



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

10th plenary meeting
Thursday, 23 September 2021, 9 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

Address by Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa

The President: I would like to remind members of the following mitigation measures that are in place for this meeting. All representatives are required to wear a face covering at all times while in public spaces and in the General Assembly Hall except when directly addressing the meeting. The size of a delegation should not exceed four people in the General Assembly Hall.

I now give the floor to the Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Mrs. Pandor (South Africa): It is my honour and privilege to introduce the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, to present South Africa's national address in a pre-recorded statement to the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex I and see A/76/332/Add.5).

Address by Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, 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. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Ali: I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, which is a special honour for the Maldives and for all small island developing and low-lying coastal States. I would also like to record Guyana's appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, who was tasked with navigating the Assembly during one of the most challenging years in modern history.

Our world is a troubled place. The peoples of our planet are living under a cloud of uncertainty. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has stomped across the globe, taking lives, wrecking livelihoods and paralysing economies. And looming large behind it is climate change, growing every day in its capacity to inflict even greater destruction and ruination than the coronavirus. Our citizens look to us, the representatives

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



of the nations gathering here, to create conditions that will ease fear, erase doubt and give hope. Yet what they see are not nations united but nations divided. Secretary-General António Guterres described our situation well when he said,

“The pandemic has demonstrated our collective failure to come together and make joint decisions for the common good, even in the face of an immediate, life-threatening global emergency”.

The pandemic has exposed the shortcomings of our international system. It has revealed that the system continues to be undergirded by nationalism, which remains the prevailing force. After all these 76 years since the founding of the United Nations, it is not the collective well-being of our one planet and our one humankind that motivates us but selfish national interests. And in pursuit of that selfish nationalism, we overlook the truth of our shared cohabitation on one planet, one Earth, and ignore the reality that what affects one affects all.

If nothing in all the generations of civilization has taught us that nation-States are not islands unto themselves but are each part of the main, then the experience of the past two years should be a salutary lesson. The world will not progress without greed and war and with freedom unless we, the leaders of nations big and small, recall with commitment the values set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and resolve to be faithful to them.

The pandemic has wrecked the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the members of this Organization adopted in 2015. Development gains have been reversed, poverty has expanded and inequality has widened. Increasing fiscal deficits, mounting debt, reduced fiscal space and external financial flows have imperilled the capacity of developing countries to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. Within those countries, the pandemic has upended growth, worsened unemployment and weakened health and education systems. Education regression is now inevitable, considering the long period in which our children have been forced out of the formal classroom and the challenges that many developing countries face in delivering education virtually.

Given those problems, economic recovery is essential to returning countries to the path of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. But that recovery will be painfully prolonged and slow without

international support in the form of debt rescheduling, debt-service moratoriums and the provision of soft resources to reboot economies. My Government restates its call for increased resources to be made available to States on the basis of their vulnerabilities and not solely on the misleading measure of per capita income. If those essential measures are not implemented, growth in developing countries will not be restored, and neither will economic and social policies be realigned along the path set out in the 2030 Agenda. Rich nations will feel the repercussions, because developing countries are markets for the industrialized nations' goods and services and sources for their raw materials. Poor countries cannot buy unless they have the means, and they cannot produce unless they have the capacity. Our world will become a damaged place, reverting to an era of avarice, conflict and plunder. Surely such a world — which now looms on the horizon — is one that all leaders should work to prevent, focusing their attention instead on advancing the progress of our one humankind through cooperation and mutual benefit. Surely that is the world we all want.

While poor and vulnerable countries will suffer longer and more intensely from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, rich countries have not been spared. Those who at the advent of the pandemic concentrated on making themselves secure now understand they will not be safe until we are all safe, because the virus does not know — or care — about ethnicity, age or geography. It will not heed borders. Belatedly, the rich have come to the realization that on our one Earth they need the cooperation of the poor to save themselves. We must all welcome that realization if it finally mobilizes the global cooperation and unified action that our world needs to survive. In that regard, my Government welcomed the Global COVID-19 Summit hosted by President Biden. We are pleased that it resulted not only in commitments for joint global action but also in the allocation of resources to achieve necessary and agreed objectives.

Similarly, we welcome the fact that earlier this month, the heads of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization met with the chief executive officers (CEOs) of leading vaccine-manufacturing companies to discuss strategies to improve access to COVID-19 vaccines in low- and lower-middle-income countries and in Africa. My Government is pleased that the heads of the international organizations and CEOs

of the major pharmaceutical companies have formed a technical working group to exchange and coordinate information on vaccine production and delivery. These are welcome positive developments, even though they have come after millions have died and many more still live under the threat of death. The issue of access to vaccines has seen the world polarized. I know I speak on behalf of many leaders when I say that we must not now hurt our efforts to end the polarization of access to vaccines by implementing measures that divide us and curtail our movements based on the type of vaccines that people have taken. What our efforts should be focused on is ensuring full vaccination and addressing vaccine hesitancy. Millions took the vaccines that were available at a time of much uncertainty, and they are the unsung heroes. They must not now be the subject of restrictions based on the vaccine they took.

