



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

Thursday, 22 September 2022, 9 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Kőrösi ..... (Hungary)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Hikmat (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.*

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

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

*Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Masisi:** At the outset, I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Csaba Kőrösi and his country, Hungary, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I am certain that this organ will benefit greatly from the wealth of knowledge and experience he has acquired during his illustrious career in the diplomatic service, including his term here in New York as Hungary's Permanent Representative, when he co-chaired the intergovernmental process and ushered in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I must particularly express gratitude to the outgoing President for his close coordination and collaboration with other principal organs, particularly the Economic and Social Council, which Botswana was honoured to lead as its seventy-seventh President. I am delighted that the two Presidents worked very cooperatively on addressing vaccine equity, the sustainable development of Africa, financing for sustainable recovery and the nexus between natural resources and sustainable development, among other priorities. Close collaboration among principal organs of the United Nations is beneficial and must be promoted.

Botswana endorses Mr. Kőrösi's choice of the theme for this session, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges". We concur with his observation that the current global challenges — namely, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the war in Ukraine, humanitarian challenges and climate change — are complex and interconnected and hence require transformative solutions. Given the interconnectedness of those challenges, it is evident that they can be effectively addressed only with a holistic approach. That further demonstrates the enduring relevance of the Charter of the United Nations, which 77 years ago established the three founding pillars of the United Nations system — human rights, peace and security, and development — as interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

As United Nations Member States, we should look no further for those solutions than in the already existing key multilateral frameworks, among them the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its

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SDGs, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), as well as the outcomes of major United Nations meetings. This session gives us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to those solutions. In his comprehensive report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), the Secretary-General has offered us a boost with concrete ideas and recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to close the existing gaps in our multilateral frameworks.

I wish therefore to preface my remarks, through which I will share my country's progress in recovering from COVID-19 and moving towards a transformative and sustainable development, by reminding the Assembly of Botswana's road to development. Many in this Hall may only know the Botswana of now, which is an upper-middle-income country. That is a status that we are proud of, given that when we attained our independence, only 56 years ago, we were among the poorest in the world. However, we were fortunate to discover what has turned out to be the world's largest diamond reserve across the Kimberley Belt.

For those less acquainted with the development path we have travelled as a country, that is not the entire reflection of the Botswana story. Our story is based on the humanity, principles and tenacity that we have as a people, as Botswana. It is a story of the wisdom of our forefathers, who avoided the misfortune that often accompanied the discovery and exploitation of minerals in other parts of the world and elected instead to turn the discovery of diamonds into a story for development. Botswana is a nation that would never have been able to realize its development had we not held firmly to our belief in the principles of democracy, centred on the rule of law, good governance and the protection and enjoyment of basic human rights by our people.

However, I must admit that we face an uphill battle in our investment efforts to attract investors to help us diversify our economy away from dependence on diamonds. I have stood before the General Assembly and I have engaged in different forums, when the opportunity arises, to share the Botswana story with a view to encouraging partnerships to augment our efforts towards diversification. I trust that those who are attentive to our call are more in number, and I firmly believe that they, too, aspire to share a part of our story.

In the meantime, diamonds are still the bedrock of our economy. It is in that respect that the words of

Secretary-General António Guterres and the call for a common agenda resonate with me. I like in particular the call by the Secretary-General for a global view whereby power, wealth and opportunity are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level. For my country, that translates into a fair and equitable opportunity to use the resources that we have to develop our people and give them an equal opportunity to contribute and share in global wealth. As we continue to advocate for the Kimberley Process, I wish to remind the Assembly that Botswana's story is unquestionable proof and living testimony that diamonds, with good governance, are for development. In fact, diamonds are a serious matter of livelihoods. I will be hosting a side event on diamonds for development later this evening, through which I hope to further broaden conversations and allow our partners within the United Nations, Governments, civil society and the private sector to join us in ensuring that my country, Botswana, will also be part of the United Nations family, espoused around shared power, wealth and opportunity, as we endeavour to realize the 2030 Agenda.

Despite our challenges, my Government continues to play its part in contributing to the international agenda and ensuring that our peoples' access to medicines is part and parcel of their health care, while ensuring that the economy also recovers from the pandemic. Vaccine roll-out remains a precondition for a sustainable recovery, yet many countries in the global South, especially in Africa, have not met the World Health Organization target of full vaccination of 70 per cent of the population by mid-2022. That underscores the urgent need to continue promoting vaccine equity through international solidarity and addressing vaccine hesitancy by countering disinformation and raising awareness about the science-backed facts regarding the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines.

Despite the challenges that we have encountered, which are common to many developing countries, Botswana has procured enough vaccines to administer to all eligible groups, thus enabling significant progress, with 64 per cent of our population now fully vaccinated. However, much more needs to be done. It is in that context that Botswana continues to play an active role in that matter and recently also joined other Member States in co-sponsoring resolution 76/301, calling for the convening of a high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. We also continue to actively participate in the ongoing

process towards a possible elaboration of a pandemic treaty at the World Health Organization in Geneva. We believe that such a legally binding instrument would strengthen existing global mechanisms to address and react more speedily to health emergencies.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, as part of overcoming the challenges of global vaccine inequity and in line with our commitment to building back better and in a transformative manner, the Government of Botswana has approved the manufacturing of the patent-free CorbeVax COVID-19 vaccine and that the construction of a vaccine manufacturing plant has already commenced. Additionally, the facility will produce cancer treatment and next-generation, cell-based immunotherapy. Those initiatives have been undertaken in partnership with NantWorks, Texas Children's Hospital Centre for Vaccine Development and Baylor College of Medicine. That partnership will enhance Botswana's capacity in human vaccine production, contribute to our goal of building a knowledge-based economy and help in preparations for future pandemics.

Botswana's recovery plans include strengthening the country's vast social protection system to ensure the inclusivity of vulnerable groups, including persons living with disabilities. That will go a long way towards facilitating equal enjoyment of their rights while broadening the accountability framework as we recently acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In that regard, my Government has set a medium- to long-term economic recovery and transformation plan intended to fast track recovery efforts while advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals. In order to achieve sustainable development, adequate financing is needed for the success of our recovery efforts from the pandemic and acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during this Decade of Action. The effective mobilization of domestic and international financial resources, as well as their prudent utilization, are therefore imperative. I therefore reiterate calls on development partners to scale up and fulfil our official development assistance commitments and our efforts to attain long-term development sustainability.

In addition to international funding, it should be noted that transformative agendas require the effective implementation by Governments and associated stakeholders, as well as a sense of ownership on the

part of all stakeholders and a buy-in from the people we serve. This decisive moment of the myriad challenges we face demands that we challenge ourselves even more. My Government has thus initiated its recent agenda, inspired by the need for collective, inclusive and coordinated efforts towards the transformative agenda. We are accelerating digitalization in the delivery of services, driven by innovation and creativity. Our people are responding to the technology-driven solutions and they, too, are demonstrating the reorientation of their disposition, as well as conceptual agility to venture into new frontiers of doing things differently. A full embrace of this mindset change is an inspirational approach to the effective implementation of Government policies, programmes, projects, business activities and, indeed, the Sustainable Development Goals.

The realization of transformative solutions to the current social and economic challenges will require solidarity, both within and among countries. As Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, many of which are also characterized as least-developed and small States, Botswana expresses solidarity with fellow United Nations Member States in special situations, particularly the distinct and peculiar challenges faced by the least developed countries and the small island developing States in their efforts to build back better and recover sustainably from the pandemic.

In line with the repeated position of our subregional body, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), I also wish to express solidarity with our north-eastern neighbour, Zimbabwe, and call for the removal of unilateral coercive measures targeted at that country. While we are confident of the resilience and resolve of Zimbabwe and its economic transformation prospects, we are concerned that such measures are not advancing the cause of livelihoods of innocent Zimbabweans or the cause of our SDGs.

This year, we continue to witness extreme weather events that point to the escalating severity of the climate crisis. The decisive implementation of the bold climate action spelled out in the Paris Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact is therefore needed to prevent the worst implications. Botswana remains committed to our 15-per cent carbon emissions reduction target by 2030, as indicated in our nationally determined contributions and reconfirmed in our climate change policy, adopted in 2021. The policy addresses access to climate finance, clean technologies and renewable energy.

Climate ambitions will not translate into climate action in developing countries if they remain inadequately funded. We are therefore pleased that new financial pledges to support adaptation in developing countries were made at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP) in Glasgow, United Kingdom. It is our hope that these commitments will be fulfilled expeditiously in order to enable accelerated implementation, particularly in Africa, a region that contributes minimally to climate change but is, regrettably, the most affected. In that context, we are optimistic that COP27, to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on African soil, will further inspire ambitious climate action and deliver more adaptation resources for Africa and other vulnerable regions.

Drawing on that inspiration, Botswana, in collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and various stakeholders, convened a climate adaptation week 2022 from 22 to 26 August in Gaborone, under the theme “Transformations in Advancing the Formulations and Implementation of National Adaptation Plans”. The expo succeeded in promoting the exchange of experiences and fostering partnerships among a wide range of actors and stakeholders on how to advance national adaptation plans.

On 2 March, Botswana was among the 141 Member States that voted in favour of resolution ES-11/1, demanding an end to the invasion of Ukraine. With that vote, we were reaffirming the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly its Articles 1 and 2, which underscore the need for peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Charter is a binding instrument of international law; therefore, all peace-loving nations ought to adhere to its letter and spirit under all circumstances. We therefore continue to call on all parties to recommit to finding peaceful and lasting solutions to the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue. The United Nations-brokered talks that resulted in the Russian Federation and Ukraine signing an agreement on the Black Sea Grain Initiative are a testament to the fact that, when given a chance, diplomacy and dialogue can yield results. If nothing else, the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations in 1945 demonstrated that only if we approach conflict based on solidarity and working together can we find peace.

I commend the Secretary-General and the United Nations system organizations, Türkiye and other stakeholders, including such neighbouring countries as Poland, for rising to the challenges to address humanitarian needs in Ukraine and other crisis situations. As we continue to seek an amicable redress of this warring conflict, it is important that the United Nations system be particularly adequately resourced, given its critical work of saving lives and alleviating the suffering of victims of armed conflict, climate change and other disasters.

We, the collective States Members of the United Nations, have the responsibility and mandate to strengthen international law, promote human rights and gender equality and, most crucial, to protect civilians in challenging peacekeeping environments. In that context, Botswana shares the same ideals with many States represented here today on the principle of the responsibility to protect. As already acknowledged at the 2005 World Summit, States have the primary responsibility to protect their own populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. As part of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, Botswana as co-Chair, together with Costa Rica and Denmark, and will continue to ensure that the membership of the United Nations pays attention to this important responsibility to reinforce global action.

In southern Africa, we remain actively engaged through our subregional organization, SADC, in addressing the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism to peace and security in our subregion. To that end, SADC has deployed its security forces to thwart terrorist threats in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique.

The United Nations response to today's crises is a clear demonstration of its indispensability as the foremost organization in addressing global issues. From its system-wide response to COVID-19 to its swift action in relation to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and other crisis situations, the United Nations has proven to be fit for purpose. Nonetheless, there remains ample room for improving the Organization's effectiveness in fulfilling the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. In that connection, we welcome recent reforms and proposals aimed at strengthening the United Nations system and enhancing its relevance in addressing contemporary challenges. These efforts include the Secretary-General's development management, peace



and security, human rights and humanitarian pillar reforms, which are aimed at enhancing the Secretariat's ability, agility, accountability and effectiveness in mandate implementation.

For a small country like mine, the reform of the United Nations is important only insofar as it ensures the equal voice of Member States, regardless of their size. My Government and I personally are therefore eager to have our own people represented and employed within the United Nations system. With our presidency of the Economic and Social Council, I believe that Botswana has demonstrated its ability, including the capacity of our youth, who have received positive reviews for their support to the Secretariat of the Economic and Social Council during our tenure. We are, however, eager to see such accolades turning into real opportunities for absorption through other employment opportunities and in the hierarchy of the Organization, particularly for our youth.

As I conclude my remarks, let me reassure the President that he can count on Botswana's support and constructive engagement towards a successful implementation of the programme of work of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. I hope that Botswana can also rely on the United Nations system and our development partners and the wider international community to help us realize the 2030 Agenda and transform our people and country into a developed nation by 2036.

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

*Mr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of the Republic of the Niger**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of the Republic of the Niger.

*Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of the Republic of the Niger, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Bazoum,

President of the Republic of the Niger, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Bazoum** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to extend my warm congratulations and wishes for success to Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I welcome the leadership and commitment of Secretary-General António Guterres to peace and development, climate action, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response, as well as his sustained efforts to find solutions to the various sources of tension throughout the world.

In this Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, the climate emergency is creating humanitarian needs and exacerbating existing development challenges. Alarming evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change shows that we may have already reached or gone beyond major tipping points and irreversible setbacks. Climate change exposes the African continent to worsening food insecurity, population displacement, recurrent droughts and pressure on water resources. Faced with the urgency of this situation, I welcome the fact that, during the special high-level dialogue on the theme "The Africa We Want", organized on 20 July 2022 under the auspices of the United Nations, the international community recognized that the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP), to be held in November in Egypt, is a unique opportunity to adjust this imbalance. In that regard, I would like to express the Niger's commitment to the proposal of the African negotiators for a new objective of \$1.3 trillion in financing by 2025 to better address climate challenges.

In the Sahel, a geographical area to which my country, the Niger, belongs, climate change, which negatively influences agricultural and pastoral activities and water resources, is also the cause of extreme droughts, torrential rains and temperature increases above the world average. That is why the Niger is paying special attention to the African Great Green Wall initiative, which is part of the African Union Agenda 2063.

In terms of security, the situation in the Sahel and in my country has deteriorated considerably in recent years due to a particularly negative subregional environment. It all started, let us recall, with the fall in 2011 of the regime in Libya, which to this day has been unable to restore a stable power that could exercise

real authority over the whole country. Consequently, the vast territory of southern Libya has become a platform for transnational organized crime where the trafficking of arms, drugs, fuel and migrants prosper, perpetuating structural insecurity in all neighbouring Sahelian countries.

Mali, which in 2011 succumbed to the violence that originated in Libya, has never really recovered. It has in turn become an incubation centre for a form of terrorism that is characteristic of a Sahel that is deeply affected by the effects of climate change preventing the practice of pastoral farming. That ecosystem of violence has had a deadweight effect on the young shepherds of the communities most affected by climate change, among whom a number of terrorist vocations have arisen. This scourge has spread from northern Mali to the Niger and Burkina Faso and is now attempting to spread to the countries of the Gulf of Guinea. The violence has such potential to destabilize State institutions that it resulted in the downfall of the democratically elected regimes of Mali and Burkina Faso in 2020 and 2022, respectively. The Niger, my country, in addition to the terrorist hotbed known as the three-borders region — Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso — is also facing another terrorist hotbed in the Lake Chad basin, where the various groups that claim to be part of the shadowy Boko Haram operate.

Despite the strong pressures related to the circumstances I have just described, my country is showing great resilience centred on very wise governance, the promotion of a culture of tolerance and community cohesion, as well as the rules of democracy and the rule of law. It was that resolute choice of rights and freedoms that made it possible to organize transparent elections that sanctioned the first change of Head of the State by virtue of which a democratically elected President passed the baton to another democratically elected President in April 2021. Need it be said that our experience proves that the surest way to ward off the effects of terrorist violence is to strengthen the democratic regime and nothing else?

The war against terrorism now requires us to devote significant resources to increasing the numbers of our forces, acquiring adequate equipment and building the capacities of our soldiers. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the various partners engaged with us in the fight against terrorism. I would particularly like to thank France, whose action through Operation Barkhane is a major asset in the struggle against our

enemies. I also thank the United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany and all the other countries committed alongside us in various ways, all equally valuable.

That being said, I find it crucial to point out that the international community's commitment to the fight against terrorism in the Sahel has shortcomings that need to be identified and addressed. Indeed, this terrorism derives a large part of its financial resources from trans-Saharan drug trafficking towards Europe and Asia, via Libya. Most of the weapons flooding the Sahel terrorist violence market also come from Libya. I believe that we are faced with a problem that is not particularly complicated. Why then has it not yet been possible to set up an adequate system with the necessary means to combat this phenomenon properly? It is indeed time for collective reflection. It is time for the great Powers present in that region and the international community as a whole to join the countries of our region in a far more relevant reflection to define an effective course of action in the fight against drug and arms trafficking in the Sahel.

Despite the major challenges we face, as described earlier, the Niger intends to remain a solid and stable State, backed by democratic institutions, and resolutely committed to the fight against poverty and for development. Our deep conviction in that regard is that the most effective means of combating poverty consists in promoting education. The development challenges for the Niger are summarized by the following simple statistics: an annual population growth rate of 3.9 per cent; an average synthetic fertility index of seven children per woman; a first birth for nearly 50 per cent of girls before the age of 15; and 50 per cent of the population aged 15 on average. Those statistics say much about the state of the education system in our country, and that is why we are committed to act with determination to improve things in this area. As such, the agenda based on which the people of the Niger elected us aims to take action on two fronts: improving access to and the quality of education.

With regard to quality, we have decided to place particular emphasis on the quality of teacher training and the professionalization of teaching. With regard to improving access, our policy emphasizes the building of school infrastructure. The other particularly important aspect of our educational programme that I wish to emphasize is aimed at achieving gender equity and building residential facilities for girls in rural schools.

Indeed, because of the precarious living conditions of children in rural schools, far from their parents, the latter tend to prevent their daughters from continuing their studies. These adolescents are given in marriage as soon as they are out of the education system, which explains some of the previously mentioned statistics. In offering girls the tranquillity and security desired by their parents, residential facilities also offer girls conditions in which to continue their studies with the possibility of staying in school and acquiring the necessary academic and professional skills. The large-scale expansion of residential facilities for girls in rural schools contributes to improved education-system performance and a reduction in the rate of population growth.

My reason for highlighting our ambitions in the field of education for a country like the Niger, after having spoken about climate change, terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel, is that we are aware that these three issues — demography, climate change and insecurity — are closely related. Indeed, the terrorism currently at work in the Sahel is connected to the living conditions of certain communities whose environment has been considerably disrupted by climate change. The Sahel is also an area that has experienced particularly high population growth in recent decades. The combination of these two phenomena — demography and climate degradation — has created, as a result of the regional disorder following the fall of Colonel Al-Qaddafi's regime in 2011, the situation of chaos that the countries of the Sahel are experiencing today.

That is why it is not enough for the United Nations and the international community to be moved by or to discuss terrorist violence at length. We must act by investing the necessary resources in education to combat the violence of today and prevent the violence of tomorrow.

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

*Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of the Republic of the Niger, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## **Address by Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of the Gambia**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of the Gambia.

*Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of the Gambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Barrow:** I bring warm greetings from the people of the Gambia and the wish that we will have a successful and fruitful seventy-seventh session.