We hold out similar hope that the world's worst emitters of the greenhouse gases that are threatening the welfare of all humankind will also come to the realization that in the end it will profit them little to emerge king over a world of dust. The promises of the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris have not been delivered. If emissions follow the trajectory set by current national commitments, we have a less than a 5 per cent chance of keeping temperatures well below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and a less than 1 per cent chance of reaching the 1.5°C target set in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Large polluters have simply not kept their word, and mistrust now pervades the air. That is failure. It is also deception.

Recent authoritative research by the Royal Institute of International Affairs paints a grim picture of the future. It forecasts that cascading climate impacts can be expected to kill far more people than COVID-19 — from hunger, intense heat, flooding and more pandemics caused by increases in pests and diseases. It concludes by saying that when combined with heat waves and drought, those impacts will likely drive unprecedented crop failures, food insecurity and migration. All of this will drive political instability and greater national insecurity and fuel regional and international conflict. Small island States and continental countries with low-lying coastlines such as Guyana would be the first to feel the full brunt of the impending disaster. Yet our countries are among the lowest producers of greenhouse-gas emissions, contributing the least to the

harmful and destructive effects of climate change. That is not only unfair, it is unjust.

The burden of reducing emissions is not being borne equitably. Small island developing and low-lying coastal States are punching above their weight in response to the global climate threats. Guyana is a net carbon sink. Our forests absorb far more carbon than is produced from human activity. But we have not folded our hands and sat back in satisfaction that we have done enough. We have continued to contribute meaningfully to reducing global environment missions and decarbonizing the world's economy, even though our country is now an oil and gas producer. Apart from containing the carbon-dioxide emissions connected to the industry, we continue to pursue a path of developing energy from sustainable sources. In the circumstances, we feel we have the right to insist on a fair system of burden-sharing.

We must devise innovative and creative ways by which the world should act to avert the catastrophe that climate change so plainly portends. The twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26), to be held in Glasgow in a few weeks' time, is the right and timely place to start. The worst emitters must make binding commitments in Glasgow to end their profligacy. They should also scale up their contributions to help small and vulnerable economies to build up resilience to the prolonged effects of the damage that has already been done. Failure to do so will shatter any confidence that the people of the world may still have that polluting nations will do the right thing. COP 26 — not COP 21 — will become the defining moment at which the future or fate of humankind is sealed. The peoples of the world will be watching.

Guyana looks towards a post-pandemic era that will reset international relations by curbing territorial avarice and embracing peaceful cooperation. In that regard, we want to draw attention to the continued overt threats that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been making to Guyana's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Just recently, an agreement was announced in Mexico City by which the contending internal factions in Venezuela renewed a baseless claim to two thirds of Guyana's territory. We have responded in clear terms. And I will repeat our response now in this hallowed Hall in which nations of the world meet in peace and cooperation. Guyana cannot be used as an altar of sacrifice for the settlement of Venezuela's

internal political differences. While my Government welcomes efforts to bring about domestic harmony within Venezuela, agreements that defy international law and processes cannot be a basis for mediating that harmony. Guyana does not promote the use of violence or threats to settle disputes. In a 1966 agreement signed in Geneva, Venezuela consented to allow the Secretary-General to decide on how to settle the controversy. The Secretary-General decided on the International Court of Justice. Both parties are therefore bound by the Court's jurisdiction and ultimate decision.

We remain concerned about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Guyana restates its solidarity with the Palestinian people and their desire for a dignified existence in their own homeland in accordance with a two-State solution. The international community must act to meet the legitimate concerns of the Palestinians, who have suffered for far too long.

The strained relations between the United States and Cuba are also a matter of deep concern to our region. We believe firmly that normalizing the relations between Cuba and the United States would have a beneficial effect on peace in the hemisphere and greater prosperity for all.

I turn now to my own country, Guyana, which is a land of many ethnicities drawn from its Amerindian people, people transported from Africa in the genocidal slave trade, people from India who were indentured to labour in a new land, people from Europe who migrated at a time of want and persecution and people from China who were also brought to work on the plantations. They came with different religions, cultures and perspectives. In the collective of their diversity, the people of Guyana are representative of the peoples of the world. While politically driven conflicts arise occasionally and differences have been exploited for narrow political purposes, my Government is convinced that the richness of our people's diversity is a gift to our nation. We continue to build a nation that draws on all aspects of its cultural roots to establish citizens who enjoy equal opportunity in all aspects of our society, a nation that is secure in itself and strong in its outlook. Our intention is to make Guyana an example for the world, utilizing the strength of our diversity for a single tapestry of one nation that is indivisible, strong, secure and prosperous. My Government has set its foot firmly on the ladder to climb to that pinnacle of success. We are confident that as we foster peace and prosperity within our country, respect human rights, uphold democracy and the rule

of law, and abide with our Constitution, we will achieve those noble goals.

It is against that background of ambition for my country that my Government embraces the vision set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda*. We embrace his view that our nations must be driven by solidarity, which he has so eloquently described as

“the principle of working together, recognizing that we are bound to each other and that no community or country [however powerful] can solve its challenges alone.”

Our Common Agenda provides a framework for the emergence of a post-COVID-19 era, addressing the world's fragilities, injustices, inequalities, conflicts, the eradication of poverty, the banishment of racism and gender discrimination, as well as a framework for the realization of ecological justice. Guyana looks forward to seeing a revitalized United Nations spearheading the thrust towards a new era in international relations, in which the world emerges as a better, fairer and stronger place for all humankind.