It is regrettable that we could not convene a proper general summit over the past two years due to the outbreak of the coronavirus disease. Allow me, therefore, to pay a special tribute to the millions of people who have succumbed to the pandemic worldwide. In their memory, we must commit ourselves to better pandemic preparedness and response.

My delegation congratulates Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his efficient role as President of the General Assembly and I assure him of the Gambia's support during his tenure. We also felicitate the Secretary-General for ably steering the affairs of the United Nations during what has become one of the most challenging times of the century.

Numerous interlocking global challenges requiring coordinated global action make it most pressing for us to rise to the occasion. This makes the theme "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges" quite appropriate. In the thick of all the complexities confronting world leaders, we must underscore the centrality of the unique role and potential of the United Nations to make a huge difference in the lives of the people. Durable solutions that match the magnitude and intensity of the never-ending challenges remain the Assembly's greatest challenge. The situation calls for new perceptions, new approaches, new partnerships, renewed commitments and increased resource levels equal to the scale of both current and emerging challenges. To recover as a global family, we must muster the requisite courage and

political will and take advantage of the opportunities that go with the global crises.

The current cost-of-living crisis across the world is a wake-up call for an immediate global response to alleviate the suffering and poverty that hold our nations to ransom. The global inflationary trends, food insecurity and the energy crisis compound the natural disasters that continue to cause havoc around the world. The need for relief grows by the day, yet global efforts appear to be less and less effective. In that connection, my delegation fully welcomes the establishment of the Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance and eagerly looks forward to concrete, action-oriented recommendations and solutions. As one of the hard-hit developing countries, the Gambia stands ready to cooperate with the Group to find real solutions for immediate relief.

We have come to this summit with gratitude for the partnerships and support extended to us from 2016 to date. We thank the Secretary-General personally and the entire United Nations body for their continued support of our peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. The Gambia has come a long way from dictatorship and has transitioned into a true multiparty democracy. Following the 2021 presidential election and the legislative elections this year, the consolidation process is gaining momentum. We will step up reforming and strengthening our national institutions to sustain a robust democracy where human rights and fundamental freedoms underpin our national policies, programmes and development efforts. As we prepare to end the current electoral cycle with the 2023 local Government elections, we are proud that the Gambia now has multiple political parties and vibrant civil society organizations, with a sharp rise in public participation in national affairs.

Amid the socioeconomic challenges that beset our nation, characterized by reduced tourism engagements, inflation, food and energy insecurity, and modest economic growth, we are developing a new National Development Plan 2022–2026, to succeed the current Plan. With this new Plan, we seek to advance the pursuit of our national priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063. We therefore solicit the support of the United Nations system, as well as our friends and development partners. Our goal is to recover and grow our economy, transform digitally and consolidate our democratic gains. Our resolve is to uplift our people

from poverty, secure their livelihoods and create new avenues to transition into a prosperous, peaceful and stable nation. Because young people and women form the greater majority of our population, the Government will continue to empower them.

Like all other genuine nations, we are committed to the global consensus that no country should be left behind in this Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite its size and economic status, the Gambia is at the forefront of fighting climate change through ambitious national action plans, and we look forward to participating effectively in the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Egypt and the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Qatar.

Accelerating development in Africa hinges on addressing the underlying causes of insecurity and underdevelopment. As a continent, our collective goal is to have a peaceful Africa where the people enjoy the dividends of peace, stability and prosperity. African Governments are committed to silencing the guns on the continent as a strategic objective. For that reason, we ask the United Nations and the international community to shoulder their fair share of the burden of the African Union's peace endeavours. Our experience with keeping the peace in Africa is marked by isolated efforts in many instances. Africa must be provided with adequate equipment and the means to fully play its peace-enforcement role on behalf of the international community.

As a long-standing troop- and police-contributing country, the Gambia will continue to support the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, and we welcome its reinforcement through the Action for Peacekeeping strategy. We are committed to improving the capacity of our officers through increased pre-deployment training, innovative partnerships and more gender-balanced peacekeeping deployment approaches. We must, however, review and do more to address the frequent deadly attacks against peacekeepers in mission areas by giving them realistic mandates. As a sitting member of the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Gambia's commitment to peace and security in Africa and beyond remains unwavering.

We have ongoing conflicts on our continent that need urgent international attention. The complexity of the challenges in the Sahel dictates multipronged



approaches and interventions that would ensure sustainable peace and stability. We must therefore reconsider our assumptions concerning that region and seek forward-looking solutions that empower the citizens. The current security and governance situation in Libya equally deserves a fresh thrust from the international community. We call on the contending parties on the ground to give the people a chance to live and coexist in peace.

Moroccan sovereignty and territorial rights over its Sahara region should be recognized by all. In that regard, the Government of the Gambia reaffirms its strong support for the Moroccan autonomy initiative, which convincingly serves as a realistic compromise in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Developments in the Horn of Africa also continue to be a source of serious concern. We request the leaders of the region and the international community to explore new options to restore peace in the area. We must equally come together to jointly assist the region to combat terrorism through greater cooperation and intelligence sharing. The humanitarian crisis is enormous and calls for considerable international emergency aid.

Reverting to other important matters of global concern, we entreat the United States to end the long-standing embargo imposed on Cuba. The reason is that global solidarity and friendly cooperation should define relations among States Members of the United Nations.

In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict needs a new impetus for lasting peace. As a people, the Palestinians deserve a State of their own; we therefore call for a fresh peace initiative that includes the revival of the Arab Peace Initiative.

We remain deeply disturbed by the horrors and humanitarian catastrophe arising from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The destabilizing global economic conditions imposed on the rest of the world are unbearable. In Africa and elsewhere, the cost-of-living crisis and the biting inflation, along with food and energy insecurity, are devastating our economies and continue to frustrate pandemic recovery efforts. Additionally, the debt burden has reached crisis levels. We call for general debt relief. We implore Russia and Ukraine to heed the global plea for political dialogue and end the war. Africa is simply asking for global peace and friendly relations. Our survival and progress depend on global peace and stability.

The plight of the Rohingya remains a matter of grave concern to the Gambia. We call on the Myanmar Government to comply with the rulings of the International Court of Justice and end all human rights violations against the Rohingya. The Gambia will continue to defend their rights.

As a responsible member of the international community, the Gambia considers Taiwan a part of the People's Republic of China and advocates the adoption of the One China Policy. We urge the international community, therefore, to fully respect China's sovereignty over Taiwan and avoid actions that undermine global peace.

The Gambia fully supports the Secretary-General's call for transformation and global solidarity in the landmark report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). In the same vein, we support his efforts to convene the Summit of the Future and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit next year. The renewal of global solidarity and regard for the less fortunate necessitate that we commit ourselves once again to leaving no one behind.

Africa will continue to demand its rightful place in the permanent membership category of the Security Council; thus, the negotiations must produce tangible results.

Finally, let me emphasize that genuine commitment and substantially increased resources should accompany the transformation of our institutions, systems, mechanisms and state of preparedness, and the developing world must not be left behind. I pray that we have a successful seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

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

*Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen.

*Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Al-Alimi** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi and the friendly State of Hungary on his election as President of the General Assembly. I wish him every success in managing the work of this session, the theme of which is “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”.

I also sincerely congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, representative of Maldives, for his efforts to uphold the purposes and principles of the Organization.

I further commend and pay tribute to the role played by Secretary-General António Guterres in strengthening the presence of the United Nations amid all those global and intertwined challenges.

I would like to thank all United Nations staff, agencies and envoys for their tireless efforts to alleviate the suffering of our Yemeni people. Through their good offices and continued efforts, they have striven to bring peace and stability to my country, which has been drained by eight years of war and major humanitarian crisis caused by the Houthi terrorist militias, supported by the Iranian regime. I take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate our great Yemeni people who, concurrent with this meeting, are celebrating their national days on 26 September, 14 October and 30 November. Those dates represent key milestones of cultural and social development in my country, including the proclamation of the Republican regime in 1962, which is being undermined by the new Imams six decades after the proclamation, which was based on the principles of freedom and justice and the eradication of disparities and racial discrimination, in addition to women's participation and the guarantee of rights and liberties.

It is an honour for me to speak to the Assembly today for the first time as President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen. For the eighth year in a row, a Yemeni leader is addressing

the Assembly about the war, destruction and the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Every year, our leaders come to this edifice to reveal the further suffering and pain of the Yemeni people and to recall the memory of the courageous leaders, women, children, neighbours, friends and work colleagues whom we are losing day after day because of the war, epidemics, illness or hunger. Every year passes without the adoption of a robust position on the Yemeni dossier, while our losses pile up and the militias and terrorist groups become increasingly dangerous in their transnational threats and perpetrate stark violations of human rights that have been the subject of consensus within the Organization for more than 70 years now.

I am here today to share with the Assembly once again the story of the great and patient Yemeni people, their struggle and suffering, as well as their questions addressed to all of us. They are asking if we can undertake serious work this time to bring an end to the bloodshed, save lives, defeat extremism and terrorism and protect the will of our people and their legitimate aspirations to recover their State, participate in political life, live a good life and rid themselves of sectarian and religious extremism and hate speech.

The international community has consistently held a unified position on the Yemeni issue, and we are proud of and appreciative for that. In the beginning, there was the plan to transfer power based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiatives and its implementation mechanism in 2011. Then came the inclusive National Dialogue Conference, which ended in January 2014 and involved all components of the Yemeni society, including the Houthis. That led to a reference document guaranteeing the Yemeni people's broad participation; meeting their aspirations for democracy, justice, equality in citizenship and women's broad participation; and preserving the right of vulnerable categories of society and freedom of belief. It culminated with the Security Council meeting that took place in Sana'a in 2013.

That dream did not last long after the Houthi terrorist militias turned against the national consensus that arose from the inclusive dialogue. The militias prevented the holding of the popular referendum on the new constitution. They invaded the capital, Sana'a, and other Yemeni cities while hunting down the President of the country and pushing the Government of national consensus to Aden. They tried to assassinate the President and took control of the State institutions. They declared a war on neighbouring countries and the

entire world. That is how the destructive war started, which today poses a real threat to the security of the region, in particular international navigation routes and global energy supplies.

In the years since, the war has killed and wounded hundreds of thousands of people and caused 20 million to suffer from famine. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have had to seek refuge in various countries and continents. There are more than 4 million internally displaced persons living in camps in extreme conditions. The war destroyed the people's means of subsistence along with our nascent democracy. It also brought epidemics and floods related to climate change, causing death, destruction and the collapse of our protection network and governmental care. That left us with limited capabilities to save lives, given the intransigence of the terrorist militias and their rejection of all efforts to achieve sustainable peace, rebuild our country and realize development.

On 7 April, a new era based on partnership and national consensus began in our country with the establishment of the Presidential Leadership Council as the legitimate representative of the Yemeni people and their political will. It was welcomed by our people, the region and the international community. Since it was established, the Presidential Leadership Council has strived to achieve peace, end the human suffering and the lofty goals of restoring the State, ending the coup and reactivating the system of rights and freedoms, along with citizenship equality, enabling women and youth to decide their future, and achieve the desired peace. Over the past six months, the Presidential Leadership Council has worked closely with the Government of political competencies and with our brothers in the alliance that supports the legitimate Government, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and various regional and international partners. Urgently needed reform programmes are being set up to activate our institutions, improve services, curb the collapse of our national currency, and tackle severe inflation and the global food crisis.

We have prioritized the rebuilding of our security and military institutions, as well as the judicial branch, which had ceased its functions for about two years. We are working to fight corruption and combat terrorism and organized crime. We are activating law enforcement institutions, realizing justice and protecting public freedoms and social peace.

The Presidential Leadership Council stresses its adherence to the peace approach pursuant to the terms of the comprehensive solution of the Yemeni crisis reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, as well as with the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), which all ensure lasting peace that will enable the State to recover its exclusive authority, constitutional institutions and republican system. We also declare our full respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the various conventions and treaties adopted and ratified by the Republic of Yemen. We are working closely with the neighbouring countries and establishing constructive partnerships with the United Nations and the international community to ensure peace building and achieve security, stability, prosperity and freedom for all the peoples of the world. Our Presidential Leadership Council is committed to establishing an approach in line with the Charter and tasks of the United Nations, while facilitating the work of its humanitarian agencies, political missions and relevant oversight mechanisms to guarantee the political, economic and social rights of women and to bring an end to child exploitation and recruitment.

In our search for peace, we have endured painful experiences with the rebellious Houthi militias since the start of the Yemeni crisis. They have broken all their obligations and commitments, beginning with the peace and partnership agreement upon occupying the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014, followed by the first and second meetings in Geneva, the Kuwait consultations and the Stockholm Agreement, and finally the ongoing truce, during which the legitimate Government lost nearly 300 martyrs and more than 1,000 were injured due to the violations perpetrated by the terrorist militias.

In only one week, the humanitarian truce will end. The Presidential Leadership Council reminds the international community that the Government has respected all elements of the truce, namely, launching regular commercial flights to Sana'a airport and facilitating the entry of oil products to Al-Hudaydah ports in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of our people. The Houthi terrorist militias maintain their closure of roads to Ta'iz, which has been besieged for seven years, as well as roads to other provinces. They do not pay the wages of their employees or release prisoners, detainees and abductees. They resort to any

excuse to violate the truce and obstruct United Nations and international efforts to extend it in order to achieve the comprehensive peace that we all seek. We want a lasting peace. The truce proved without a doubt that we lack a serious partner who wants peace.

The Yemenis are now convinced that it will be difficult to achieve sustained calm without strict deterrence against a sectarian armed group. In that context, we stress the steadfast position of the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council welcoming the renewal of the truce. However, the renewal must not take place if it is not in the interest of the Yemeni people if it is used to prepare for another round of war or if it undermines our sovereignty. The renewal must not empower the terrorist militias, which threaten not only Yemen but the whole region and the entire world. For us, peace is a strategic choice. There is no doubt about that. We are perfectly aware of the difficulty of leading our country without the involvement of all Yemenis. However, we cannot allow any armed group to enjoy the monopoly of power and law enforcement. That is the foundation of a State that the Yemeni people deserve, like all other peoples of the world.

For the terrorist militias, the main issue of establishing peace is related not to their concern for sovereignty, as they claim, but to ensure a place above the State and above the people for their leaders, who claim that they have a divine mandate to govern the people. They export transboundary violence and adopt a hostile approach against peace and coexistence while calling for hatred, infidelity and hostility. I am aware that it is difficult for other States that have long lived in peace and stability to understand that there are human beings who claim to have a divine mandate to rule other human beings in this era. They believe that peace constitutes a mental invasion and a soft war. However, that is one of the common realities among the Houthi terrorist militias, Al-Qaida, Da'esh, Boko Haram and other terrorist organizations throughout the world.

The theme of this year's session of the General Assembly — "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges" — first requires establishing clear values for peacebuilding under a stable Government and a strict deterrence to protect the political process and pave its way by all means. However, if we continue to fear that the use of force will undermine attempts to strengthen a precarious calm and that designating that group as terrorists will lead to a humanitarian disaster, then we must look for equally

deterrent alternatives. There is nothing better than the international community's support for the legitimate Government to ensure that the values of freedom, peace and coexistence prevail. From an academic point of view, diplomacy is based on bringing different points of view closer. We can only implement diplomacy as such in the context of a legitimate regime. Entities that deny the rules of the international system must not be communicated with; otherwise, the principles and the Charter of the Organization will be violated.

While the world is not paying enough attention to the suffering of the Yemeni people and their voices calling for freedom and good living and is focused on other hotspots of tension across the world, we have had good brothers on our side and an alliance to support legitimacy, led by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which have sacrificed blood and money and taken responsibility for defending a State Member of the United Nations on behalf of the international community. They have also hosted millions of Yemeni refugees, who have been accorded many benefits in those countries, including work, residency, medical care and education. This year, the Presidential Leadership Council and the Government of political competencies have received support in various fields from our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. We also cannot forget to commend the funding, humanitarian and development aid we have received from the United States of America, the European Union and the United Kingdom, in addition to other sincere friends as a support for our just cause.

Nevertheless, we are experiencing a wider gap in funding that threatens to close more relief programmes intended to save lives, including in the areas of food and health care. In addition to the need of rapid response from humanitarian organizations, it is also more important to invest in long-term income-generating projects and to channel all funds through the Central Bank in Aden in order to support the national currency and lower prices of basic goods so as to avoid a potential famine.

The obstacles imposed by the terrorist militias should not prevent us from shouldering our ethical responsibilities to avoid the imminent spill in the Red Sea of more than 1 million barrels of crude oil contained in the *FSO SAFER* oil tank for the past five years, which could lead to a destructive environmental disaster that would exceed fourfold the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in the Pacific Ocean in 1989. On this occasion,



we thank all countries and Yemeni businessmen who contributed to the plan of salvaging the *FSO SAFER*, which the Houthi terrorist militias are using as leverage to exert pressure and make money.

We join all countries in seeking to ensure free navigation in international waters and in fighting extremism, terrorism and piracy. We also call for efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular Iran's nuclear programme, ballistic missiles and destructive role in the region. We also call on the international community to condemn Iran's blatant interference in our country's security and stability. Iran is transforming it to a cross-border platform for threatening activity. Iran must be subjected to sanctions under the resolutions of international legitimacy relevant to the Yemeni dossier. In that context, we call on Member States to commit themselves to the disarmament regime, while confronting Iran's destabilizing influence in the region and preventing it from providing its militias with military technologies, such as ballistic missiles and drones, that are used to perpetrate acts of terrorism against civilians in our country and countries of the region, including planting millions of internationally banned mines on land and in the sea. Iran also targets international maritime routes, in stark violation of international law.

The Republic of Yemen stresses its steadfast position concerning the Palestinian question and achieving peace and a just and comprehensive solution to that question based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative in order to ensure the establishment of an independent State for the Palestinian people.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines respect for the inherent dignity of each human being with equal rights that constitute the bases of freedom, justice and peace in the world. That is why we always need to prioritize those rights in all tasks of the General Assembly on behalf of tens of thousands of our citizens who are refugees, detainees, kidnapped, disappeared or jailed, including journalists, activists, artists, relief workers and hostages of all ages. Members do not need more evidence to prove the stark violations committed in areas under the control of Houthi terrorist militias as the worst places for public freedom and human rights in the world.

I would like to conclude by telling a story. A Yemeni who survived the militias, when asked recently by a medical doctor in Cairo about his date of birth,

answered that he was born two weeks ago, meaning since he left Sana'a and survived the militias. However, he was extremely concerned about his family and friends whom he had left behind. That is why we must delay no further in our collective mission of returning millions of Yemeni people to life, hope and the future that members wish for their dear and dignified populations.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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

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

*Mr. Taneti Maamau, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Taneti Maamau, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Maamau:** Let me begin by praising and thanking Almighty God for His everlasting love, peace, mercy and blessings upon the world and each one of us here today. In his holy name, *Kam naba bane ni Mauri*.

I join previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Csaba Kőrösi and the Government of Hungary on his election as President of the General Assembly. He may be assured of the full support and cooperation of Kiribati as he steers the helm of the General Assembly to make the seventy-seventh session a watershed moment for the many interlocking challenges facing humankind.

By the same token, I congratulate and thank the outgoing President, Mr. Abdulla Shahid of Maldives, for a resoundingly successful seventy-sixth session, as

demonstrated in the accomplishment of his many new initiatives. He infused a renewed sense of faith and hope in the power of a united humankind and a stronger multilateralism. The most remarkable legacy of his leadership has been the inclusion of underrepresented Member States within the workings of the United Nations. Never before have the small island developing States been as diversely and widely represented within the realms of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

I also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his stellar and steady leadership, especially during these very difficult and trying times. Kiribati welcomes and fully endorses his reappointment for a second term to further advance and complete a comprehensive overhaul of the United Nations in meeting its obligations for the peoples it serves.

We also appreciate the restructuring of the multi-country offices aimed at bringing the United Nations closer to the people on the ground. The establishment of the United Nations multi-country office for the northern Pacific region, which includes Kiribati, is a symbolic notion bringing the United Nations closer for effective and tailored delivery of United Nations agency services. We hope to see more tangible development activities occurring in that remote and underrepresented region of the United Nations.

I wish to also acknowledge the great contributions and services that the United Nations agencies have delivered to my country and people. In particular, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the United Nations police for all the assistance and support that have enabled our Kiribati police to participate for the first time in United Nations peacekeeping missions, starting with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

Seventy-six years ago, in establishing the Charter of the United Nations, our founding fathers committed to cooperating to prevent future wars and eliminate the root causes of wars and other violent conflicts in society. They agreed to restore the godliness, dignity and worth of the human person and improve the standards of living for all, to name a few. Today we take stock of the progress made towards those goals along with new commitments, and reflect and assess whether we have truly lived up to those values.

As a small island developing nation, multilateralism is central to the sustainable development of Kiribati. It offers a variety of opportunities to engage on global

issues that are of importance to the well-being of our people. With an ocean area large enough to fit the whole of Europe, our Kiribati Vision for 20 years and foreign policy objectives have been on the promotion of ocean health and wealth. That includes both the risks from nuclear submersibles traversing our waters and the damaging effects of illegal, unregulated and unreported activities on our fisheries. Most important is the health of our people, especially those who were exposed to the nuclear test blasts on Christmas Island.

We are grateful for the leading role, together with Kazakhstan, on articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons concerning assistance for persons and environments harmed by nuclear testing. Two of the initiatives that we proposed are now reflected in the Vienna Action Plan. The first is the establishment of a voluntary trust fund to assist countries, communities, people and environments harmed by nuclear testing. The second is the creation of a scientific advisory body to help provide the science needed to address health and environmental problems occasioned by past nuclear testing. We are grateful to those countries that have already pledged support for and made contributions to those initiatives, especially those that are not yet States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Let me be clear on this. Humankind should be free now and forever from the testing and use of nuclear weapons. That is why my Government has decided to invite the United Nations to use Kiritimati Island as a global or sub-global centre for anti-nuclear research and related programmes and activities.

The choice of theme for the seventy-seventh session could not be more appropriate or timely. A cloud of uncertainty and fear continues to hang over humankind in the light of the two-year coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Communities, families and businesses are still reeling from the effects of the pandemic. Compounding the devastation are the persisting challenges of climate change that have manifested in coastal erosion, reducing available land space, and droughts that have affect the livelihoods of many persons.

The Ukraine war has added to the despair and uncertainty through the unnecessary loss of lives, scarcity of food grains, increase in food and fuel prices, interest rates and many more. The consequences of COVID-19, climate change and the war in Ukraine are clear examples of interlocking challenges that

must be addressed urgently, using the seventy-seventh session's motto of solidarity, sustainability and science. Solidarity underscores the sustainability of science and its advances. We saw this through the record-breaking production of vaccines that have saved millions of lives. By emulating the success of sharing vaccine production and science discoveries, we can ensure that many more receive life-saving vaccines and medicines. On that note, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have assisted the people of Kiribati in many ways by providing vaccines, financial support and others during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Climate change is another area in which science has made and continues to make advances in our understanding of the root causes and ways to address climate change. However, the lack of solidarity even through multilateralism continues to be the stumbling block to addressing the global climate change emergency. The targets that have been agreed and set under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, including the financial pledges, continue to remain out of reach. Those challenges and the many others that have caused much human suffering in the past seven decades all have one thing in common. They are curated by people in positions of power and influence. Much of that irresponsible, selfish and heartless behaviour is part of what the late Queen Elizabeth II referred to as the darker side of human nature. That darker side harbours negative mindsets and attitudes that give in to greed, hatred and many other vices that breed more bad than good, resulting in conflict, violence across societies and the world at large.

Broken humanity can be fixed not by wonderful speeches, meetings, resolutions or international instruments, but by an interplay of greater compassion and solidarity. Sadly, harmful mindsets persist and we ourselves, being a remote country, are far from immune from such. The escalating geostrategic competition in our part of the world means that regionalism and solidarity are at risk of being increasingly used to serve specific national interests, rather than a collective of diverse needs and views working in unison for our common benefit. As is the case now, any differing views and sovereign decisions that deviate are at risk of being vigorously scrutinized and labelled as adversarial through a security lens rather than a genuine desire to pursue sustainable development for the country and its people.

Likewise, efforts undertaken by Kiribati to prepare for its graduation from least developed country status, as recommended by the United Nations, are being scrutinized. With limited resources, we are committed to driving our development agenda and ensuring sustainability when we graduate by maximizing benefits from the Phoenix Islands Protected Area and many others. Our development agenda is grounded in our culture, traditional values and norms, practices and aspirations for the benefit of our people. Yet it continues to be oppressed by neo-colonial thinking that does not take our needs, our priorities or our national context into account. A system of global thinking remains and is steeped in legacies of environmental destruction, which our peoples have now inherited, as in the case of the mining of Banaba Island. We must work together to ensure that the solutions and actions to correct these legacies and local watershed moments work hand in hand with actions and solutions for today's interlocking challenges.

Wendell Berry has pointed out that global thinking is often merely a euphemism for abstract anxieties or passions that are useless to engaged efforts to save actual landscapes. Multilateralism should never be viewed as a one-size-fits-all scenario. We are reminded that it is best to orient our work through locally grounded planning and action that focus on the actual scaled down watersheds commonly addressed.

We have a duty as leaders entrusted with the power to decide, and as enablers of solutions for the security, peace and well-being of our people that are sustained through education, awareness and financing. Acting together side by side in unison and solidarity, making decisions and taking action based on reality and facts derived from natural law and true science is a precursor for the transformative solutions we need. Let us all agree to make this seventy-seventh session a watershed moment; a moment for renewed and positive mindsets; a moment for true discipleship action; and a moment for a prosperous, peaceful and secure world for all. I believe that together in unison and solidarity, as one human family and with God's blessings, we can do it. Certainly, we can do it.

I conclude by sharing our traditional blessings: *Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa*.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and

Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Taneti Maamau, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Republic of Kiribati, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe**

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

*His Excellency Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Mnangagwa:** It is my singular honour to deliver this statement to the Assembly. Allow me to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. He can be assured of Zimbabwe's full support as he guides our deliberations during the current session.

I also pay special tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for leading the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly as the world grappled with a plethora of challenges. We commend him for the President of the General Assembly Fellowship for Harnessing Opportunities for Promoting Empowerment of Youth initiative towards enhancing youth interest, engagement and commitment in the work of the United Nations. That will go a long way towards safeguarding the interests of future generations, as embodied in today's youth. Their voices must be heard across our Governments and within the United Nations. Zimbabwe is privileged to be among the pioneering beneficiaries of the initiative.

Delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains an urgent priority for us all. Our theme for this session, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges", captures the importance of scaling up our actions, informed by the state of our world. The number of

persons exposed to food insecurity continues to increase. Meanwhile, the scourges of conflict and climate change have become major drivers of migration and refugees. The ever-looming threat associated with the "triple C crisis" of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), conflict and climate change has placed upon us an enormous responsibility to confront these interlocking challenges by strengthening multilateralism and solidarity. Terrorism, biodiversity loss, desertification, pollution and cybercrime, among other challenges, reinforce the urgent need to implement inclusive and transformative solutions that leave no one and no place behind.

The seventy-seventh session comes in the wake of the debilitating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which overstretched our health-care systems and severely exposed the disparities between developed and developing countries with regard to vaccine access. Africa is among the most affected. The lessons from the pandemic should inspire and enable the General Assembly to urgently scale up means to build multi-pronged capacities that must guide our collective response to future pandemics and other global challenges.

Despite the illegal economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe has successfully implemented its COVID-19 National Response Strategy, anchored largely by our own internal resources and institutional capacities. The proactive approach of my Administration has enabled the country to achieve high vaccination rates, extending to children up to 12 years. Meanwhile, our focus on the construction, rehabilitation and modernization of health facilities across the country, coupled with enhanced capacities around biotechnology and the pharmaceutical value chain, attests to my Government's determination to realize universal health coverage.

Lifting many more people out of poverty and into a higher quality of life must remain at the core of both United Nations activities and the programmes and projects of our respective countries. Zimbabwe has made significant strides towards ending poverty and hunger. That has seen the implementation of various policies and programmes to support and empower communal and small-scale farmers.

At the household level, the provision of agriculture inputs, equipment and technical support to farmers, especially the vulnerable, has contributed to household and national food and nutrition security. However, in 2022, mid-season drought and tropical cyclones



regrettably reduced the overall performance of the agriculture sector. To that end, the climate change conundrum has continued to be an albatross. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change should remain the primary platforms for negotiating our collective global response to climate change. All measures taken to achieve the targets and commitments set under the Paris Agreement have to be implemented. Furthermore, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances must also be reflected.

Financing for climate change has remained inadequate, leaving the scope for effective and just transition to renewable energy among developing countries under serious threat. It is our hope that at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt later this year, the developed countries will deliver more concrete action on climate change, not just for mitigation targets, but also in relation to adaptation, loss and damage, climate-specific finance, technology transfer and capacity-building.

In our case, Zimbabwe is making concerted and deliberate efforts to integrate climate action into our national policies, strategies and planning. That includes strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable in our society. Additionally, my Government is implementing an ambitious programme to increase the number of dams for irrigation. The programme is expected to create greenbelts across the country as we reduce dependence on rain-fed agricultural activities while enhancing export-led production and productivity.

Our comprehensive Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation Strategy is focused on increasing production and productivity across the agriculture spectrum. That was instrumental in our unprecedented realization of national wheat self-sufficiency, as well as increased exports in horticulture. The provision of technical extension services for improved land and water use has seen the widespread adoption of climate-smart agricultural innovations, with evident upward increase of incomes among communal and smallholder farmers, as well as women and youth in agriculture.

Zimbabwe is committed to 2030 Agenda and has, to that end, mainstreamed the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our national economic development blueprint, the National Development Strategy. We

acknowledge the support of the United Nations in the alignment of the Strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals. Economic reforms have been implemented, resulting in significant progress in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining and tourism. Our “Zimbabwe is open for business” mantra has fostered strong partnership between the Government and the private sector for inclusive and sustainable development. Massive infrastructure development projects, which include dams, energy plants and roads, have broadened our national economic asset base, as well as production and productivity enablers, while enhancing regional connectivity and integration.

The current global financial architecture has demonstrated its inadequacies in addressing the challenges that confront us. An increasing and unsustainable debt burden, the prohibitive cost of borrowing, illicit financial flows and the exploitation of natural resources from developing countries have all combined to relegate developing countries to the periphery of the global financial system. There is therefore a need for a global financial system that is just, more inclusive and responsive to the challenges we face. Equally, the international trade architecture under the World Trade Organization has remained largely exclusive and indifferent to the needs of developing countries. The African Continental Free Trade Area is thus expected to be the panacea for Africa in trading and stimulating economic growth and development. The Free Trade Area must be complemented as we strive to improve production and trade in goods and services. The liberalization of services and strengthening of competition policy and intellectual property rights, as well as the adoption of digital trade, should also be enhanced.

Education is a key driver of sustainable development with a direct impact on SDG 4, on quality education; SDG 5, on gender equality; and SDG 17, on partnerships for the goals. Zimbabwe has embarked on reforms based on our Heritage Based Education 5.0 model, which emphasizes science, technology, innovation and industrialization. Those are indeed necessary tools to leap forward the modernization and industrialization of our countries in the developing world. My Government is equally providing quality, inclusive and accessible education through the roll-out of a phased, free primary school education system. The Transforming Education Summit during this high-level week is a timely and welcome development that should

help revitalize the education sector, even more so after COVID-19-induced disruptions.

My country notes that more work needs to be done globally to close the gender gaps that are often aggravated in times of crisis. Opportunities are being created for all Zimbabweans, especially for women and youth, to realize their individual and collective potential. Milestones have thus been achieved in the implementation of SDG 5 on gender equality, leading to expanded empowerment and employment opportunities for women and young people.

The proportional representation for women in Parliament is enshrined in the Constitution. Under my leadership, Zimbabwe has legislated reserved youth seats in the National Assembly. To further strengthen participatory democracy and good governance, my Government has introduced a 30-per cent quota for women in local authorities. That is especially important as women bear the brunt of poor service delivery at the local level. The establishment of gender and youth focal desks within Government ministries has helped to mainstream the issues of young people, particularly young women.

Sustainable socioeconomic development is an indispensable imperative for the enjoyment of the fundamental rights of any people. The Policy on Devolution and Decentralization has seen increased budgetary support directly to local authorities. Communities at the village, ward and district levels are now making independent decisions and prioritizing their programmes and projects, informed by the most pressing needs at their level. That has seen the rapid construction of schools, clinics, water and sanitation infrastructure, and other social amenities in the most remote areas of Zimbabwe.

In the same vein, my Government is promoting heritage-based rural industrialization to guarantee improved livelihoods and incomes for all communities, based on their respective, unique natural resource endowments. Zimbabwe is modernizing and industrializing based on our local resources and human capital base. Inspired by the historic monument, the Great Zimbabwe, from which our country's name is derived, we are building our country brick by brick, stone upon stone, with the support of our friends and partners. As my Government continues to entrench democracy, good governance and the rule of law, we are committed to vibrant, competitive and peaceful political contestations.

Notwithstanding our success, the ongoing deleterious effects of the illegal sanctions continue to hamper and slow our progress and the realization of sustainable and inclusive development. Zimbabwe is a peace-loving country. We remain indebted to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and the African Union, as well as other progressive members of the comity of nations for their unwavering support and calls for the removal of these unwarranted and unjustified sanctions. We once again call for their immediate and unconditional removal. My country welcomes the findings of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, who visited Zimbabwe in 2021.

At the international level, Zimbabwe has adopted an engagement and re-engagement policy. The policy is underpinned by the principles of mutual understanding and respect, cooperation, partnership and shared values with other members of the international community. We desire to be a friend to all and an enemy to none. My country is greatly concerned that more than 20 years after the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, hate crimes, xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance have continued to increase at an alarming rate, including at the international level. There is a need, therefore, to recommit to fighting those scourges in all their forms and manifestations.

The spread of terrorism and the intensification of old conflicts on the African continent and throughout the world have been a setback to our quest to silence the guns. In southern Africa, we remain seized with insecurity and terrorist insurgency in northern parts of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique and conflicts in parts of the Great Lakes region. Emboldened by our SADC regional philosophy that an injury to one is an injury to all, we continue to pool our resources to fight terrorism and other threats to peace, security and stability in our region. We appeal to the United Nations to render the requisite support to our efforts to restore peace in the affected areas.

Zimbabwe stands committed to playing its part for the realization of peace and security within various United Nations, African Union and SADC peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. The scale and gravity of our challenges today cannot be addressed through old structures and old ways of doing business. Zimbabwe subscribes to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte

Declaration as the sustainable approach to the reform of the Security Council.

In conclusion, Zimbabwe reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and multilateralism in the resolution of the complex and intersecting challenges facing our world. The implementation of the inclusive 2030 Agenda remains our biggest hope for the future we all want. There is indeed a more compelling case for enhanced solidarity, cooperation and partnerships if we are to respond effectively to these challenges and ensure our collective survival. The United Nations should remain the beacon and source of hope for the global citizenry. As leaders, we have a weighty burden and responsibility to make the United Nations deliver to the expectations of all the peoples of the world.

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

*Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau**

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

*Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Embaló** (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by delegation*): I would like to warmly congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi of Hungary on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I also commend Secretary-General António Guterres for his commitment to world peace and Mr. Abdulla Shahid of Maldives for the results that he achieved during his term.

Much has been said by the eminent speakers who have stood before me on this rostrum, which allows me to avoid certain repetition. The time has come for us to

think of a global and lasting solution based on solidarity, sustainability and science, as the focus of this session calls on us to do. The solution to many of our problems is in joint reflection, global solidarity and the pursuit of concerted and collective actions. The coronavirus disease pandemic has tragically reminded us that we live in a globalized world, that the lives of all human beings have equal value, that humankind is one and that we have a shared destiny. We must share scientific knowledge and ensure equitable access to vaccines.

Over the past two years, we have been able to create greater political stability in our country, reaffirm our role on the African continent and reclaim our place in the concert of nations. However, the international context does not favour a full implementation of our development plan, particularly with respect to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In Africa, we are also feeling the consequences of the war in Ukraine, whose impact is unfortunately broad, particularly in the energy and agricultural sectors. Inflation and increased prices for grains and other staples have considerably aggravated a food situation that was already challenging.

Guinea-Bissau is a coastal country with a great number of islands. We have dedicated much effort to mitigation and adaptation. We hope that the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be a deciding step in defining and adopting concrete strategies to minimize the negative impacts of climate change.

Allow me, as Chairman of the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to recall that our subregion faces great security challenges and that we need peace in order to ensure the development and well-being of our people, who are our primary wealth. The stability of a large part of our continent in general, and of West Africa in particular, is threatened by the insecurity caused by terrorism, violent extremism and transnational crime, which violate the principles of the rule of law and democracy. ECOWAS created a political and legal framework and structural mechanisms to prevent and resolve political and institutional crises. However, the challenges continue to be numerous and difficult to overcome. We need international assistance to stop the advance of terrorism in West Africa and in the entire Sahel region. This is a threat to international peace and security, and, in order to combat it effectively,

we must involve the entire international community, and the United Nations in particular.

I was recently chosen to chair the African Leaders Malaria Alliance. According to data from the World Health Organization, 96 per cent of malaria cases globally and 98 per cent of malaria deaths occur in Africa. Our continent has not achieved the established goal of reducing malaria incidence and mortality by 40 per cent by 2020, which would have been a fundamental step in eliminating malaria on the African continent by 2030. Therefore, we need more than ever to adopt appropriate measures to protect everyone, everywhere, from infectious diseases. I take this opportunity to call on all countries, Governments, donors and development partners to contribute to the replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Together and in solidarity, we can end malaria once and for all and save millions of human lives.