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

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

The 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 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: Allow me, Mr. President, on behalf of the Republic of Botswana and indeed on my own behalf, to join previous speakers in expressing our congratulations to you personally and to the Republic of the Maldives on your well-deserved election as

President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, which is a clear testament to the fact that the international community holds both you and your great country, the Maldives, in high regard and esteem. That is not surprising given the immense experience and career accomplishments, spanning more than three and a half decades, that you bring to the position. I am fully confident that the Assembly will benefit tremendously from your extensive diplomatic, executive and legislative experience. As we continue to battle against and strive to recover from the dreadful coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic — and many other pre-existing global challenges, such as the climate crisis — your vision statement, which is based on five rays of hope, serves as an inspiration to many, including my own country, Botswana. In that respect, it is gratifying to note that your vision speaks to the topical issues that continue to confront humankind and should remain at the top of the agenda of the United Nations. They include human rights, climate change, gender equality and the empowerment of women, terrorism and violent extremism, inequalities and injustices. We in Botswana are pleased that you have prioritized those issues and are committed to delivering for people, planet and prosperity, consistent with your firm belief in multilateralism and international cooperation.

Let me in the same breath take this opportunity, Mr. President, to pay a fitting tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, for his effective guidance and leadership during one of the most challenging General Assembly sessions in the 75 years of the Organization's existence. The pandemic challenged us, as Member States, and him, as President of this body, to be innovative and creative in order to ensure business continuity and keep the wheels of the United Nations running. Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we welcome the fact that under his able leadership we successfully convened some of the most important high-level meetings of the session. They included the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (see A/75/PV.3); the first ever Summit on Biodiversity; the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women; dialogue on support to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States; digital cooperation; reform of the Security Council and revitalization of the General Assembly.

The convening of the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was also extremely important, ensuring as it did that as Member States we demonstrated our collective resolve to come together in support of an effective global response to the unprecedented effects of the pandemic and reinforce the principles of solidarity and shared humanity. My delegation therefore fully endorses your choice of the theme for the seventy-sixth session, Mr. President, "Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people and revitalize the United Nations". It is consistent with the actions we need to take collectively to fulfil the legitimate expectations and aspirations of the people we serve at this difficult time in our history.

We welcome your clarion call for hope, Mr. President, because it sets a much-needed optimistic tone for this session, given the extreme urgency with which we must act in the challenging circumstances in which we find ourselves. Hope is a virtue that is at the very core of human progress. History is replete with examples of great things that can be achieved when hope is chosen over fear and despair. Our great Organization, founded after the devastating Second World War, is itself a product and manifestation of hope. Even in the midst of the worst pandemic in a century, our actions should be driven by the belief that things can and will be better.

When I had the honour of addressing the Assembly a year ago (see A/75/PV.8, annex XII), we were all in shock as the pandemic was wrecking our national health systems, taking many lives, destroying livelihoods, overturning life as we know it and ushering in a "new normal" of lockdowns and social distancing. A year later, we are still in the throes of the pandemic. However, advances in science have enabled the rapid development of vaccines. Given that science has delivered the vaccines, it is now time for world leaders, guided by the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure that this life-saving resource is distributed equitably. Without a doubt, if we are to contain the continuing spread of this deadly virus and its more transmissible variants, we need a worldwide campaign that ensures that all countries, especially developing countries, have immediate access to vaccines.

That is why Botswana shares the frustration of many and strongly supports the call for the vaccines to be treated as a global public good, as that is key to

recovery and rebuilding better from the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of some developed countries to support developing countries, especially those in Africa with very low vaccination rates. I want to sincerely thank our development partners who have donated vaccines and other forms of assistance to Botswana, especially to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic, which is now spreading exponentially in my country and claiming many lives. The donations are an indication that the global community is slowly heeding the Secretary-General's warning that no one is safe until everyone is safe. But we have also seen how the uncontrolled spread of the virus triggers the emergence of new variants. A more equitable global vaccination roll-out programme is urgently needed if we are to win the race against the new variants. Let us be mindful of the fact that a variant somewhere is a variant everywhere.

I am happy to say that my Government has prioritized saving our people from this pandemic. In addition to encouraging our people to practice the necessary COVID-19 preventive measures, we have also channelled extra resources to the health sector. That includes purchasing vaccines through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, the African Union's Covid-19 Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team and bilateral arrangements. While we have purchased enough vaccines to reach herd immunity, the current logistical supply challenges continue to hamper our vaccination plans. However, the slow roll-out of vaccination programmes in the global South, including in my own country, cannot be solely viewed in terms of the laws of supply and demand. Let us accept that the prevailing vaccine inequity is the real problem and a reflection of the inherent weaknesses of our multilateral system. We must therefore recommit, both in deeds and words, to the pledge we made at the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of this Organization to strengthen international cooperation, coordination, and solidarity (see A/75/PV.3). One way of doing that is through the sharing and transfer of knowledge and waivers on intellectual property rights where vaccine production is concerned. We are ready to work with all stakeholders to make that a reality. We in Botswana are open to capacity-building for the production of COVID-19 vaccines.

In order to make the desired impact under your able leadership, Mr. President, the United Nations system, and especially its principal organs, must work closely

together and act jointly in a coordinated way. While my country holds the presidency of the Economic and Social Council, we will strive together with you to strengthen coordination and collaboration between the two principal organs of the United Nations that we lead. As you indicated in your vision statement, that will help to make the United Nations stronger and more effective in discharging its mandate.

Our economies are still reeling from the impact of the heavy blow inflicted by the unparalleled scale of the pandemic. For small economies in particular, the pre-existing challenges in the areas of economic mainstays such as trade, tourism and the extractive industry have worsened. That undermines our ability to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unfortunately, it is the most vulnerable and neediest in our societies who run the risk of being left furthest behind. However, all is not lost. I am hopeful that if we press the reset button and reaffirm our commitment to multilateral ideals, we can accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in this Decade of Action. As you rightly pointed out in your vision statement, Mr. President, financing, trade, technology, and debt sustainability are some of the prerequisites for attaining the Goals.

My delegation has also taken note of your call for rebuilding back better, stronger, greener and bluer, Mr. President. We could not agree more. The idea of doing things differently is in line with our current approach at home. When we realized the scale of disruption produced by the pandemic, my Government instituted a Reset Agenda, consisting of five priorities that are well aligned to the priority themes of your presidency. First, my Government is fully committed to saving Botswana's population from COVID-19 through health programmes that include vaccination. Secondly, we are reforming public services to ensure the effective implementation of Government policies. Thirdly, we are accelerating digitalization in the Government's delivery of services and creating conditions conducive to the private sector and society's active involvement in the uptake and utilization of digital technologies. Our fourth priority is value-chain development. That entails unlocking more value in key sectors such as mining, tourism, agriculture and education through the innovation and creativity of our people, especially youth. That priority is aimed at accelerating economic diversification and youth empowerment and

employment. The fifth priority relates to mind-set change. Here the aim is to inspire our people to own their national development goals, as well as to embrace the goals in both disposition and action.

My Government believes that the Reset Agenda and its priorities, which are in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, will enable us to emerge from it stronger and to realize our development aspirations as enshrined in our national Vision 2036 and our eleventh national development plan. Those national frameworks are aligned to the global blueprint in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. We are, however, mindful of the fact that in an increasingly interdependent setting, Botswana's development trajectory is inextricably linked with that of the rest of the world. Now more than ever, multilateralism, international cooperation and global solidarity are imperative. The onus is therefore on the Assembly as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations to strive for a better world, a world where no country is left behind in attaining the 17 SDGs. Beyond what we can do as individual countries, it is also our hope that the lessons being learned from the pandemic will enable the United Nations to find innovative ways of enhanced collaboration with regional and subregional organizations to ensure preparedness for future pandemics and epidemics.

You are assuming your global leadership role, Mr. President, at a time when the world is grappling with a myriad other pressing global challenges, including devastating natural disasters associated with climate change, with small island countries among the most vulnerable. In recent months, massive and uncontrollable floods have swept across Western Europe, Asia and other places, destroying riverbanks and homes and killing hundreds in their wake. Hurricanes, typhoons and storms, as we just again witnessed in countries that include Haiti and the United States, are a major cause of destruction of critical infrastructure worth billions and contribute to humanitarian crises. Similarly, my own region of Southern Africa has not been spared by the terrible path of climate-change-induced disasters, as evidenced in our rainy seasons, which have triggered floods, combined with the devastating cyclones Kenneth, Idai and Eloise. This recurring situation also represents a call to our region to strengthen its early-warning and disaster-preparedness mechanisms through regional

collaboration with all stakeholders, with the support of the United Nations.

While the past decade was already the hottest of our planet on record, in recent months more record-breaking temperatures and other climate-change-induced incidents have signalled a real danger of increased global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has again recently warned of a code red for humankind. Today, more than ever before, our planet has clearly become dangerously warmer, triggering melting ice, rising sea levels, floods, cyclones, hurricanes, droughts and other extreme weather events. Combined with air pollution, they destroy irreplaceable ecosystems, with negative repercussions for sustainable development, health and food-production systems as well as food security.

We have all long recognized that climate change is the greatest challenge we face and a true existential threat, demanding that we take bold and urgent measures to regulate our interaction with our environment, among other things by adopting technologies that reduce carbon emissions. I would still like to believe that we can prevent the situation from getting much worse and provide innovative solutions. As the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan once reminded us, "The world is not ours to keep. We hold it in trust for future generations." In September 2015, we committed to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in all its three dimensions, economic, social and environmental, in a balanced and integrated manner that also embraces full respect for the enjoyment of all fundamental human rights.

In the interests of saving time, I will skip ahead and leave the rest of my statement for the record. I will conclude by saying that it is regrettable that at a time when our main battle should be against the invisible enemy of COVID-19, we continue to witness acts of violence that seek to take advantage of the situation and further threaten international peace and security. In our subregion, where until this August I had the privilege to serve as Chair of the Southern African Development Community Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, we have committed to countering and eliminating the threat of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In addition to the threat to peace and stability brought about by terrorist insurgents in Mozambique, which we condemn, we consider any sanctions on Zimbabwe to be a setback to stability in

the region. Botswana therefore calls on the international community to end those sanctions. At the national level, my Government continues to take steps to keep its people safe, thereby contributing to the larger ideal of the maintenance of international peace and security. In June we signed a memorandum of understanding in that connection with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, with a view to enhancing Botswana's capacity and ability to better detect and deter terrorism.