Speaking of solidarity among States and peoples, we cannot forget to mention Cuba and the need for the United States embargo against our fellow nation to be lifted immediately.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Guinea-Bissau, despite being a small country with limited means, will spare no effort to contribute to maintaining peace, stability and security on our planet. We are resolute in continuing to actively participate in the consolidation of multilateralism and the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among the nations and peoples of the world.

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

*Mr. Úmaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

#### **Address by Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Union of the Comoros.

*Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Assoumani** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his effective leadership of the work of the seventy-sixth session of our Assembly. I also wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, his successor, on his brilliant election and to assure him of the solidarity of the Comoros as he carries out his mission. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his sustained investment, as well as that of all his teams, in the service of peace and development.

The seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly is being held at a particularly delicate moment in the life of the international community. The face of the world is changing profoundly from one year to the next. Indeed, three years ago our countries entered the worst health crisis in their history, marked by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic, as the Assembly knows, has brought all the countries of the world to their knees and demonstrated that, big or small, we are all equal in the face of the epidemiological threat that today is one of the worst situations facing our global village. In that regard, the Union of the Comoros wishes once again to express its thanks and appreciation to all those who have worked tirelessly to provide, in just a few months, effective solutions that make it possible to restore hope in the world and to gradually emerge from this crisis that has seriously shaken the world's economies.

As if all that were not enough, another crisis, caused by the invasion of Ukraine, has revealed once again, and in a dramatic way, the fragility of the multilateral system that brings us together today. With each passing day we are seeing the price of wheat and other food products increase to unprecedented levels, which jeopardizes food security by increasing the threats of shortage and famine. That is why my country condemns in the strongest terms this anachronistic invasion and urges the international community to convince Russia and Ukraine to resume as soon as possible the path of dialogue and mutual respect, the only things capable of opening the way to the cessation of hostilities. I would also like to welcome last July's Black Sea Grain Initiative, carried out under the auspices of President



Erdoğan of Türkiye and Secretary-General António Guterres and aimed at allowing the export of millions of tons of grain blocked in Ukrainian ports. Those agreements, which ought to be consolidated, are proof that dialogue can and must always prevail to prevent the world from plunging into chaos and misery.

In addition to concerns related to the ongoing conflicts and health and food crises, the community of nations must continue its quest for appropriate solutions to political and territorial problems related to the sovereignty of States and the dignity of nations. In that respect, I reiterate here, on behalf of my delegation, the imperative need to find a rapid, just and equitable solution to the flagrant injustice that Palestine is suffering. We must indeed find a solution that enshrines the right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in perfect security and harmony with the State of Israel because, as the Comorian adage says, “we choose our friends, but we do not choose our neighbours”.

With regard to the question of the Moroccan Sahara, I reiterate the unfailing support of the Union of the Comoros for the principle of Moroccan rule over the Sahara. The Moroccan autonomy initiative, within the framework of the sovereignty of the Cherifian Kingdom, is, in our eyes, the best basis for reaching a timely, pragmatic and lasting solution to that regional conflict, which has gone on for far too long. My Government therefore strongly encourages dialogue between our two brotherly countries, Morocco and Algeria, and welcomes all initiatives likely to contribute to ensuring peace in that region, in particular the relaunch of the political process, based on Security Council resolutions.

In the same vein, with respect to the sovereignty of States, the Union of the Comoros reiterates its position on the need for the People’s Republic of China to recover its integrity with respect to the Chinese province of Taiwan. In that context and given the threats that weigh on world peace today, which everyone recognizes and understands, my Government invites all parties involved in the various conflicts to show restraint and a spirit of responsibility.

With regard to the highly worrisome situation in the Sahel, we know from experience how dangerous it is to allow hotbeds of tension to arise and become fertile ground for the expansion of international terrorism. My Government is all the more attentive to this issue as we have seen the rise in power in southern Africa of the barbaric Al-Shabaab phenomenon, which constitutes

a threat on land and at sea for the entire continent. I reaffirm, as I did last year before the Assembly (see A/76/PV.10), that these groups threatening peace in the world are not Muslims. They are quite simply terrorists who have nothing to do with Islam, which is a religion of peace, tolerance and coexistence.

However, we are aware that behind these contemporary terrorist phenomena, which we must fight vigorously, there is also a great deal of frustration among young people who have no points of reference and are in search of a future. In that regard, I appeal to the great Powers of this world and recall that while their support is an essential contribution to the economic and social development of the States under the greatest threat, said support should be designed in such a way as to also meet the aspirations of the peoples that benefit from it. I am convinced that nothing beats prevention when it comes to building peace, security and stability in the world. The only way is to manage the complex issues that threaten world peace at their earliest stages, through dialogue and diplomacy.

I cannot talk about conflicts without mentioning the territorial dispute between my country and France concerning the Comorian island of Mayotte. My Government, like all those that have preceded it, solemnly recalls before the Assembly, and in accordance with international law, Comorian sovereignty over this island, which was removed from Comorian rule during the decolonization process of our country. The management of this painful dossier, which has lasted for more than 40 years, is very fortunately seeing new perspectives open up with the spirit of dialogue that has been created between the Comorian and French parties.

The principles and values of the United Nations are now gathered around the Sustainable Development Goals, which each country has made a priority. It should be recalled that climate change is one of the important elements of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, entire regions are simply destined to disappear, while others are daily subject to the intensification of climate phenomena, such as floods, intense droughts, fires, coastal erosion or the acidification of the oceans. While these disasters spare no country or region, it should be emphasized that the case of island developing States like the Comoros is even more worrisome and deserves greater attention from us leaders. I also take this opportunity to renew our condolences, support and sympathy to the authorities and the people of Pakistan, and through them, to the bereaved families and the

victims of the heavy floods that have affected this brotherly country.

Our States are also confronting other dangerous phenomena, such as piracy, pollution, illegal fishing, the plunder of resources at sea, human trafficking and drug trafficking, which require our utmost attention. My Government joins all regional and global initiatives in waging a merciless fight against these barbaric acts, which are one of the major threats to the security of property and people. That is why I have always attached great importance to the security dimension in our geostrategic action, particularly in the Mozambique Channel area and the south-west Indian Ocean region.

My country, the Union of the Comoros, has just celebrated 47 years of independence. Although the first two decades following that regained freedom were marred by political unrest, turmoil and instability, the country has enjoyed peace and stability for more than 20 years now. It is therefore necessary to do everything possible to consolidate and perpetuate this newfound political stability because it constitutes a real guarantee of socioeconomic development. Our salvation lies, in fact, in a peaceful, united society that is increasingly inclusive of all the structures that make it up.

Thus, with a view to better national cohesion and mid-mandate, last February we held a national political dialogue aimed at bringing together more Comorian men and women around essential objectives, including peace, security and national unity, with a view to sustainable socioeconomic development. The Assembly will understand why I wish to thank all the partners who were kind enough to lend their support to that dialogue. I remain convinced that all the vital forces of the nation that took part in that important meeting will work towards the consolidation of the achievements of the past 20 years, in terms of human rights and the democratic transfer of power, and thereby advance the development of the country.

With regard to human rights, allow me to emphasize that my country works closely with the relevant regional and international bodies and has successfully passed the four-year universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council in 2019. The constitutional and legislative reforms carried out confirm my country's desire to make human rights a national priority.

With respect to social outcomes and all other areas, COVID-19 has been a concern and forced countries to prioritize its management. The Union of the Comoros

experienced two waves, the second of which proved to be more virulent, claiming many victims. Nevertheless, the situation in the country has been brought under control thanks to forethought and the provisions taken by the authorities in that respect, and with the support of our bilateral and multilateral partners, the communities and civil society. We thank them once again. It must be said that even if the Union of the Comoros is, thankfully, currently classified in the "green" category, we must remain vigilant, especially being an island country, in order to avoid a new outbreak of the disease. Consequently, the Comorian Government is making considerable efforts to support the population on a daily basis, particularly in this time of global food crisis resulting from COVID-19 and aggravated by the Russian-Ukrainian crisis.

I welcome the action of all the development partners of the Comoros and reiterate my thanks to them here. Alongside the United Nations system, the newly signed framework plan for sustainable development for the next five years perfectly integrates the priorities held by the Emerging Comoros Plan, the reference framework par excellence for the development of our country. The combined efforts of the Government and bilateral and multilateral partners must converge towards a major objective, that of the emergence of our country by 2030. In that light, in early December we intend to organize in the country a follow-up seminar to the Conference of Development Partners that was held in France in 2019 in order to mobilize the promises made to support this challenge of emergence by 2030. I would like therefore to launch from this rostrum a friendly and fraternal appeal to all our partners to find together the ways and means of evolving towards the concretization of the commitments we made in Paris to finance the various projects targeted in the programme.

At the regional level, I attach particular importance to the close cooperation that exists between the Comoros and the countries with which we share a common destiny in the Indian Ocean area. The Union of the Comoros also participates in regional efforts aimed at ensuring security in eastern Africa and, in that context, supports the sisterly Republic of Mozambique in its fight against terrorism, a scourge that spares no country. Regional and international solidarity must therefore prevail if we are to wage a merciless fight against this scourge and ensure the safety of all.

*Mr. Chimbindi (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Our presence every year here at the United Nations is irrefutable proof of the interest we place in multilateralism and of our conviction of the major role of the Organization in further humanizing the world. This year, it reflects an even stronger and unshakable common resolve to act for the good of our respective peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the need for continued unity and solidarity within the international community. It is together and within an organized framework that we will find the appropriate solutions to the great challenges of our time, for greater peace and progress, and for the betterment of all of us and generations to come.

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

*Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia**

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

*Mr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

**President Weah:** I am honoured to address this seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly on behalf of the Government and the people of Liberia. Let me congratulate His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly at this seventy-seventh session and assure him of Liberia's fullest support. I would also like to commend his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for a job well done in administering the affairs of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. Let me also extend my profound thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for his remarkable and visionary leadership.

This year's Assembly is taking place at a difficult time when, even as the world is recovering from the scourge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we continue to face the challenges of the war in Ukraine, climate change and its devastating effects on our environment. Just as the Ukrainian people are enduring the harsh impact of this unwarranted military incursion, the rest of the world is feeling the harsh consequences of economic downturn caused by disruptions in global supply chains, food insecurity and the rising prices of basic goods and services.

The theme of this year's Assembly, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges", is both appropriate and meaningful. It not only reminds us of the current state of our world, but provides us the space to reflect on the multiple challenges that confront us today. They include the health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the devastating effects of climate change, environmental concerns, poverty reduction, food insecurity and gender inequality. The challenges confronting the world today will require immediate collective global actions, with the United Nations at the centre of the search for solutions. In so doing, we must give special consideration to the needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in line with the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022–2031.

Working together with the United Nations family, Liberia hereby commits to protecting our planet, promoting peace, preventing conflicts, ensuring sustainable financing and boosting partnerships. That commitment is reflected in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, which embodies the expression of our shared determination to achieve peace, prosperity and national development and to address extreme poverty, inequalities, regional disparities, infrastructure deficits, climate change and equitable distribution of our national wealth.

Given Liberia's youthful population of more than 60 per cent, my Government initiated a youth rehabilitation and empowerment programme, the Socioeconomic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Youth Project, between 2019 and 2021, with the subsequent launch of a \$13-million national fund drive for the rehabilitation and empowerment of at-risk youth in Liberia. We remain of the firm conviction that, when empowered, our youth can be a positive force for good.

As Liberia's feminist-in-chief, women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality remain key priorities of my Government. Women not only comprise almost half of our country's population; they also play important roles at all levels of our society and must be given deserved equal attention, support and a place at the leadership and governance tables in our society. To that end, we have developed a legal framework, including the ratification of regional and international instruments to address gender inequalities, which arise as a result of sociocultural perceptions, practices and stereotypes that support male dominance and the subordination of women.

I would like to inform the Assembly that my Government, together with United Nations partners, is implementing the European Union Spotlight Initiative to end violence and harmful traditional practices against women and girls and promote their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Furthermore, the Government of Liberia is currently implementing a \$50-million project funded by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to enhance the capacity of female entrepreneurs.

I would like to express Liberia's sincere gratitude to our local and international partners, both multilateral and bilateral, for their continued support of our national efforts in combating the pandemic. As a result of that support, Liberia is well on its way to achieving herd immunity, hopefully by the end of this year, with 67 per cent of the population already fully vaccinated.

My Government continues to take actions through the formulation of new policy frameworks and strategic interventions to address the impacts of climate change and protect the environment. Liberia is committed to achieving the target of a 64-per cent reduction in carbon emissions below business as usual by 2030. We anticipate that the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt, will provide the opportunity to accelerate work towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Sustainable development can take place only in a peaceful and secure environment. In the fulfilment of our commitment to the maintenance of regional and global peace and security, Liberia takes pride as a troop-contributing country, with Liberian troops and other security apparatuses serving in the United Nations

Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei. We thank the United Nations and our bilateral and multilateral partners for the support that we continue to receive in facilitating our contribution to global and regional peace and security.

I am pleased to report that the International Monetary Fund's latest appraisal of its ongoing programme with Liberia is very positive. It shows that inflation rates have been significantly reduced. There are now better prospects for economic growth compared to previous years, despite the negative effects COVID-19. Our efforts in instituting new policy measures to fight graft are also particularly commended in the report, along with our adherence to prudent fiscal management.

Democracy in Liberia also continues to grow from strength to strength. After many years of civil upheaval, Liberia is becoming a stronghold of peace and a safe haven for democracy. That is because we have taken actions in the past few years to build and strengthen democratic institutions, such as the press and the Liberian judiciary. We have put forward new legislation that empowers the media, while eradicating laws that have tended to suppress free speech. I am proud to say that, from the beginning of my Administration to date, there have been no political prisoners in Liberia.

At the regional conferences of the Mano River Union and ECOWAS, which have been convened to discuss efforts to restore democracy in a few trouble spots in our West African region, Liberia has constantly and consistently pleaded for strict adherence to constitutional term limits and a return to democratic civilian rule in cases of military takeovers. Liberia is expected to hold presidential and legislative elections in October 2023. The upcoming elections will be crucial to consolidating our democracy. In that regard, I underscore my Government's unwavering commitment to ensuring that the enabling environment will continue to exist for the holding of peaceful, free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections. That is in keeping with my commitment to ensuring that the democratic will of the Liberian people is respected at all times.

In the run-up to the 2023 elections, it is incumbent upon all prospective candidates to avoid the incitement of violence and any other behaviour that could deprive the Liberian people of the peaceful space that they need to freely exercise their franchise and express their political will in choosing their leaders. We must let the



people decide, and then we must respect their decision. That is indeed the true essence of democracy.

If we are to advance the common good of humankind, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, then international cooperation must be given primacy and the principle of solidarity must have its rightful place. We have the platform to generate the transformative solutions that we seek. The world is watching. Our people are watching. We must now seize the moment, confront the challenges and collectively endeavour to lift the poor from poverty, hunger, sickness and disease and ensure progress, development and prosperity for all. At the same time, we must protect our planet and guarantee and maintain global peace, security and stability.

We must pursue efforts to make the United Nations more efficient, more effective, more inclusive, more accountable and more suited to its purpose.

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

*Mr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud,  
President of the Federal Republic of Somalia**

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

*Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Mohamud:** It is a great honour and privilege to address the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session here in New York today.

At this particularly challenging time in human history, I welcome the important theme of this session, which directs us all to jointly find transformative solutions to the various interlocking challenges that

we face today. There is absolutely no doubt that we, as a community of nations, now collectively face the most challenging socioeconomic and environmental situation we have experienced in modern history. In fact, I can say with sadness that the situation is dire and potentially existential.

Therefore, without transformative and urgent implementable solutions to those interlocking challenges of our time, the small window of opportunity we have to act together will pass, to the detriment of all our citizens and to the world. Our actions today will surely determine our fate and that of the generations to come. The burden on all of our shoulders is heavy and failure is not an option.

Most of the world is still recovering from the devastating health and socioeconomic impact of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic was unprecedented in its impact on the daily lives of all citizens across the world. It has changed the ways in which we live forever and clearly presented how unprepared the world is for such shocks and disruptions.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has painfully illustrated how far apart the world is in terms of development and its ability to respond to such a huge crisis through the top-down distribution of the vaccines. Richer nations were able to invest in the distribution of life-saving vaccines more rapidly for their citizens, while developing countries like Somalia waited for whatever was available and whatever they could afford or were gifted by international partners.

While vaccine inequality is symbolic of the existing development divide between the developed and the developing world, we, as a community of nations, understood that we can and must stand together to overcome even the greatest challenges if we have a strong global system of cooperation, collaboration and action. In that regard, the Somali Federal Government is grateful to all the dedicated medical professionals on the front lines against COVID-19, as well as those bilateral and multilateral partners that have supported our national efforts to vaccinate our people and provide protection for their livelihoods through the difficult COVID-19 crisis.

Today we must ensure that the global inequality of the COVID-19 vaccine is not replicated with the looming food security crisis. Our world is becoming less secure through recurring conflict, increasing

international terrorism and the destructive impact of the climate change. I cannot prioritize between those three interlocking challenges, because they are equally dangerous and directly harmful to any progress we make, anywhere in the world, on achieving the vital Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

In fact, those complex and interconnected crises are the drivers of today's unprecedented international humanitarian crises, food insecurity, rapid urbanization and the burdensome international cost of the livelihood crisis, which is pushing most of the world's population into poverty. Indeed, we are at an unbearable juncture in human history, where citizens are looking to their respective Governments and the international multilateral system to provide meaningful policy responses that are anchored in transformative and sustainable solutions. Accordingly, we, as a community of nations, must be more optimistic and work even more closely together instead of retreating into nationalistic isolation, which cannot and will not serve our global citizenry in this new age of interconnectivity and interdependence.

In Somalia, we are working tirelessly to transition from over two decades of devastating conflict, drought, famine and development stagnation to a new age of stability, progress and prosperity. However, despite our continuing efforts, Somalia and its resilient people are facing some of the most complex and interconnected crises in the world. Those crises include ongoing regional drought, which is directly threatening the lives and livelihoods of Somalia's most vulnerable communities. In fact, our Government has called on all its business community, diaspora and international partners on to work with us to do everything possible to avert the possible looming famine. We urge all our partners to heed our call and work with us to provide immediate support and relief to the most affected communities.

In the long term, we must collectively work together to ensure that we mitigate the acceleration of the dangerous and costly climate crisis by meeting the commitment to investing in and adequately financing climate adaptation in the most affected and vulnerable regions of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa. Key areas of investment must be sustainable water management, biodiversity protection to enhance food security, climate-smart agriculture, resilient infrastructure and greater investment in renewable energy.

In Somalia, for the first time, we have established a new Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to lead the urgent process of addressing the devastating impact of our national and regional environmental deterioration. Somalia is caught between floods and droughts annually, owing to climate change and poor infrastructure. Our people, who have a long tradition of living harmoniously with nature and who barely contribute to the poisonous emissions warming the Earth, are the ones paying with their lives today.