Mr. Gastorn, Vice-President (United Republic of Tanzania), took the Chair.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Botswana's abiding faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and various multilateral instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other protocols calling for universal access to education, good-quality health care and food, and for the rights of women, children and people with disabilities, as well as the creation of adequate opportunities for our young people. And I want to assure the President of my country's full support, commitment, and cooperation in enabling him to fulfil his mandate during this seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

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. Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez, President of the Republic of Cuba

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

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (spoke in Spanish): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by the President of the Republic of Cuba, Mr. Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex II and see A/76/332/Add.5).

Address by Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola

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

Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, 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. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Lourenço (spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation): The fact that I can be on this rostrum to congratulate you in person on your election is a sign of progress in how we are dealing with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We have not yet won the battle against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but we must note that we are overcoming the fears, uncertainties and the feeling of powerlessness of a year ago, and that we are gradually returning to normal life, with all the necessary precautions and sense of responsibility required of all of us.

The fight against COVID-19 and its new and frightening variants goes on, and our combined efforts, without distinction between rich and poor or based on other types of social categories, are the only way forward for us to fight this pandemic with outcomes that meet our peoples' expectations of a full return to normal life. We have seen a growing belief around the world that achieving that goal is a real possibility, as vaccines have been developed and introduced by the international scientific community with admirable and commendable speed, and with the larger purpose of preserving the human species, which is threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is therefore urgent that we establish, in practical terms, a general understanding that solidarity and streamlined procedures for access to vaccines are the only way to lead the world to victory in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, by ensuring the broadest possible immunization of the inhabitants of our planet. It is shocking to see the disparity between some nations and others where the availability of vaccines is concerned. Those disparities allow for third doses to be given in some cases, while in others, as in Africa, the vast majority have not received even the

first dose. The United Nations must discuss and adopt decisions designed to encourage the release of vaccine production patents so that they can be produced for increasing numbers of countries, making them more accessible to all. The pandemic that we face is global, which accentuates the links and interdependence among nations. For that reason, the COVID-19 vaccine must be recognized as a good for all of humankind, with universal and open access to enable wider production and equitable distribution on a global scale.

The negative effects and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic also had a strong impact on economic and social life in Angola. Nonetheless, we were able to act quickly, aggressively and decisively to contain its spread on a scale that enabled us to keep the contagion levels within the limits of our health structures' capacity to respond. However, the results of the assessment of the losses that the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted on our national economy are distressing, and we are now seeking solutions to help mitigate and relieve our people's suffering. We have had support and efforts that we appreciate enormously, as they have given us some measure of relief in terms of our financial responsibilities to our creditors. That has enabled us to maintain some capacity to tend to our enormous and multiple needs. With the people's living conditions and our economic and social fabric deteriorating significantly, we will have to work hard to find long-lasting solutions that can serve as a basis for rebuilding our economy, which this worldwide health crisis has severely damaged.

Angola has made major efforts to contribute to peace and stability in Central Africa, the Great Lakes region and other parts of our continent. Our sensitivity with respect to issues of peace and war is the result of our long internal conflict, which lasted for several decades and has given us a clear perspective on the importance of resolving disputes through dialogue and understanding between the conflicting parties. We have sought to share our experience with other nations in the belief that if our efforts are well understood, they will surely lead to success in ending conflicts and re-establishing peace in some of the countries affected by strife. A number of conflicts continue in various parts of the world, and some seem to have no end in sight, not just because of the complexity of their causes but above all because of an unwillingness to comply with the norms that govern international relations and the principles of peaceful coexistence among peoples

and nations. We must continue to believe in the mechanisms that are available to the United Nations to build a framework of multilateralism if we are to achieve solutions ensuring solid and long-lasting world peace and security.

We are particularly concerned about the changes in the institutional order in African countries that frequently result from the use of military force. Those unconstitutional acts, as we have seen in Mali and more recently in Guinea, have not evoked an appropriate or sufficient reaction from the international community that would discourage such actions, which are entirely reprehensible. We therefore believe it essential that the international community act with resolve rather than simply make statements of condemnation, in order to force those actors to relinquish power to the countries' legitimately established institutions. We cannot continue to allow recent examples such as those in Guinea and others to succeed in Africa and on other continents. We have a great opportunity for the Heads of State and Government gathered here to demand with one voice the immediate and unconditional release of President Alpha Condé of Guinea.

We are concerned about the threats to world peace and security from extremist groups in the Sahel, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and other parts of the world, which require the international community to constantly mobilize to strengthen our capacity to respond to such dangerous assaults on social and economic stability. We are unfortunately seeing a return to the use of mercenaries, professionals without armies recruited from anywhere in the world who are paid to kill, destabilize countries and oust democratically elected but troublesome politicians and regimes. This problem was once strongly condemned and fought but unfortunately is now being encouraged and fuelled by powerful forces hiding behind anonymity. The United Nations, the African Union and the international community in general must urge the Ethiopian authorities to find better ways to end the conflict in the Tigray region and counter the threat of a humanitarian catastrophe before it is more serious and too late.

Climate change is on today's agenda, as we see from the grave consequences that humankind is facing on every continent. The frequency and ferocity of the hurricanes, floods, forest fires, landslides, volcano eruptions and earthquakes that devastate entire cities and population centres in rural areas,

sometimes with significant numbers of deaths, should focus the attention of everyone — Governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, scientists and civil society — on the need for concerted efforts to protect planet Earth, our common home, which has been sending increasingly clear signals that it is not happy with how we treat it, and is defending itself in the most violent manner possible.

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

Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré,
President of Faso and President of the Council of
Ministers of Burkina Faso**

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso to introduce an address by the President of Faso and President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Sinka (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour and privilege to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Faso and President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso, to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Faso and President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex III and see A/76/332/Add.5)

**Address by Mr. Laurentino Cortizo Cohen,
President of the Republic of Panama**

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, President of the Republic of Panama, 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. Laurentino Cortizo Cohen,

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

President Cortizo Cohen (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama welcomes the holding of the seventy-sixth United Nations General Assembly during this extremely challenging time for humankind.

In my address to the General Assembly last year (see A/75/PV.7, annex XIII), I mentioned that the road to building a different post-pandemic world included taking mitigation measures that would enable us to lay a foundation for deep structural change. The pandemic hit each and every one of us, and in its wake has revealed to us in all their harshness the deep inequalities of our societies, globally as well as regionally. Faced with that reality, we can make the choice that leads to division, conflict and indifference, or we can take the path of unity and solidarity. The pandemic has made it clear that in today's interconnected world, the only path for human survival must be guided by solidarity. Our decisions today matter. They will have good consequences or bad consequences, today, tomorrow and in the long term.

Panama is committed to building a sustainable and inclusive future, and for this, even during the pandemic, we convened a national dialogue with the purpose of making the right decisions, decisions that will last beyond one term of Government. The dialogue, which we call the Bicentennial Pact: Closing Gaps, was built through broad consultation with the support of the United Nations, recognizing that all citizens must make proposals and contributions if we are to lay the foundations for a more just, inclusive and supportive Panama. Regarding the Bicentennial Pact, Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said,

“What they are doing in Panama can be considered an example for many other nations. You have a great opportunity in your hands.”

The pandemic has subjected the nations of the world to monumental challenges. One of those challenges is vaccination. Panama acted with foresight and has been able to obtain enough safe and effective vaccines for its entire population. Thanks to that, we are only weeks away from reaching herd immunity. However, the goal cannot be for some countries to achieve herd immunity when the goal is worldwide immunity.

Another great challenge facing our region, amid the harsh circumstances and conditions imposed by

the pandemic, is delivering the aid needed to maintain living conditions and social peace to the population. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our Government has prioritized delivering food and basic supplies to those who have lost their sources of income, especially in the most vulnerable segments of the population. To do that, we developed a plan with two initiatives: one involves the transfer of funds to those most affected through digital vouchers, and the other the distribution of bags of food and supplies to those who live in remote regions that are difficult to access. That plan, which has been in place since March 2020, has evolved according to the dynamics of the pandemic, and in its latest stage, its beneficiaries must choose between providing a community social service or training for work through courses offered by the Government. It is now a social relief plan with shared responsibility. The programme's effectiveness has been recognized by the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank. On top of that, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama is one of two Latin American countries that managed to reduce extreme poverty rates in 2020 during the pandemic.

Another challenge that many nations are facing is irregular migration, a long-standing and persistent phenomenon that we cannot ignore. More than 80,000 irregular migrants have crossed Panamanian territory so far in 2021. That figure represents exponential growth. To highlight how dramatic the situation is, Panama went from receiving 800 migrants in January of this year to 30,000 just last month. The majority of those migrants originate from the Caribbean and Africa and have traversed several countries under difficult conditions. Our country, responsibly and with respect for human rights, treats the migrants with dignity and provides them with temporary shelter, medical assistance and food for the first time on their journey. We have dedicated a significant portion of our very limited resources to those tasks. Panama is doing its part. We urge the international community to make a united effort as soon as possible, using coordinated strategies and resources, to forestall a regional humanitarian crisis of serious proportions. That is the responsibility of us all, and it is an urgent one. We hear many speeches, including some very thoughtful ones, but we avoid moving from speeches to concrete actions.

After the pandemic, the greatest challenge that we still have to tackle is climate change. The current refusal

to believe in the reality of climate change and its effects must be relegated to the past. Every major problem facing our planet is connected to climate change. What more do the world's leaders need to understand that tragic reality? How many more speeches do we need in conference forums to understand that the problem should be our highest priority? Panama is doing its part with regard to this issue as well. We are one of three countries in the world classified as carbon-negative. I repeat, Panama is one of the only three carbon-negative countries in the world. In Panama, the country with the best maritime and air connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean, a transit country with a logistics industry, we have understood that what is good for the planet is good for the economy and for all of our countries. Panamanians have taken on the responsibility of being blessed with one of the most richly biodiverse areas in the world. Panama is a blue-world leader, complying with the 30x30 Initiative to protect 30 per cent of our oceans, a goal that we have reached nine years before the deadline of 2030.