We are therefore taking the matter of protecting our environment seriously because we know that climate change is real. We are living with the evidence of its painful and destructive reality today. We also know that Somalia and the rest of the world cannot develop sustainably without jointly addressing the global climate crisis quickly and effectively, because our whole way of life and the most important job-creating productive sectors of our economy, including agriculture, livestock, fisheries and the wider blue economy, depend on the climate.

Terrorists are making our word less safe by the day. Terrorism remains a persistent and complex challenge that both contributes to and exacerbates all other crises, including food insecurity, the displacement of people from their homes and climate change. Terrorists have no religion or human values. They are violent criminals who simply seek to terrorize innocent people. We must continue to stand up to them with all our collective strength and effort. Nowhere in the world has there been an example of a terrorist organization succeeding against a united Government and people, let alone governing justly, as may be falsely claimed.

The most important lesson we have learned in the long modern war against international terrorists and terrorism is that neither can be contained or degraded. They need to be comprehensively defeated, wherever they exist. In Somalia, we are actively fighting the terrorist group called Al-Shabaab, which is an affiliate of Al-Qaida, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, separately. Both criminally misrepresent the beautiful and peaceful Islamic religion and values to destabilize the region and, in the process, terrorize the Somali people and their brothers and sisters in neighbouring countries and across the world.

In recent weeks, the unprovoked, violent and senseless actions of Al-Shabaab against innocent civilians across Somalia have highlighted the urgent need for an expedited common national and international

response to defeating the group, on a permanent basis, to advance regional and global security. At the height of the humanitarian crisis, the group, which falsely claims to be Islamic, blew up desperately needed water wells and water catchment areas, banned transportation carrying food and killed innocent people, who were already struggling to live because of the impact of the severe drought in our country today. That is the true criminal and despicable face and intentions of terrorists and terrorism.

On its part, the Somali Federal Government and its federal member states, with the direct support of our brave and resilient people, are responding by challenging and defeating the remaining terrorist groups in major localities. The Somali people have begun to organically rise up in support of their Government's call to free themselves and their nation from the evils of terrorism. As recently as this past month, more towns and villages were recovered as a result of our offensive military operations, with the support of local communities. We are now confident that with enhanced public support, our Government will eliminate terrorism from Somalia because the Somali people have finally realized that Al-Shabaab's repressive actions will not end until we all take action to achieve that. In a nutshell, the Somali people now believe that Al-Shabaab can and will be defeated, and that is our real source of energy and inspiration, as a Government in the fight against international terrorism.

At the policy level, the Somali Government will continue to work with all its partners, including the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, in the fight against global terrorism. We are fully committed to doing the heavy lifting to secure our future. However, to deliver the killer blow to the violence and insecurity, we must think past the notion of containing and degrading Al-Shabaab or any other terrorist organization, anywhere in the world.

We know that those policies are no longer as effective as they were once thought to be at this advanced stage in the fight against the ever-evolving global terrorism threat. Instead, we need to focus all our joint efforts on the Somali Government's new strategy of militarily, ideologically and financially challenging terrorism and terrorists to ensure that they are comprehensively defeated, once and for all and quickly. Furthermore, the Somali Government is sincerely committed to working with all its partners to effectively train, equip and sustain its armed forces, with a view to moving forward

fully. That is the only long-term sustainable solution for stability and progress in our country, the region and the world at large. The Somali Government is working within a complex network of challenges that include the effects of climate change and poverty.

Without predictable and committed national and international financing, it will not be possible to find transformative solutions to the interlocking challenges we face today. In Somalia, we are working to enhance our economic capacity through a rigorous economic and financial reform programme that will strengthen Somalia's economy, improve public financial management and mobilize more urgently needed domestic resources to ensure a more sustainable and swift response to the crisis.

We are very grateful to international financial organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which support Somalia in implementing real economic and financial reform. However, given Somalia's fragile economic situation as a recovering post-conflict State, the financing of global development priorities must be underpinned by a common international commitment to supporting countries like ours with more concessionary financing, capacity-building and investment in all areas that can strengthen resilience to today's multiple crises, including climate change, insecurity and the provision of social protection for the most vulnerable in our societies.

We must also facilitate and promote private sector investment and participation in overcoming those challenges to transition from what is now simply referred to as a corporate social responsibility to common social prosperity, in which we all contribute our fair share. Our Government must facilitate and improve further the enabling environment necessary for that private investment.

In conclusion, there is no escaping the vicious cycle of complex and interconnected global crises, which challenges our citizens and the wider world. What is even more worrisome is that they have become repetitive, and without strong bilateral, multilateral civil society and private sector partnerships, they cannot be addressed effectively anywhere or by any single nation or geographic region alone.

In the absence of urgent and effective joint action starting today, the dream of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will remain just that — a

mere distant dream. For its part, the Somali Government is committed and determined to defeat international terrorism alongside all its international partners, address extreme poverty, raise the environmental consciousness of our population, mitigate the worst of the climate change impact and rebuild an inclusive, resilient and people-centred society and economy through our successful ongoing socioeconomic reform programme. That is the basis for the transformative solutions that will help us mitigate and overcome the interlocking challenges that our nations face today and pave the way for future progress and prosperity.

The most important lesson we have learned from dealing with the multiple, complex and interconnected crises in Somalia is that we must not always be behind, but must plan for and respond to the worst emergencies. When we have many early national and international warning systems in place, it is better and more prudent to plan ahead and focus on building resiliency by finding and financing durable solutions that help to deliver sustainable development for the most vulnerable across the world. In Somalia, we have a wise saying that one finger cannot wash your whole face. If we work together sincerely and collaboratively as a community of nations, no challenge, no matter how big it is, is insurmountable.

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

*Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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

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

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

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Ndayishimiye (spoke in French):** Praise be to God the Almighty and Merciful, who has allowed

us to meet in the magnificent city of New York to participate in our Organization's current session under the best conditions.

At the outset of my remarks, allow me to express my sincere thanks to the Government and the people of the United States of America, and more particularly to the people of New York, for the exemplary welcome and hospitality extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to express my warm and heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, for his auspicious election as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its seventy-seventh session. Burundi, through me, assures the President of its full support and cooperation throughout his mandate in the service of humankind. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for the remarkable work he has done under extremely difficult conditions marked by the ongoing crisis resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and by security crises in several regions of the world. In that context, I pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General of the Organization, Mr. António Guterres, who has spared no effort in accomplishing his mission well despite a difficult situation involving various crises and paradoxes.

As the Burundian adage states: "In a climate of peace, a pruning knife can serve as a lawnmower" — in other words, where there is peace, anything is possible. The world today should take inspiration from this. Unfortunately, the world has become an immense tower from which we witness, with tears in our eyes, gruesome acts in some nations due to war, horrible massacres, refugee flows, food insecurity and the destabilization of world economic systems. The countries of the world are experiencing the knock-on effects of the situation in Ukraine. In Africa, terrorism and violent extremism continue to strike in the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa and in Central Africa, with a tendency to spread to the southern region of Africa. The same is true in other parts of the world — as has been noted, terrorism has no borders and climate change, which causes famine, has no limits. However, together, with political will, I am confident that we can overcome these scourges.

I am confident because my country, Burundi, has seen all too much, with repeated political crises that have destroyed not only human lives, but also the environment. Today we have recovered, and the country is well on the way to socioeconomic development. Burundi is striving to make progress in this direction,



using the dividends of peace, security, stability and the social cohesion that has re-emerged thanks to Burundians themselves and to the contribution of the international community. We therefore hope that everyone will embrace the spirit of peace, fraternity and justice so that all the peoples of the world may fully enjoy their right to live well and in dignity. On the humanitarian level, Burundi has welcomed on its soil, with warmth and dignity, thousands of refugees of all ethnicities from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Peace is a topic that is close to our hearts; its absence weighs heavily on the lives of our peoples. It is in this spirit that we will never allow ourselves to shy away from implementing security decisions taken by this important, dignified international Organization, the United Nations. With this in mind, Burundi continues to fight tooth and nail to contribute to the return of peace in countries in which it has been disrupted, in the framework of the United Nations, the African Union or the region. Our interventions in Somalia and the Central African Republic are testimony to this. Similarly, Burundi is committed to contributing to the return of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the framework of the East African Community initiative. I take this opportunity to ask the international community to support the Nairobi process to help the Congolese people in distress.

With further regard to peace and security, by participating in this meeting, I am led to humbly request the involvement of the United Nations in tracking down the terrorist groups that are beginning to infiltrate our subregion, not to mention those already active in other parts of the world. The East African Community, of which Burundi holds the presidency, has just welcomed a new member, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and, together with the other heads of State of the member countries, we have set ourselves the goal of stabilizing the entire community, so that our countries' populations can finally focus on socioeconomic development projects.

That is why the Government of Burundi is developing transport infrastructure, including road, rail, air and water transport, in order to achieve the interconnected, multimodal approach at the national and subregional levels that is imperative for my country. Burundi is working closely with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania to achieve the ambitious Uvinza-Musongati-Gitega-Bujumbura-Uvira-Kindu railroad project that

will link the three countries, as well as the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. This megaproject will not only boost the economies of the three countries, but will also facilitate the movement of goods and people in the subregion.

We would like the States Members of the United Nations to stand as one to protect and promote all the rights that humankind must enjoy without distinction. While we appreciate what is already being done, work remains to be done in order for people to fully exercise all the rights to which they are entitled as human beings.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the international community for its efforts to restore peace and stability in my country. In that regard, I should like to inform this august Assembly that equitable justice for all is today a reality, and that human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of the press, are respected throughout Burundi.

Unfortunately, however, some officials, under the banner of some of the Organization's entities, are discouraging this positive development by politicizing democracy and the fight against impunity. In some countries, including my own, when democracy, as defined, takes root, some United Nations officials distort that democracy, calling it untrustworthy and non-inclusive to perpetuate unnecessary tensions. Whereas we fight on a daily basis against impunity, some of these officials still seek to disqualify our actions. It is therefore high time that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights align itself with our countries to enable a common understanding of the direction of our countries' policies, instead of trying to control their actions at a distance through committees and offices of special rapporteurs. The time has come for the United Nations to recognize the progress made by my country over the past 17 years and to understand that the status of "fragile country" no longer applies to Burundi.

People are at the heart of the economy, from the family to the global level. We must therefore contribute to the development of human capital by providing our peoples with appropriate tools, experience and knowledge adapted to the demands of contemporary life. We must find solutions to counter the threats to our economy, health, education system and peaceful coexistence — in short, threats to our way of life within our countries and among the countries of the world.

We know that the United Nations seeks to improve the living conditions of the world's population through

access to sufficient household income to ensure a decent standard of living. Education is a key element in achieving that. In terms of education, I could not be more explicit than Nelson Mandela when he said: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” So many years after this famous line was spoken, this idea for effecting positive change in our communities remains relevant. Education creates aspirations and ambitions for the future in young people and is an effective tool in the fight against violence and terrorism.

That is why, in my country, we are initiating reforms that rethink policy regarding the education system in order to turn our youth into members of, rather than tributaries to, the public service. We are pleased to note that, in my country, making education free has significantly increased enthusiasm towards school among girls and boys alike and that the dropout rate in elementary grades, which is often linked to food insufficiency, distance from schools and inability to afford school fees, has decreased significantly. In order to turn youth into agents of peace and inclusive development in Burundi, we have put in place an ambitious programme of youth economic empowerment and employment with the aim of reducing unemployment by creating jobs for young people through entrepreneurship. Alongside this programme, we have set up a youth investment bank and an accelerator, guarantee and support fund to facilitate access to credit.

The same is true for women, who account for a high percentage of Burundian youth. We have established a women’s investment bank and are pursuing reforms to improve women’s health and education. The Office of the First Lady of Burundi has opened a hospital to treat obstetric fistulas and, together with Burundi’s development partners, continues to innovate to greatly improve the lives of Burundian women.

Meanwhile, managing the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is an urgent task. To that end, I would like to make a strong appeal to all development partners of the African continent to take courageous measures to support the economies of African States, which have been hard hit by the various current crises. As no country in the world was created with the idea of forever receiving assistance, this support should be done through mutually beneficial strategic partnerships focused on, among others, investment, trade promotion and technology transfers.

In order to develop human capital and to make the population dynamic and productive, my Government is providing each commune with at least one hospital and health centres to prevent and treat diseases, including from epidemics and pandemics. While we are proud of having been able to effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the fight continues. Furthermore, free health care has been provided for children under five years of age and pregnant women who give birth in public hospitals and health centres, which has significantly reduced infant mortality.

The efforts aimed at my country’s economic development must primarily focus on developing the agricultural sector. To that end, my Government has declared 2022 as “Year of Agriculture in Burundi” under the general theme “Agriculture, source of the national economy”. Our agricultural development programme is all about changing mindsets and practices. We are encouraging the population to aim higher by producing not only for local consumption but also, and especially, for export, to join forces to work together in agricultural cooperatives and to progressively replace hoes with modern tools and agricultural technologies.

Concerning the environment, Burundi has not remained idle, especially since we have experienced drought in some regions, the flooding of rivers and lakes and landslides that sometimes carry away human lives, houses and crops, thus leading to food insufficiency. In the light of this, Burundi has joined the global consensus by carrying out environmental protection, conservation and management works through various activities throughout the country. Furthermore, Burundi is learning about climate change resilience, not only through the practice of hill irrigation but also through soil protection efforts, such as the drawing of contour lines and generalized reforestation, under the government project entitled “Ewe Burundi urambaye”, or “Covering Burundi”. Every Thursday is dedicated to this purpose throughout the country.

We must also ensure that we progressively develop the infrastructure, in particular energy and transport, to support production and better ensure the growth of other sectors that drive growth and employment. The Government of Burundi is working on a huge project to develop the energy sector by mobilizing resources through co-financing and private-sector investment. The aim is to develop the potential of hydroelectricity, solar energy, peat, geothermal resources and municipal waste. The two sectors I have just highlighted also

provide crucial support for the exploitation of mining potential. We want to forge a mutually advantageous and balanced technical and financial partnership in the exploration, exploitation and processing of mining and geological products, as surveys have revealed a subsoil that is very rich and as yet untouched.

For peace and development to become reality, we have to prioritize good governance and the sound management of public finances, which not only helps to relieve the people's frustrations, which are at the root of social conflicts, but also enables us to plan the national economy properly. I want to point out that we have strong national mechanisms for combating corruption and related activities. Acts of corruption are dealt with effectively and our citizens are satisfied with our performance in this area. In terms of economic activity, Burundi is on the right track, leveraging mining resources as well as road, sea and, soon, rail transport routes for economic actors. Investors should know that the Lake Tanganyika shoreline is being developed for tourism and new tourist sites are being created in the interior of the country.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to once again reaffirm my country's determination to maintain good diplomatic relations and mutually beneficial, win-win cooperation with all States and international organizations in order to confront the fundamental challenges that are a threat to us all. We welcome our resumption of good political, diplomatic and economic relations that had previously been frozen with various States and international organizations. Our ardent wish is to maintain strong relations with States and international organizations towards a bright future for Burundi and every country in the world.

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

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

**Address by First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan.

*First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Al-Burhan (spoke in Arabic):** I am delighted to sincerely congratulate President Csaba Kőrösi on his election to lead the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and to wish him every success. We also express our appreciation for the efforts of his predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. We greatly value the theme of this session of the Assembly and call for more international solidarity, joint multilateral action and the activation of cooperation mechanisms in order to find sustainable solutions to global challenges and reduce their negative repercussions for all peoples, particularly in countries emerging from conflict and less developed countries.

I am pleased to be giving an overview of political developments in the Sudan and reiterating our commitment to achieving peace and promoting mechanisms for a peaceful transition in order to establish full democracy, and by holding fair and transparent elections by the end of the transition period to establish a civilian regime that represents every Sudanese citizen. In order to ensure that opportunities for entering into dialogue and holding consultations are available to all, we announced in an armed forces communiqué that we were withdrawing the military as an institution from that dialogue and from participation in the Government. The aim is to enable the political and revolutionary forces that believe in the democratic transition and the goals of the people's great December revolution to form a civilian Government under leadership of national competence. All except the National Party would participate in the Government in order to fulfil the remaining requirements of the transitional period. In that regard, we reiterate our commitment to cooperating with the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) in keeping with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the UNITAMS mandate

set forth in Security Council resolution 2559 (2020) and the list of requests from the Sudan to the United Nations. We also reiterate our continued cooperation with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei.

We emphasize that we are positively considering the many initiatives aimed at achieving national accord in the Sudan, particularly the national initiatives that have been subject to intense consultations in which various civilian stakeholders participate, such as political parties, youth and revolutionary elements, civil-society organizations and signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement. We hope that can lead to a broad consensus that will ultimately enable a democratic transition to take place through the holding of free and transparent elections. In order to achieve that national accord, we have provided all the necessary support to the tripartite mechanism led by UNITAMS, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Despite that support, the mechanism has taken up a great deal of time without actually fulfilling its goals, which has complicated the discussions of the national accord.

Our efforts since the December revolution have resulted in the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement, which has mitigated the conflict in Darfur and improved security and stability in the region. In that regard, we call on our brothers Abdul Aziz Al-Hilu and Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nour to join the peace march and work together to build the Sudan of the future.

In the Darfur region, and following the achievement of peace and community reconciliation, the rate of voluntary return of displaced persons has increased and the first group of the joint forces has been established to protect civilians. In that regard, we urge the international community to provide us with assistance in advancing peace efforts pursuant to the Juba Peace Agreement.

*The President took the Chair.*

Despite the acknowledged challenges that our country is addressing domestically, the Sudan has been playing a positive and constructive role in supporting peace and achieving stability and development in our region, as well as through its effective role in implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. We have also been cooperating with our brothers in Somalia. Moreover, and in coordination with the African Union, the Sudan has played a role in

reaching a peace agreement in our sister nation of the Central African Republic and has participated actively in meetings to promote peace, security and cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, we led efforts to promote development and cooperation among countries in the Horn of Africa and East Africa during our presidency of the IGAD summit. We are also continuing our joint border-control activities with our neighbour and sister nation Chad and are keen to coordinate and follow up with the relevant stakeholders with a view to helping our neighbour Libya establish security. The Sudan has also undertaken major efforts to fight terrorism, human trafficking, transnational crime and organized crime and is cooperating with all relevant countries and organizations in that regard. We are firm in our support to all peoples in exercising their legitimate rights in line with international legislation.

The Sudan is working tirelessly to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), because we believe deeply in the value of the outcome document of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that connection, the transitional Government adopted a strategic document on poverty reduction for the period from 2021 to 2023 and presented its second voluntary national report in July 2021. Needless to say, while we are continuing those efforts, we still need assistance from our brothers, friends and international development partners in standing with the Sudan. We reiterate our full commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda so that our recovery process can be more flexible and sustainable. However, external debt is a real obstacle hindering my country's ability to promote socioeconomic development through the implementation of the SDGs. As we are all aware, the Sudan is eligible to benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and I therefore call on the international community and all our brotherly and friendly countries to honour the commitments and obligations they made at the related meetings in Paris and Berlin in 2020 and 2021, considering that the Sudan has enacted all the legislation required to enable it to benefit from debt relief.