Panama once again offers itself as a bridge to bring nations closer together, seek shared, concrete solutions to problems and face regional and global challenges. We can do it, with a road map marked by solidarity and respect for human rights. We can do it through broad and honest dialogue, focusing international efforts on maintaining social peace and providing the necessary vaccines to all countries in order to save lives, preserve health and get all of us on the road to economic recovery as soon as possible. For all of those immense challenges, the future is now. Let us make no mistake. For all of those immense challenges, the future is now. The time for stories and philosophy is over. The time for fairy tales and words is over. The time for promises is over. The moment of truth has arrived. The time for action has come. Panama is doing its part.

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

Mr. Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Milo Đukanović, President of Montenegro

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

Mr. Milo Đukanović, President of Montenegro, 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. Milo Đukanović, President of Montenegro, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Đukanović (*spoke in Montenegrin; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour for me to address the Assembly on behalf of Montenegro and to reaffirm our determined commitment to the principles and tenets of the Charter of the United Nations and the mission and goals of this global Organization. It is also a great pleasure to be in this great Hall once again with everyone here, despite the risks and fears caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Our presence here shows our strong determination to affirm that multilateralism is still alive.

I would like to thank the Secretariat and the host country's services for the enormous effort they have invested to ensure that the general debate is not only a demonstration of hope and belief that the world will deal with the pandemic but also a secure and safe event for all participants. In providing desperately needed medical and humanitarian aid, as well as significant support in dealing with the serious economic consequences of the pandemic, the activities of the United Nations have unquestionably demonstrated their important role in the modern world. Today it is clearer than ever that we can respond successfully to global challenges only if we act on a global level, with the concerted and coordinated action of all of us. And it is the United Nations that must be at the core of that action.

Enormous problems and crises — and they are unfortunately increasingly numerous — require strong leadership. Without it the world cannot provide what our citizens expect and are entitled to. But to our common misfortune, the world has lately witnessed a crisis of leadership whose consequences can be seen in almost all areas of global relations. Fragmentation and national approaches are still dominant factors in the behaviour of key international stakeholders. Rather than uniting in joint concrete action, we more often share only our joint concerns. A path focused on clear vision and commitment, quality and continuity, efficiency and effectiveness, cooperation and solidarity, determination and responsibility is the only road to dealing with our

growing global problems, from the pandemic and climate change to famine, migrations, human rights violations and humanitarian crises. Member States will always have an open and reliable partner in Montenegro on that path.

The theme of this year's debate refers to the generally accepted opinion that an understanding and adequate treatment of the multidimensional consequences of the pandemic, aimed at building a sustainable future, will be a major factor in the future actions and behaviour of States and other international actors. It is clear that reinvigorated multilateralism and revitalization of the United Nations are desperately needed. One step towards that goal, which we warmly welcome, is the Secretary-General's initiative responding to the health emergencies and social and economic consequences of the pandemic by establishing the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. Our response must be united and equally accessible.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most serious crisis the world has seen since this global Organization was established. However, with a mature and responsible approach, we can learn lessons from every crisis. The lesson this time is a loud warning about how important it is to stand together and ensure international solidarity in seeking global solutions. It seems that the world is at a crossroads. We can either choose further isolationism and erosion of trust, tolerating growing xenophobia, nationalism and right-wing ideas, ignoring the alarming warnings about the state of the environment and silently accepting increased inequality in every arena, or we can make a breakthrough, aimed at achieving a more secure and better future for all, by taking the path of *Our Common Agenda* — for people, for the planet, for prosperity and for peace, as Secretary-General Guterres has said. It means choosing a future based on the highest values of equality, justice, responsibility and solidarity, not on retrograde ideologies, selfishness and cheap populism.

Surely we cannot consider that we face a dilemma in choosing between those options. We, the leaders and our citizens, have a unique opportunity to use the current crisis as momentum for building a greener, more just and more sustainable world. That mission will require effective and strengthened multilateralism, a retreat from rhetoric and greater space for action. To overcome existing geostrategic divisions and dysfunctional international relations we will need a

new world view within our States and a renewed global agreement between them. Our post-pandemic recovery and revitalized multilateralism must be based on fair globalization, respect for human rights and the dignity of all, environmental protection and a responsible attitude to nature, and results that are measured by humane parameters, not just economic ones. We should not strive for a peace that is nothing more than the absence of war, and we should not strive for development merely for the sake of profit. We should strive for peace and progress built on achieving the highest democratic standards and quality of life for all, and for current and future generations alike.

The process of strengthening the multilateral approach should happen alongside our work on strengthening cooperation in the digital arena, particularly now when we are witnessing the influence of technology on the post-crisis recovery and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Montenegro will continue to support efforts to implement the reform agenda within the development and managerial structures, as well as in bodies working to preserve peace and stability and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are convinced that we can make the Organization's functioning more efficient and flexible only through such essential reorganization efforts.