The crisis brought on by high food and energy prices demands further international cooperation. In that context, we reiterate that the Sudan is qualified to receive assistance in achieving food security at the regional and international levels. From this rostrum, I call on the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as regional organizations and brotherly and friendly countries, to support my country's efforts



to meet that goal through the transfer of agricultural technology, capacity-building and support for agricultural research centres.

The Sudan has hosted millions of brotherly refugees from across the continent for decades and has kept its doors open to them. We have shared our limited resources with them and provided them with protection despite a difficult economic situation that is familiar to all. Considering how that situation is being exacerbated by the effects of climate change, drought, floods and insufficient humanitarian assistance, we urge for a collective commitment to providing assistance, led by the relevant United Nations agencies, donor countries, brothers and friends, in support of the communities that host the refugees.

In the area of disarmament, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a priority for the Sudan. Like many developing countries, the Sudan suffers from the effects of this dangerous phenomenon, which so often has economic and social repercussions and has been spreading among tribes and population groups, making the task of collecting such weapons extremely difficult. We are more conscious than most of this dangerous problem and the importance of eradicating it through regional and international cooperation.

*Mr. Erdan (Israel), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

With regard to the issue of Security Council reform, we approach it within the context of the Common African Position. The Sudan's position vis-à-vis the informal intergovernmental negotiations on reform is based on stressing the importance and centrality of Security Council reform and the need for it to be comprehensive, including by encompassing the Council's working methods, in order to address the negative effects of current practices, which are visible in the fact that texts are often drafted unilaterally and individual penholders wield control over countries on the Council's agenda.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all the brother nations that have stood by my country in the most difficult times. We urge the United Nations and the international community, along with our friends and brothers, to continue to show even greater solidarity with our country during this stage of its development.

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

Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan for the statement he has just made.

*First Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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

##### **General debate**

##### **Address by Mr. Yair Lapid, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel**

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yair Lapid, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel.

*Mr. Yair Lapid, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Yair Lapid, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Lapid (Israel):** In November 1947, the General Assembly gathered and decided on the creation of a Jewish State. Only a few hundred thousand Jews lived in Israel at the time, in hostile surroundings, shocked and devastated after the Holocaust, in which 6 million of our people were murdered. Seventy-five years later, Israel is a strong, liberal democracy, proud and prosperous. It is the start-up nation that invented Waze and Iron Dome, medicines for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and a robot that can perform spinal surgery, as well as a world leader in water and food technology, cyberdefence and renewable energy, with 13 Nobel prize winners in literature, chemistry, economics and peace.

How did this happen? It happened because we decided not to be a victim. We chose not to dwell on the pain of the past but, rather, to focus on the hope of the future. We chose to invest our energies in building a nation and a happy society that is optimistic and creative. We did not only reach the promised land, but we are building the promised land. History is determined by people. We need to understand, respect and learn from history, but we also need to be willing and able to

change it, to choose the future over the past, peace over war, partnership over seclusion and isolation.

A few months ago, we convened the historic Negev summit. We sat at dinner, not far from the grave of David Ben-Gurion, the founding father of the State of Israel. There were six of us — the Secretary of State of the United States and the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Israel — at a dinner that only two years ago, no one would have believed was possible. Then the door opened, and someone came in and said, “I’m sorry to disturb you, but there was a terror attack not far from Tel Aviv. Two Israelis were murdered.” In an instant, we all understood that the goal of the attack was to destroy the summit, create anger among us, cause us to argue and divide this new partnership among us.

I said to the foreign ministers, “We have to condemn this terror attack, right now, together. We have to show the world that terror will not triumph.” The room fell silent. Then one of the Arab foreign ministers said, “We are always against terror, that is why we are here.” Five minutes later, we put out a joint statement from the six of us, condemning the attack and sanctifying life, cooperation and our belief that there is a different way. The summit continued, agreements were signed and working groups were formed to deal with issues of technology, food security, energy, water, education and infrastructure. Those working groups are changing the face of the Middle East as we speak.

The people of the Middle East — of the entire world — should look around and ask themselves: who is doing better? Those who chose the path of peace or those who chose the way of war? Those who chose to invest in their people and country or those who chose to invest in the destruction of others? Those who believe in education, tolerance and technology or those who believe in bigotry and violence?

Whenever I meet someone who is critical of Israel, I always have the same answer: come and visit us, come and meet the real Israel. You will fall in love with a country that combines breath-taking innovation with a deep sense of history. It has great people, great food, great spirit. It is a vibrant democracy and a country in which Jews, Muslims and Christians live together with full civic equality. In the Government that I lead, there are Arab ministers. There is an Arab party that is a member of our coalition. We have Arab judges on our Supreme Court and Arab doctors saving lives in our hospitals. Israeli Arabs are not our enemies, they

are our partners in life. Come and visit us. You will discover that Israel is an incredible cultural mosaic, from the white snowy mountains of the Golan to the white desert sand of the Negev, from Tel Aviv, the high-tech capital and non-stop party on the Mediterranean Sea, to Jerusalem, our eternal capital, the holy city for three religions, in whose beautiful streets the past meets the future every single day.

There are, however, two major threats hanging over the head of our wonderful country. Those threats also hang over the heads of the members of this Assembly, even though they may try to deny it. The first is the nuclear threat — the fear that terrorist States and terrorist organizations will get their hands on nuclear weapons. The second threat is the demise of truth. Our democracies are slowly being poisoned by lies and fake news. Reckless politicians, totalitarian States and radical organizations are undermining our perception of reality.

We should know. There is no country in the world that faces this phenomenon more than Israel. There is no country that has come under greater attack from lies, with such a vast amount of money and effort being invested in spreading disinformation about it. Last May, the picture of Malak al-Tanani, a 3-year-old Palestinian girl, was published all over the world, with the terrible news that she was killed with her parents in an attack by the Israeli Air Force. It was a heart-breaking image, but Malak al-Tanani does not exist. The photo was taken from Instagram and is of a girl from Russia. I can give thousands more examples of similar fake news about Israel. The anti-Israel movement has been spreading these lies for years in the media, on college campuses and on social media. The question is not why they do it, but why the members of this Assembly are willing to listen. Why are they listening to people who have invested billions of dollars in distorting the truth? Why do they side with Islamic extremists who hang gay people from cranes, oppress women and fire rockets at civilians from kindergartens and hospitals?

I am not a guest in this building. Israel is a proud sovereign nation and an equal member of the United Nations. We will not be silent when those who wish to harm us use this very stage to spread lies about us. Antisemitism is the willingness to believe the worst about the Jews, without question. Antisemitism is to judge Israel by a different standard than any other country.

Conducting this orchestra of hate is Iran. For more than 40 years now, in the town squares and on the streets of Iran, demonstrators have been photographed burning Israeli and American flags. The members of this Assembly should ask themselves: where are the flags are coming from? How did they get so many of our flags? The answer is that they are manufacturing them specially, just so they can burn them. This is what an industry of hate looks like. This is a regime that systematically deals in hatred. It even hates its own people. Young Iranians are suffering and struggling under the shackles of Iran's regime, and the world is silent. They cry for help on social media and pay for their desire to live a life of freedom with their lives. Iran's regime hates Jews, women, gay people and the West. They hate and kill Muslims who think differently, like Salman Rushdie and Mahsa Amini. Their hate is a way of life. It is a way to preserve their oppressive rule. There is only one Member State of the United Nations that openly states its wish to destroy another Member State. Iran has declared time and time again that it is interested in the total destruction of the State of Israel. And this building is silent. What are Member States afraid of? Has there ever been a time in human history when silence stopped violence?

The country that wants to destroy us is also the country that founded the largest terrorist organization in the world, Hizbullah. Iran funds Hamas and Islamic Jihad and is behind mass terrorist attacks, from Bulgaria to Buenos Aires. It is a murderous dictatorship that is making every effort to obtain a nuclear weapon. If the Iranian regime obtains a nuclear weapon, they will use it.

The only way to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon is to put a credible military threat on the table and then, and only then, to negotiate a longer, stronger deal with them. It needs to be made clear to Iran that if it advances its nuclear programme, the world will not respond with words but with military force. Every time a threat like that has been put on the table in the past, Iran stopped and retreated.

Today the world is choosing the easy option. It chooses not to believe the worst despite all the evidence to the contrary. Israel does not have that privilege. This time, we are not standing empty-handed against those who want to destroy us. The Jews today have a State; we have an army and great friendships, first and foremost with the United States. We have capabilities and are not afraid to use them. We will do whatever it

takes. Iran will not get a nuclear weapon. We will not stand by while there are those who try to kill us. Not again. Never again.

Israel's economic and military strength enables us to protect ourselves, but it also enables us to strive for peace with the entire Arab world and with our closest neighbours, the Palestinians. An agreement with the Palestinians, based on two States for two peoples, is the right thing for Israel's security and economy and for the future of our children. Peace is not a compromise. It is the most courageous decision we can make. Peace is not weakness. It embodies within it the entire might of human spirit. War is surrender to all that is bad within us. Peace is the victory of all that is good.

Despite all the obstacles, a large majority of Israelis still support the vision of the two-State solution. I am one of them. We have only one condition: that a future Palestinian State will be a peaceful one, that it will not become another terror base from which to threaten the well-being and very existence of Israel, that we will have the ability to protect the security of all the citizens of Israel at all times. If anyone believes that this demand is too much, they should look at the neighbourhood in which we live. They should look at Lebanon, a collapsing State controlled by Hizbullah; at Syria, where a murderous regime massacred half a million of its own people; at Afghanistan, Libya and Iran. We can be asked to live according to the values of the United Nations Charter, but we cannot be asked to die for them. My father was a child in the ghetto, and my grandfather was murdered in a concentration camp. We want to live in peace, but only if it gives us security, not if it threatens us even more.

Look at Gaza. Israel did everything the world asked of us, including from this very stage. We left. Seventeen years ago, we dismantled the settlements and took apart our military bases. There is not a single Israeli soldier in Gaza. We even left them 3,000 greenhouses so they could start to build an economy for themselves. What did they do in response? In less than a year, Hamas, a murderous terror organization, came to power. They destroyed the greenhouses and replaced them with terrorist training camps and rocket launch sites. Since we left Gaza, over 20,000 rockets and missiles have been fired at Israel — all of them at civilians, all of them at our children.

I have a child with special needs. Her name is Yaeli; she is autistic and does not speak. In May last year, I had to wake her at three o'clock in the morning

and run down with her to the bomb shelter because missiles were exploding above our home. All those who preach about the importance of peace are welcome to try running to a bomb shelter at 3 a.m. with a girl who does not speak, try explaining to her, without words, why there are those who want to kill her.

We have been asked more than once in this building why we do not lift the restrictions on Gaza. We are ready to do that tomorrow morning. We are ready to do more than that. I say from here to the people of Gaza that we are ready to help them build a better life and an economy. We have presented a comprehensive plan to help rebuild Gaza. We only have one condition, that they stop firing rockets and missiles at our children. If they put down their weapons, there will be no restrictions. If they put down their weapons and let us bring home our children who are being held in captivity — Hadar and Oron, may their memory be a blessing; Avera and Hisham, who are still alive — we will build their economy together. We can build their future together, both in Gaza and in the West Bank. If they put down their weapons and prove that Hamas and Islamic Jihad are not going to take over the Palestinian State that they want to create. If they put down their weapons, there will be peace.

That is the minimum I owe my grandfather, my father and my daughter. The Jewish people have learned the lessons of the past. Our security is guaranteed by our military might, economic ingenuity and democratic resilience. Israel seeks peace with all our neighbours. We are not going anywhere. The Middle East is our home, and we are here to stay forever. We call upon every Muslim country, from Saudi Arabia to Indonesia, to recognize that and to come talk to us. Our hand is outstretched for peace.

Conflicts do not disappear on their own. Hostility does not disappear on its own. People create conflicts; people can also replace them with friendship, kindness and common good.

The burden of proof is not on us. We have already proved our desire for peace. Our peace treaty with Egypt has been fully implemented for 43 years now, and our peace treaty with Jordan for 28 years. We are a country that keeps its word and fulfils its agreements. We have proved our desire for peace through the Abraham Accords, the Negev summit and the agreements we have signed with the Arab world.

In the Book of Numbers, there is a verse that every Jew is familiar with: “May the Lord raise His countenance towards you and grant you peace” (*Numbers 6:26*). The State of Israel is the only country in the world founded by a book — the Book of Books, the Tanach. That book and the principles of liberal democracy require us to stretch out our hand in peace. Our history requires us to be clear-eyed and very careful. That is how we have made peace in the past; that is how we will make peace in the future.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel for the statement just made.

*Mr. Yair Lapid, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. James Marape, Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea.

*Mr. James Marape, Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. James Marape, Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Marape (Papua New Guinea):** It is my honour and privilege to once again join and address the General Assembly. On behalf of my Government and my people, I congratulate the President of the Assembly, as well as the Government and the people of Hungary, on his election and wish him the very best.

The presidency’s theme of an integrated agenda for peace, prosperity and sustainability through multilateralism is very much needed today. We must build on the good foundations that preceding Presidents and all of us have laid going forward, given the turmoil, uncertainty, mistrust, pain and suffering resulting from multiple crises, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the worsening climate crisis,



the escalating socioeconomic challenges and the conflicts tearing us apart.

Let us transform words into actions. That must be underpinned by our collective commitments; supportive resources that are affordable, accessible and timely; and enhanced opportunities that will assist us all in providing for our peoples' basic needs, while restoring their trust and confidence in all our Governments and healing our lands and ecosystems to deliver the future we want, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and many of our own development aspirations.

Let me pay tribute to the previous President, a fellow representative of a small island developing State, Mr. Abdulla Shahid of Maldives, for his outstanding presidency of hope, which renewed our collective resolve to turn the tide against the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic and other evolving challenges. We wish him all the very best.

May I also convey my delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for his continued strong leadership and untiring efforts in rallying the world to save ourselves and provide a much better, safer and more secure future for all, including, most important, for succeeding generations.

The candid yet sobering report of the Secretary-General (A/77/1) on the work of the Organization that he presented today (see A/77/PV.4) is deeply troubling. The clarion call of the Secretary-General must not go unheeded. We must all do our part and act decisively now for our collective good; otherwise, the alternative is to condemn ourselves to a future of doom and gloom. Is that what our children deserve?

It is with that in mind that Papua New Guinea supports the Secretary-General's narrative in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). We welcome the preliminary progress made towards better understanding the range of defining issues and how we address that effectively to help deliver on the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to improve our peoples' lives and livelihoods while also better protecting our common environment.

In that connection, we applaud the Secretary-General for convening the Transforming Education Summit. We are pleased to note the shared recognition of education as a cornerstone of a prosperous, stable and secure future for all. I know that an educated

society is an informed society that stands to make better decisions.

Education is a key priority for my country and is guided by our education policy to leave no child behind, supported by our Education Sector Development Plan 2023-2027. It is a holistic and inclusive approach to ensuring a focus on a quality life-long education for all, with special attention given to the most vulnerable and marginalized population, while recognizing the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in the pursuit of education.

One demonstration of that strong commitment to education is my Government's decision to provide free education for all, up to grade 12 and continuing into tertiary-level education, as well as to provide opportunities for children, young people and adults, through flexible, open and distance education and community colleges, to scale up their capacity to be entrepreneurs and nation-builders.

We also welcome the consensus reached on the Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, which aims to find solutions to the multiple crises we face on Earth. However, that should not be defined by the lowest common denominator but, in my view, must be more ambitious, yet realistic and workable. We remain committed to engage in that process because it provides an opportunity for us to also draw parallels with our national efforts to attain Papua New Guinea's Vision 2050.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the COVID-19 pandemic and the other stresses we face as a nation, including supply chain difficulties and development financing challenges, have spurred my Government to embark on our own national process similar to the Secretary-General's global efforts under *Our Common Agenda*.

We have taken stock of our own domestic development challenges and have put in place key policies and legislative measures, including reforms of important sectors and development priorities, tying them to our budget cycle under the medium-term development plan. That path, if we follow it, will make Papua New Guinea a middle-income country by 2050, in line with the aspirations of our nation's Vision 2050.

I report to the United Nations that the core focus of my Government for the next five years — since we received a mandate in the recently concluded democratic election process — will be to build a resilient and

diversified economy; invest in high-quality economic and social infrastructure; ensure fair and equitable natural resource development; address business and investment confidence; strengthen the rule of law and domestic security; deliver quality education and health to all our people; and, last but not least, to strengthen the institutions of State, including governance, on key issues such as corruption and everything that is fundamental to developing nations. Those are the fundamental building blocks of my country, which should contribute towards the achievement of peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

As Papua New Guinea approaches the fiftieth anniversary of its independence in three years, my Government has also prioritized the industrialization of our economy through import substitution, value-adding and downstream processing of our vast natural resources through the use of modern green technology that will not compromise my country's rich biodiversity and our pristine natural environment.

Papua New Guinea is documented to have about 5 to 6 per cent of world's biodiversity and our huge tropical rainforest is third in size only to that of the Congo and the Amazon. We therefore welcome genuine and appropriate foreign investors to partner with us on various sectors of our renewable resource development, and I assure them of fair, equitable and secure returns on their investments.

While we note the global community's calls for domestic revenue sources to be expanded and better harnessed for development financing, we also recognize that the existing global economic and financial architecture is weighted against developing countries such as Papua New Guinea. That structure needs to be changed to better support all developing nations in their development needs. Let us not forget that small developing countries often bear the brunt of global economic and social woes that they have no hand in engendering.

In that spirit, I join the calls of fellow small island developing States for their development financing needs to be measured based on the environmental, economic and social dimensions of their vulnerability rather than based on their gross national income measure alone, which is no longer a suitable approach. Accordingly, we urge the international community to support the proposed multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States as a tool to support such States through concessional financing and debt relief,

given their special circumstances amid the increasing challenges that they continue to face in meeting their development needs, including food security, as alluded to by the Secretary-General.

Today many parts of the world face food insecurity, hunger and poverty, which Papua New Guinea can contribute to alleviating. In response to the Secretary-General's concerns about global food security, I would like to recall that Papua New Guinea's 8 million people live on a land mass of 464,840 square kilometres, and that our country has rain and water in abundance, while our seas are equally a food source. For instance, we supply tuna to Asia and Europe. Compared to, for instance, the United Kingdom of Great Britain's 243,610 square kilometres, Japan's 377, 975 square kilometres or our neighbour the Philippines' 300,000 square kilometres, Papua New Guinea has enough land, sea and people to be a food supplier to the world.

For the first time in our country, my Government has exerted efforts to address that imminent problem by placing more emphasis on the agricultural sector, which is viewed not only as a revenue source for our economy but also as a conduit to empower the majority of our rural communities, through the introduction of innovative farming methods in cash-crop production, livestock and poultry, in order to allow those communities to take ownership and leadership of their development needs and livelihoods and at the same time foster poverty alleviation and food security.

It is from that perspective that we have established new ministerial portfolios for oil palm, coffee and livestock to assist us not only in catering better to the needs of the majority of our rural communities and integrating their local economies into the national and global markets but also in improving lives and livelihoods so that they can be a source of food security and hunger and poverty alleviation for both our country and other countries. We therefore welcome new international development partners that wish to work with us in the agricultural sector, particularly on the downstream processing of products, which adds value and supports local communities and our country.

As the world prepares for the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and despite the rallying efforts of the global community, including through pledges to cut emission levels under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the world remains on fire.

That is further compounded by destructive floods and rising sea levels — allow me to convey Papua New Guinea's sympathies to the victims of the recent flood in Pakistan — which affect our coastal communities, including through displacement and loss of identity as a people, both in my own country and across the Pacific region and beyond, as carbon emission levels continue their destructive spiral out of control. We cannot and must not allow that to continue.

I reiterate the call I made last year in this Hall (see A/76/PV.13). My country, with one of the largest standing pristine tropical rainforests in the world, is one of the few carbon-positive countries in the world. We remove more carbon than we emit. Over the past five years or so, we have reduced national forest emissions by 53 per cent, for a total of more than 75 million tons of United Nations-verified Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) credits, which will be on the market by the end of this year. My Government has updated the Climate Management Act and this year put in place a nationally determined contribution regulation.

We now have the legislation in place needed to implement the Paris Agreement. We have also endorsed our nationally determined contributions implementation plan and road maps on electricity, agriculture, forestry and other land use. We are also drafting our first electric vehicle policy and working towards endorsing our national adaptation plan.

However, it is disheartening for small countries like Papua New Guinea that do not have a big carbon footprint to note that, despite our proactive national efforts to implement our commitments under the Paris Agreement, we seem to always get the raw end of the deal. We have done our part, yet we have had little support from the global North, including for our submissions to the Green Climate Fund. But we have not lost all hope, even though REDD+ and forest nations were almost forgotten in the conversations held recently in Glasgow.

We will no longer be placated by toothless pledges. We need the power of sovereign carbon markets that fully comply with the Paris Agreement. The world cannot talk about climate change without talking about forest conservation and proper land-use management. Papua New Guinea calls for an urgent global focus to be placed on the conservation, preservation and sustainability of our global forests, including proper land-use practices, because it is only in our dear trees

in the forests that one finds the dual benefit of carbon cleansing and oxygen production.

I had the privilege of meeting His Majesty King Charles III, and the views on forests that he shared with me are the same as those I have mentioned here today, including the view that the world, especially countries whose carbon footprints on Mother Earth are the greatest, must help preserve the Earth's forests in a manner commensurate with each country's emission levels.

That is incumbent upon all nations. We must preserve our forests. It is Papua New Guinea's humble view that the atmospheric balance of oxygen and carbon should be prioritized as the number one focus of all humankind because therein lies the sustenance of life and the dear trees in our forests play a balancing role as created by the Creator God. The world must save its forests; not to do so will be suicide for the Earth's future. We are leaving a gloomy future for our children.

That is something we must correct at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties, to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh. Let us not forget that there is more carbon stored in the world's forests than in all known coal, oil and gas reserves. In short, if we lose our rainforests, climate stability is impossible; we may as well kiss goodbye the temperature goal of 1.5C warming. We and other rainforest nations are trying our best to balance the harvesting of our forests for our development needs with conserving them for the world. We need help with that. The Assembly must hear us. Our planet is fragile and time is short, but together we can do this, and not to do so would be to the detriment of planet Earth.

Finally, given the increasing adverse impact of climate change on our communities, I would like to reiterate Papua New Guinea's strong support for the initiative of our Melanesian neighbour, Vanuatu, to seek an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on that existential threat. We invite others to join Pacific, Caribbean and other partners in taking that initiative forward at the General Assembly for our common good.

With regard to the ocean agenda, I reaffirm that Papua New Guinea, as a maritime nation, is strongly committed to ensuring that our maritime zones remain safe, secure and peaceful in the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Our maritime zone not only provides us with economic opportunities,

including through our fisheries resources, but also symbolizes our ties with the ocean over many centuries.

Along with other small island developing States and least developed countries, Papua New Guinea calls on developed nations to assist us in accessing appropriate capacity-building resources, research, science, technology and financing to strengthen our national efforts to better protect our oceans and harness the ocean-based economy. Accordingly, we welcome public-private partnerships.

With regard to SDG 14, it was pleasing to note the success of the second Ocean Conference. We are encouraged by the welcome offer of France and Costa Rica to co-host the next Conference and look forward to working with like-minded countries to take forward that initiative. Such partnerships on the ocean agenda are most welcome.

I would also like to applaud the sterling efforts made under the leadership and presidency of Singapore in last month's negotiations on a new implementing instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, to which as a marine nation we offer our full support.

A resounding call that we continue to hear loudly, clearly and repeatedly — and rightly so — is the importance of empowering young people to be at the table as real partners in national development when decisions are being made about their lives and livelihoods. That is indeed long overdue and must be brought to fruition without further delay. In recognition of the ever-increasing youth bulge in my country and the challenges that young people continue to face, youth issues are now front and centre of my Government's development priorities for nation-building.

We are rolling out cadetship programmes as a tool for capacity-building and training that will equip young people to be owners, drivers, leaders and entrepreneurs in building our nation. We are also using our education system as a lever to foster integral human development for all our young people. We welcome development partners to join us in that transformative endeavour.

It was in that spirit that Papua New Guinea was pleased to be a main sponsor and strong supporter of the establishment of the Youth Office in the United Nations Secretariat. It was also pleasing to note the consensus on that issue. While we recognize that much more work remains to be done, we look forward to harnessing the

United Nations Youth Office, once it is operationalized, to support our national efforts on the youth agenda. The potential of our young people was well recognized by Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth Employment during their ground-breaking visit to my country in March 2020, which was a testament to that partnership.

Gender equality and empowerment, including combating gender-based violence, remains a top priority for my Government. We have established a bipartisan parliamentary committee that has carried out extensive public consultations, and the recommendations made to the previous Parliament will be taken up by the current Parliament in a serious way in order to better address the protection of our women and girls and give them fair and just opportunities to reach their full potential.

We have also put in place legislation and policies to address concerns related to gender equality and empowerment and combat gender-based violence. In addition, we are pleased that two well-qualified women were newly elected to the eleventh Parliament — an improvement on the last Parliament, in which there were no women parliamentarians. I have recognized their capabilities and professionalism and have tasked them with specific responsibilities for the country. We will continue to work hard to include more women representatives in decision-making bodies as equal development partners.

I would like to join the call for global peace and stability. The simmering tensions and mistrust that are the nemesis of peace cannot and must not be allowed to fester any longer. We, as members of this Organization, took it upon ourselves to uphold the Charter of the United Nations. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to ensure that we are seen to uphold our commitments to the Charter. In the context of the ongoing Bougainville peace process, I want to assure this forum that that important issue remains a top priority in Papua New Guinea. Peace by peaceful means underpins that national priority, and I would like to note that we are on the road to establishing a political solution for Bougainville.

We have a road map that continues to serve as a blueprint, and we will consider all issues under the existing parameters of our Constitution for a lasting, peaceful political solution that is acceptable to all Papua New Guineans as far as Bougainville is concerned. We would like to thank United Nations for its role in Papua



New Guinea and the Melanesian conflict resolution model, which can be replicated in other countries facing political conflict.

With regard to Security Council reform, making that organ relevant to today's realities is a task to which we must attend. We note the incremental progress that continues to be made in the intergovernmental process. However, let me reiterate our call to expedite the long-drawn-out process by ensuring that we have a negotiated document that can serve as a basis for moving forward.

May I also take this opportunity to recognize the milestone achievement made earlier this year, whereby the General Assembly held Security Council members responsible for their decisions on peace and security. We welcomed and supported the emergency special session measures taken by the General Assembly with respect to the situation in Ukraine in order to ensure that the Security Council is held accountable for its actions. The success that arose from that process is a small but nonetheless significant step illustrating why reform of the Security Council is necessary and cannot be delayed further.

Last but not least, may I take this opportunity to pay homage to the memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who by the grace of God and Lord Jesus was Papua New Guinea's Head of State for 47 years. Our beloved Queen personified grace, dignity, honesty, humility, tolerance of others, forgiveness and all other Christian virtues and lived a consistent, unfailing life of public service for 70 years — some lessons we leaders of the world must learn to practice.

On behalf of Papua New Guinea, I pay my respects to Mama Kwin, as we affectionately called her. May her soul rest in peace with her maker, Jesus. We convey our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and his royal family, the people and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth family.

Let me conclude by thanking the President for giving me the opportunity to speak again on a very appropriate contemporary theme and our shared global need, and by thanking the United Nations for once again being a wonderful host at this milestone seventy-seventh session of the Assembly. May God bless the United Nations.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Independent

State of Papua New Guinea for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. James Marape, Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia**

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

*Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Garibashvili (Georgia):** On behalf of the Georgian people, it is an honour to speak to members again at the General Assembly.

As we gather for the seventy-seventh session, we reflect on our founding principles and the progress we have made as an international community since the creation of the United Nations. At the first session held in 1946, the founders vowed to unite to maintain global peace and security. While we have made significant advances, we must acknowledge the ongoing acts of aggression against members of this organ — the very same types of action that led to the establishment of the United Nations after the Second World War.

In 2008, my country, Georgia, was attacked by Russia, resulting in the ongoing occupation of 20 per cent of our territory. At the time, the international community recognized that aggression. But as we have learned, the world's democracies must act as one to ensure that freedom and peace prevail. The United Nations was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and protect State sovereignty and territorial integrity. That is our duty. That is our promise.

Today I have the privilege of representing Georgia — a strong, proud, freedom-loving nation that has preserved its sacred heritage and history, while also evolving and adapting to the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. Thirty years ago, Georgia became part of the United Nations family. Now more than ever, we are committed to protecting our shared values, in our region and worldwide.

We seek all opportunities for collaboration with our international partners to advance the cause of peace. In that regard, the Geneva International Discussions are particularly crucial for bringing the Russian Federation to the table to address the implementation of the 2008 ceasefire agreement mediated by the European Union (EU). Georgia appreciates the international community's support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Although my country is still occupied by Russia, we do not let that difficult challenge define us. We continue to punch above our weight and contribute to the international community. Since our Government came to power in 2012, we have implemented an ambitious reform agenda that has brought us closer to our key international partners, the EU, the United States, NATO and the United Nations. For the first time since we regained independence, Georgia and the Georgian people have enjoyed an unprecedented decade of peace, prosperity and stability. We are continuously working on Georgia's global positioning and are already reaping the rewards.

According to the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2021, Georgia is first in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The *Open Budget Survey 2021* ranked Georgia first in the world in terms of budget transparency. And according to the Fraser Institute's *Economic Freedom of the World: 2021 Annual Report*, Georgia is among the top five economies, along with Singapore and Switzerland. NUMBEO named Georgia one of the world's safest countries, ranking it fourteenth globally.

Our work to align more closely with the United States and Europe goes hand and hand with our commitment to continued democratic transformation. Increased Euro-Atlantic and European integration is our way of returning to the family of European nations, with which we share history, culture and — most important — values. We are continuing on our unequivocal path towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Our commitment to those goals is backed up by actions and real results, including an Association Agreement with the EU, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and a visa-free travel arrangement with the EU. This year, we applied for full EU membership. The historic decision of the European Council to recognize the European perspective of Georgia created a new set of benchmarks. Just as in the past, Georgia will meet and exceed those benchmarks.

The prospect of acceding to the EU is strong motivation for our country and our citizens. We are fully aware that the European perspective comes with the responsibility to achieve the highest political, economic and legal convergence with the European Union. Georgia immediately responded to the European Council's decision by presenting a very concrete action plan to address the Union's 12 priorities. That inclusive process ensures the full engagement of all branches of the Government, the opposition parties and civil society. Working groups have been established in Parliament for each priority area with all relevant stakeholders. We are making progress and are well ahead of schedule. Let me be clear: Georgia deserves EU member candidate status, which will bring us to eventual membership and make the dream of generations a reality.

We have developed a long-term development strategy — Vision 2030 — a nationwide policy document that covers the key directives and priorities of our general development by 2030 and fully complies with the 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Georgia also has in place a new national strategy for human rights protection for the years 2022-2030. The Government approved that strategy following discussions with both international partners and domestic civil society organizations. It aims to further improve human rights protection standards and is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a comprehensive document that covers all fundamental human rights and freedoms.

We are working with the world's leading firms and brightest minds to transform Georgia into a true multidimensional regional hub. Our financial services sector is globally recognized, and we now attract international investors, injecting additional funds into the education and health-care sectors. The start-up ecosystem is thriving, and the logistics and energy potential have been realized. Collectively, those developments have created a sustainable and predictable economy for Georgia and its people.

Our Government's sound policies led to a strong recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with economic growth that reached 10.4 per cent in 2021 and far exceeded expectations from January to July 2022, at 10.3 per cent. According to the International Monetary Fund, our growth projections have reached 9 per cent for 2022, primarily due to our Government's proactive measures to minimize

the impacts of post-COVID-19 recovery and the war in Ukraine.

We are creating opportunities and giving all the necessary tools to our citizens, including those living in Georgia's occupied territories. For that reason, here today at the General Assembly I would like to speak directly to my Abkhaz and Ossetian brothers and sisters and once again tell them that our strength is in unity. We will build Georgia together and peacefully turn it into a prosperous, free and unified European State.

War is raging again, not far from my country's doorstep. Russia's full-fledged war in Ukraine undermines that country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles of international law.

Georgia stands with Ukraine. Since the start of the war, my Government has provided substantial humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, including the allocation of more than 1,000 tons of humanitarian aid. Georgia is providing financial assistance and accommodation to more than 32,000 Ukrainians currently residing in Georgia. The Georgian education system has enrolled more than 1,500 Ukrainian students, many of whom receive general education in the Ukrainian language according to the standard Ukrainian curriculums.

We have sponsored, joined or supported almost 400 resolutions, statements, joint statements and other initiatives made or proposed by major international organizations and institutions in support of Ukraine and were among the main sponsors of resolution ES-11/2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine.

As confirmed by the United States Department of State report on the investment climate in Georgia, the National Bank of Georgia and Georgian financial institutions act fully in accordance with the financial sanctions imposed by the United States and others on the Russian Federation. We have aligned with the restrictive measures imposed by the European Union against Crimea and Sevastopol as of 2014 and those imposed against Donetsk and Luhansk as of this year.

As the conflict in Ukraine has shown, the wider security of the Black Sea is at the forefront of the Euro-Atlantic security agenda. Georgia, as an indivisible part of the regional architecture, is ready to increase our contribution to common security. As we know well, security brings stability and stability brings

predictability, which is a crucial precondition for sustainable economic development.

Therefore, the more predictable the Black Sea region becomes, the more we can unlock its economic potential for the benefit of our people and the global economy. For that reason, we are developing strategic transport corridors to connect Asia with Europe. Georgia is participating in several international initiatives and infrastructure projects with our European colleagues in order to improve connectivity and facilitate reliable and efficient commerce across the Black Sea.

Despite the complex situation in our region, we spare no effort to foster rapprochement between our neighbours. We have already had success stories, including the safe return of 15 Armenian detainees to their homeland in exchange for maps of mined territories in Azerbaijan. In July of this year, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met in Tbilisi for the first time.

We are ready to serve as a venue for that dialogue to bring much-needed peace and stability to our region. With that in mind, Georgia has been promoting the Peaceful Neighbourhood Initiative, which envisions participation by all three States of the South Caucasus. That new initiative does not substitute, counter or oppose any other cooperation formats. Georgia wishes to serve as an honest broker to aid in normalizing regional relations.

We are also heavily investing in our country's infrastructure in order to increase Georgian transit capabilities for the benefit of the region. We aim to attract greater institutional foreign investment, facilitate projects of regional importance and strengthen our infrastructural capabilities, thereby becoming an actual bridge between East and West. Our goal is to transform the South Caucasus into a region of opportunity and economic growth.

We are already discussing with our EU counterparts a list of flagship projects that will bring about additional economic synergies and serve as a catalyst for more connectivity and integration with the European Union and European markets. We believe that all countries of the South Caucasus and allies from the West will benefit from that collaboration. We must act now to secure the Black Sea, protect energy routes, maintain supply chains and increase regional connectivity in order to foster greater economic development. Those actions are all essential to European peace and prosperity.

We are mindful that our regional challenges must be addressed against the backdrop of global challenges, such as international security, the ongoing pandemic and climate change. Georgia is contributing to global peace and the rules-based international order. For more than two decades, Georgia has contributed to NATO missions around the world, serving as one of the largest per capita contributors to the mission in Afghanistan. We have lost many brave soldiers and suffered significant casualties, with hundreds wounded in those missions. Georgia reiterates its readiness to stand by NATO in protecting common security while continuing to support EU-led missions.

As I speak here today, dangers that we can no longer ignore are threatening all of humankind. The planetary crises created by climate change, from biodiversity loss to pollution, represent an existential threat. Like many challenges, climate change affects developing nations first, hindering their ability to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Georgia, our Government has made significant investments in education, public health and the environment in order to ensure that future generations can thrive. Education systems are critical for empowering prosperous and productive societies. Education in the twenty-first century means investing in digital literacy and promoting infrastructure in order to bridge the digital divide and ensure that future crises, whether related to public health, war or climate change, do not create dire situations.

In conclusion, I believe that, working together, we shall return peace and prosperity to our homes and countries. That has been the spirit and the mandate vested in the United Nations from its founding — to support and ensure peace and cooperation. I am proud to represent my country before the Assembly today. After three decades of restored independence, Georgian dreams are becoming a reality. Our nation, the history of which goes back thousands of years, has in recent decades become an example of resilience and progress in the face of extraordinary challenges. With our international partners, I am confident that we will build a brighter, more peaceful and prosperous world, now and for the generations to follow.

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

*Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway**

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

*Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Støre (Norway):** We live in challenging times indeed. As a global community, we face the dire consequences of war, climate change, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, food insecurity and inequality. The Secretary-General underlined that eloquently in his address to the General Assembly (see A/77/PV.4). We have the values and principles necessary to deal with those challenges — they are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. There is no country that does not face those challenges, and we can only successfully respond to them together.

That is precisely why we have the United Nations, which was born out of crisis, to unite our strengths and enable nations to rise above their narrow self-interests and find common ground. That is what we need to turn to again. The United Nations Charter sets out clear principles for a rules-based international order, but now that rules-based order is under attack. February 2022 ushered in what we had hoped we would never witness again — a new large-scale war in Europe. Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine has led to massive suffering, large-scale humanitarian needs and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. Russia bears sole responsibility for the war and its consequences — and Russia is responsible for bringing it to an end.

Russia's actions are in blatant breach of the United Nations Charter, and therefore concern us all. The war is also having devastating global consequences, as we have heard so many speakers highlight this week. It has undermined multilateral cooperation when we need it the most. It has accelerated a negative economic spiral and jeopardized the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are all feeling the repercussions of the war. Energy supply is under pressure, inflation is soaring and



food insecurity has increased dramatically. Ordinary people across the globe — not least those in developing countries — are paying the price. The war is amplifying other crises and compounding the impacts of climate change and armed conflict in other parts of the world. The Horn of Africa is faced with its worst drought in more than four decades. Pakistan is contending with devastating floods. More than 300 million people affected by conflicts and humanitarian crises are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

There is a lack of respect for international humanitarian law in many armed conflicts, and civilians are paying the price. A few years ago, it appeared that hunger would soon be a scourge of the past; now food insecurity is on the rise. No continent is more vulnerable to the combined effects of climate change, conflict and growing food insecurity than Africa. Norway stands in solidarity with the people grappling with those interlocking crises. We have allocated more funding to humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in 2022 than ever before.

The war of aggression against Ukraine is a challenge to the norms and the founding principles of the United Nations. We are standing up to confront that challenge. Some have the conviction that authoritarian regimes are strong, while democracies are frail and likely to crack under pressure. We are proving them wrong. Together with a strong alliance of partners, we are standing with Ukraine and aiding its self-defence. As Europe's largest supplier of energy, we do what we can to enhance Europe's resilience.

We are standing up for human rights and fundamental freedoms elsewhere. Norway will continue to promote civic space, protect human rights defenders and support media diversity and independent journalism worldwide. Women's and girls' participation in society and their right to make decisions about their own bodies are essential to democratic and sustainable development, not least in times of conflict and war. Safeguarding those human rights remains one of our top priorities.

While supporting Ukraine, we must not forget conflicts elsewhere. Norway is continuing its peace diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts in major conflicts across the globe. As part of our long-standing engagement in the Middle East, we are pushing for an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including a viable two-State solution.

In Colombia, the new Government has expressed its commitment to implementing the peace agreement with the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común and initiating formal negotiations with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) guerrilla group. The ELN also seems inclined to renew dialogue. As a guarantor country, Norway remains committed to Colombia's quest for peace and to supporting the parties in that endeavour.

In all the peace processes in which Norway is engaged, we promote active involvement and participation by women in line with the women and peace and security agenda. We talk to all parties as we work to achieve peaceful conflict resolution. Without dialogue, we have no opportunity to influence the parties and encourage them to move in a more positive direction.

Norway also strongly supports the good offices of the Secretary-General in conflicts worldwide. We commend him and his dedicated team for their important work on the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and Türkiye for its important contribution. The prices of food, fuel and fertilizer were already high before the war in Ukraine, but the war has dramatically exacerbated the situation. If the global community does not act swiftly, the current food price crisis will develop into a food availability and food supply crisis — and that is too serious to ignore.

Together with fighting climate change, Norway has placed food security at the top of its development agenda. This year we are allocating more than \$300 million in funding to food security initiatives alone. We need to increase humanitarian assistance and enhance social safety nets, promote local food production in the global South, secure access to seeds, fertilizers and technology for small-scale farmers and accelerate the transformation to climate-resilient and sustainable food systems. In doing all of that, we must ensure that the needs of women and girls are adequately integrated.

We are all dependent on a collective response if we are to succeed in addressing climate change and the loss of biodiversity. We are currently not on track, and that needs to change. Norway will honour its commitment to cut greenhouse-gas emissions and play a key role in the green transition. We have listened to the concerns of developing countries and have decided to double our climate financing to those countries by 2026. Within that target, we aim to at least triple our funding for climate adaptation and resilience.

Climate change affects millions of people worldwide and increases the needs of vulnerable people. However, the current humanitarian system will not be able to meet the increasing humanitarian needs. As global warming continues, weather and climate extremes will increasingly have an impact on armed conflict. Climate and security are already closely interlinked. The fight against climate change requires new, innovative approaches, and we must do what we can to ensure the success of the upcoming twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt. Norway will not rest between now and then.

The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet brings together private and public resources with the objective of accelerating development. As co-Chair, Norway will work with partners across the global South to support the initiation of renewable energy transitions, reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, increase clean power and create green jobs.

Given our geography and our history, the oceans can — and will — be a vital part of the solution to climate change, food insecurity and poverty. If adequately managed and protected, the oceans hold the key to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet Sustainable Development Goal 14 is the most underfunded, which is why Norway is pushing for change.

The High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which is co-chaired by Norway, is an initiative by world leaders committed to ocean health and ocean wealth, in support of the 2030 Agenda. Panel members have committed to sustainably manage 100 per cent of the ocean areas under their national jurisdiction. We will establish sustainable ocean plans and urge other coastal States to do the same.

The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly was an important breakthrough for multilateral cooperation on environmental issues. Norway will work to ensure an effective agreement on combating plastic pollution through a life-cycle approach.

We must not overlook existing crises as new ones emerge. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is not over yet; we cannot go from COVID-19 panic to COVID-19 neglect. We must use the lessons learned from the pandemic and the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator. That will be key to preventing, preparing for and responding to new outbreaks of infectious disease.

Russia's unlawful act of aggression against Ukraine has heightened geopolitical tensions and presented obstacles to multilateral cooperation. That is serious. As a Security Council member, Norway has consistently sought to strengthen the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. Despite increased geopolitical tensions, the Security Council has retained its ability to adopt important resolutions. We secured a robust mandate for the United Nations in Afghanistan. Together with the Niger, we negotiated a ground-breaking resolution on the protection of education in armed conflict (Security Council resolution 2601 (2021)), and we partnered with Ghana on a resolution on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea (Security Council resolution 2634 (2022)). All that matters.

In times of crisis and rising global tensions, we all feel the pressure to put domestic concerns before global solidarity. In times of distress, it is only natural for political leaders to try to look after their own populations; it is their responsibility. But let us remind ourselves that there is no contradiction between that and engaging with the rest of the world — quite the contrary, it is in the interests of our citizens. We are bound together, we are dependent on each other and we have a shared destiny.

It is clear to me that, without a strong and effective United Nations, the international community will not be able to address the challenges it faces. That is why we applaud and support the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). If anything, it is even more urgent to implement that report now than when it was launched. The Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, will be an important milestone. We expect, and will work towards, an ambitious declaration on future generations, and we look forward to engaging with the High-level Advisory Board and Member States in the process ahead.

We are living in challenging times, but let us never lose hope. We must face the current challenges with resolve and recall the strength that we can muster when we act together.

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

*Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and**

**the Public Service, and Minister for Finance,  
Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and the Public Service, and Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados.

*Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and the Public Service, and Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and the Public Service, and Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados, and inviting her to address the Assembly.

**Ms. Mottley** (Barbados): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly and to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed for their courageous leadership and commitment in very difficult times.

This year we come together again and the battles continue; indeed, they have grown. What we have seen over the course of the summer and the course of this year with the war in Ukraine are the concomitant consequences for ordinary people all over the globe with respect to inflation, the scarce supply of goods and quite simply hardship. The struggle for access to food continues, regrettably, to be the environment in which we live.

I had hoped that we would have seen improvement, but I am now convinced more than ever that there comes a time when we must heed a certain call, like the one made when others before us, when I was a student, sought to fight the great famine in Africa and came together as one world to make that definable difference. Last year I asked us to do the same (see A/76/PV.12) and it may be, in the words of Jimmy Cliff, that we have to keep trying, trying and trying, but the world must stand up if our citizens are to live a better life.

I say this today because it is easy to come and only complain. However, the truth is that it is within our power to make that difference and that definable

change. We must decide whether we want to stand for peace, love and prosperity, knowing that we choose to do so at the most difficult time and from the most difficult, deep place we have seen in a very long time. I believe it is possible, but it is up to us to turn possibilities into realities.

What do I mean? We have been speaking for a long time about the reform of this institution and the recognition that only one quarter of the States now in existence were present when this institution was formed. Earlier this week, President Biden spoke of the need to reform the Security Council (see A/77/PV.6). We echo that, but we go further because we believe that a Security Council that retains the power of the veto in the hands of a few will still lead us to war, as we have seen this year. Therefore, the reform must not simply address the Council's composition but also remove the veto.

We also believe that if the Group of Seven and the Group of 20, in their capacity as the world's informal governance subcommittee, are to be fair, they must recognize that we can no longer accept that persons have to call year after year for the inclusion of the people of Africa and of African descent. For how can the world have at its core a subcommittee that excludes more than 1.5 billion people of the world and then expect it to reflect fairness and transparency in its decision-making?

We ask that the determination be made by those countries, who must understand that if we are to move from possibilities to realities, we must embrace a transparent framework that allows our peoples, who are losing faith in their institutions and in the governance of the world, to understand that fairness means something — the ability for all to have a voice — and that we cannot only speak to it in the corridors of democracy within the nation State, and indeed it will be meaningful only when it is also reflected in our international community.

If I perhaps have one simple theme today, it is that fairness and togetherness are what is needed to bring about peace, love and prosperity in the world. No, that is not romanticism. Those are hard realities that simply require decisions. That is why I use the language of that great anthem *We Are the World*, because there comes a time when we must heed a certain call, when the world must come together as one.

Yes, regrettably, there are too many people dying in conflict and as a result of the economic crisis, and the hand that we must lend to life comes in the decisions that we must make to reform and to fight for peace and not to fight to sustain war wherever it is found around the world; to fight for reform so that our citizens are not made victims of poverty due to the triple crisis of climate change, the pandemic and now the conflict that is causing the inflationary pressures that have regrettably led to people taking circumstances into their own hands, as we have seen in Haiti in the last week.

Any attempt to increase fuel prices by 150 per cent in any part of the world would be met with great consternation and anger by populations on fixed incomes. But when that happens in one of the poorest countries in the world that has been trying for almost 230 years to find stability, against the backdrop of the exploitation that it has faced, we ask ourselves what it will take for the world to stand up and be counted for the people of Haiti.

Similarly, we ask for the same transparency with regard to the removal of the blockade against the people of Cuba. This is the thirtieth year in which a resolution has called for the removal of that blockade, but the blockade has been there for 60 years. I simply say to the people of the United States of America not to be short-sighted in their goals, for in this hemisphere peace and prosperity is the province of all. Yes, there may be problems on both sides, but there is nothing that justifies further hardship for people because of ideological differences. If there are human rights differences, let us resolve them, as we have chosen to do with mighty countries across the world without the imposition of sanctions. Fairness and transparency demand it of us.

I also want to talk about other solutions that we believe can alter our condition without imposing the burden of taxation that is unreasonably sown on the populations of the world. As I said last year, we live in a world in which the disparity in income is too great, in which some are even disproportionately and egregiously benefiting from crises. We must ask ourselves, therefore, whether the time has not come for a review of the settlement of the Bretton Woods institutions, which no longer serve in the twenty-first century the purpose that they served in the twentieth century, when they were catering to one quarter of the nation States that are now members of this institution. We ask ourselves whether the time has not come for our

voices to collectively demand such a review through the boards of directors of the respective institutions.

Why do I say that? The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is really what the World Bank is. Maybe if we referred to that continuously, we would remind ourselves that the purpose of reconstruction and development must be appropriate to the century in which we live, a century that not only demands of us the eradication of poverty, which remains a noble goal, but equally demands of us the protection of global public goods.

All of us here have suffered as a result of the weakest among us being unable to rise to the occasion to protect public health. All of us now know what it is to be on the front line of the climate crisis. Years ago, we spoke about small island developing States being on the front line because we were the canaries in the coal mine. Today we speak about all countries and about this hot summer — from wildfires in California to heat waves in North America and Europe, waterways in Europe being unpassable by vessels, floods in China and, above all, the apocalyptic floods in Pakistan, for which our hearts go out to the people of that country.

It simply cannot continue. Any attempt to deny that the climate crisis has humanmade origins is an attempt to delude ourselves and an admission that we want to be accomplices in the continued death, loss and damage that ensue for the people who are victims of the crisis. Our people demand better of us.

We believe that today the most appropriate place to deal with global public goods is in fact the World Bank Group. I will speak more to this tomorrow, but I want to say simply that, if multinational companies have contributed to the global public risk — or if they benefit from the solutions for global public goods — then they ought to contribute to its resolution through a small percentage of their profits.

That funding would be used to address the needs of countries, whether in relation to climate stability, resilience and adaptation; the protection of biodiversity, both on land and in our waters; the protection of public health against the next pandemic, either a slow-motion pandemic of antimicrobial resistance or another that we have not even contemplated; the provision of education for all of our citizens, because to remain on Earth without the benefit of education is to be sentenced to life imprisonment from a young age; access to electricity, given that 600 million people in Africa are without it;



or access to broadband, the equivalent in our age to the right to knowledge and prosperity.

Of course, as I said to the United States Congress last week, we must also address countries' needs in relation to, believe it or not, the right to a bank account, because countries across the world are being denied the right to access correspondent banking, leaving their citizens and economies to function as financial pariahs in a world that is supposed to be globally interdependent in terms of the movement of capital. The provision of that funding to promote public goods at a global level is critical if we are to make a difference going forward and achieve the peace, love and prosperity to which I referred earlier.

I want to commend the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its rapid financing mechanism at the beginning of the pandemic crisis and for the Resilience and Sustainability Trust that is soon to be launched. It is the first recognition that middle-income countries should be able to access funding irrespective of per capita income, depending on their climate vulnerability.

To those who recommend this to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, we say that they should not simply recommend it for countries following a disaster but also for countries before a disaster. Every dollar that is spent on research, as they have done, saves \$7 in expenditure avoided, not to mention the lives saved. We do not want only to pay the undertaker, we want to save lives.

I asked the IMF to reflect on the fact that the Resilience and Sustainability Trust may need to be delinked from quotas if it is to be effective. I am conscious that will depend on more countries seeding the Trust with capital and more countries agreeing perhaps to allow their special drawing rights to be used for that purpose, just as we asked them to allow those special drawing rights to be used to enable multilateral development banks to significantly increase the money that is available to countries, particularly at this time when we are on the verge of a debt crisis, with more than 45 countries facing the heat of the moment due to the increased cost of capital resulting from the monetary policies being put in place to fight the virulent cancer of inflation.

We want to thank those countries that have come together to help us continue financing the Sustainable Development Goals, which we link to the global public goods. Why? Because they are fundamentally the right

to development and the right to give each person the ability to live a good life. We cannot get lost in the conflict, the climate crisis and the pandemic and forget what our mission is.

I commend those that continue to remember that and ask that we reach a global compact. Financing for development cannot be short-term; it needs to be at least 30-year financing. The world recognized that when it allowed Britain to participate in the refinancing of its World War bonds, which were only paid off eight years ago, 100 years after the First World War started. Or when it allowed Germany to cap its debt service at the equivalent of 5 per cent of its exports, conscious that the cataclysmic experience of war would not have allowed it to finance reconstruction while repaying debts incurred for war.

We are no different today. We have incurred debt for the coronavirus disease and the climate, and now in order to fight this difficult moment of inflationary crisis and uncertain supply of goods. Why, therefore, must the developing world now seek to find money within seven to 10 years when others had the benefit of longer time frames to repay?

Finally, I want to deal with the issue very quickly and to impress on the Assembly that all of those things have been the subject not just of idle thought or arbitrary comment on our part. We had the good fortune in Barbados of collecting a large number of persons from civil society and academia at the end of July and the beginning of August, and we settled on what we have come to call the Bridgetown Agenda, which we believe to be an agenda for peace and prosperity inspired by the love of humankind.

It is that agenda that speaks to the reform of the Bretton Woods architecture. We have asked, and will ask, countries and people to join it because we believe that, unless we take responsibility for ourselves and accept that we are the world, we will not see a change. As I come to the issue of climate change, which will dominate over the next 45 to 48 days as we head to Egypt, let us remember that the trust that is needed to propel us to fight the great causes of our time will not be won by breaching promises.

The developing world, in particular the small island developing States, went to Paris and agreed to a global compact thanks to one of its key aspects, the promise concerning loss and damage. Today the people of Guadeloupe and Puerto Rico, and yesterday those of

the Turks and Caicos Islands — and little do we know what will happen in Bermuda — face the difficulty of disruption by Hurricane Fiona. This morning I received news of difficulties concerning our own natural gas supply in my country, and I suspect that others will experience difficulties in this part of the world due to the facilities and installations being affected in Puerto Rico. This comes at a time when access to that commodity has already been affected by the war in Ukraine and the decision by Russia to cease the supply to Europe.

When we match this with the reality that we have not planned in granular form our capacity to meet the commitments we have made for net zero — I am a big defender of net zero, as the Assembly knows — then I see trouble ahead. We must pause and get it right. Our small States are making commitments that the world wants to hear. However, when those commitments are undermined by the inability to supply the electric cars or batteries necessary to sustain renewable energy, then we know we have a problem.

That is why natural gas has been viewed as a bridge to clean energy. But when the very access to natural gas is also affected, one understands better why emerging market countries in the Caribbean, including my own, and in Africa have determined that they cannot abandon access to their own natural gas resources until they are assured of having the capacity to sustain their populations. That is where the rubber meets the road. I ask us to recognize that those commitments on loss and damage and that granular detail matching commitment to capacity are absolutely critical if we are to make serious progress in saving our world. We know that our world needs to be saved.

I want to salute Denmark for its commitment on Tuesday to offer \$13 million towards a loss and damage fund, because it represents the first acknowledgement by a North Atlantic country that there is a justified need and justice in the demand for that loss and damage claim. I ask us to recommit ourselves to the big matters

and to recognize that, if we do not speak truth to our population or explain and have the mature conversations rather than relying on headlines and sound bites, we will find a disconnect between those who are governed and those who govern. Therefore, let us move to the task with dispatch — not to make sound bites but to have difficult conversations to secure the peace of the world and the prosperity of our people and to underpin those with a love for humankind, the original purpose that this Organization was formed to achieve.

In the words of that same song: let us lend a hand to life, for it is the greatest gift of all. We cannot pretend day by day that someone somewhere else is going to make that change. This is our family, this is our world and this is our time to make that defining difference. Many of the things that are put before us today do not require money, but they require a commitment and political will. With the power of the pen, we can impose natural disaster and pandemic clauses in our debt arrangements, and we can change the capital that is available to multilateral development banks so as to remove current barriers to us fighting poverty.

With those commitments, we can make a difference in today's world. Let us do so, recognizing that a world that reflects an imperialistic order, hypocrisy and a lack of transparency will not achieve that mission, but one that gives us freedom, transparency and a level playing field will make that definable difference.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and the Public Service, and Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and the Public Service, and Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados, was escorted from the rostrum.*

*The meeting rose at 2.30 p.m.*