In its support to the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, Montenegro has again demonstrated its political commitment to the mandates of peace operations and their effective action, particularly regarding the protection of civilians. We remain determined to contribute, within our capacities, to the preservation and enhancement of international peace and security and to extend our participation in United Nations humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. Thanks to the obvious deterioration of the overall international security atmosphere, the modernization of weapon systems and the collapse of some of the most important strategic instruments in this area, the international architecture for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is under significant pressure. That is an issue that Montenegro, as a responsible member of the United Nations and NATO, wants to draw attention to. Support for implementing, strengthening and further developing multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control should be an imperative for us all.

Montenegro will also continue to work on integrating a human rights and gender perspective into every aspect of United Nations work, defending the universality of international human rights law and the independence of the human rights system. As a candidate with a realistic chance of becoming a member of the Human Rights Council, we will advocate for streamlined agendas and better synergy between Geneva and New York. That is the only way to ensure that we will have opportunities to react in a timely fashion and prevent the mass violations that have repeatedly shocked the world public. Until we do that, we will keep reacting post facto almost as a rule, and therefore spending our resources mainly on de-escalating and dealing with humanitarian crises instead of on managing and preventing them.

It is in that light that we should also consider the obvious deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation, as we prepare for a potentially new and greater wave of migrants that will undoubtedly have regional and global repercussions. We call for a global response to the refugee and migrant crisis. We must share responsibility in that regard, as we envisaged in the global agreements we adopted on refugees and migrants. We must cooperate in finding solutions and provide help both to countries of destination and countries of origin. Montenegro is the only one of the republics of the former Yugoslavia that did not have to deal with war on its territory during the conflicts of the 1990s. At the time we took in more than 100,000 refugees and displaced persons, more than 20 per cent of our entire population. As a United Nations member, we find it difficult to understand and accept any approach other than one of solidarity and support for the most vulnerable.

We are witnessing a growing climate and environmental crisis. The High Commissioner for Human Rights recently presented very worrying findings in Geneva about the global human rights situation in the context of environmental issues, saying that climate change, pollution and loss of biodiversity will together constitute by far the most serious challenge to human rights in our era. She clearly acknowledged human activity as one factor and a lack of appropriate action as another. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement are crucial to better recovery from the pandemic and to global preparation against future systemic shocks. That is why it is particularly important that in preparing for the

World Climate Summit and Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow in November this year, all countries mobilize an additional level of ambition in achieving their long-term goals for reducing global warming. Although Montenegro's share of global emissions is tiny, in December 2020 we increased our climate goals, thereby affirming our strong and constant commitment to tackling climate challenges adequately. We expect that further activities at the national level will enable us to make new and more ambitious breakthroughs. That is why it is exceptionally important to integrate the components of action that will be based on human rights both when new climate goals are set and when a new global biodiversity framework is defined.

This year Montenegro celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the restoration of its independence and the moment when the Montenegrin flag was hoisted for the first time above New York's East River. We have walked a demanding path since our admission to the United Nations family — which was the broadest recognition of our restored independence — from our positioning on the main concourse of the United Nations and with our key foreign-policy partners, to the visibility, recognition and affirmation that we have today and that greatly exceed our country's physical size. That path has not been easy, particularly in the Balkans, which is burdened by its past and continues to be a place where conflicting influences clash and geostrategic interests compete. That is still a concern for various international actors, but it does not always bring needed or timely attention.

The challenges and threats to multi-ethnic democracy in the Balkans have not lessened. The Western Balkans are once again a battlefield for conflicting geopolitical interests, resulting in a slowdown in the integration of Western Balkan societies into their natural European setting, undermining people's trust in and adoption of European values. That confusion not only hinders and further slows the development of this European region, it also opens the door to a revival of destructive theories that claim that because it is lagging behind, this region cannot survive as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional community and its States cannot be functional. This manufactured thesis is aimed at Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, but also at smaller countries in the region. The motive for it is to make a case for restoring the greater-State

nationalistic projects that in the 1990s led to war in the Western Balkans and almost 150,000 deaths.

However, our determination to fight those retrograde and dangerous ideas has not wavered and therefore today, from this rostrum, Montenegro is warning of the renewed danger that the Western Balkans may be destabilized and its European prospects reduced. Montenegro has continued to work to build a better future for its citizens based on equality and non-discrimination. We have built relations of trust and cooperation with all of our neighbours. As the most senior officials of our host country used to say, Montenegro was an oasis of peace in the Balkans in the war years of the 1990s. As a contributor to regional security, we joined NATO and have become a leader in the process of European integration. In spite of our many challenges, Montenegro remains determined to defend civic, inclusive, multi-ethnic and European democracy and to be proof that multi-ethnic democracy is possible in the Balkans and is the only true guarantee of prosperity.

Montenegro will remain loyal to those policies and strongly committed to the values of multilateralism, open and friendly cooperation, further democratic consolidation and the strengthening of the rule of law. Among other things, that will help to strengthen our partnership with the Organization.

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

His Excellency Mr. Milo Đukanović, President of Montenegro, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia

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

Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, 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. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Geingob: Namibia joins other Member States in congratulating the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, convened under the theme “Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people and revitalize the United Nations”. We would also like to commend Secretary-General António Guterres for his profound and moving statement (see A/76/PV.3) highlighting the many challenges the world is facing while imploring global leaders to act now to solve those problems. We have heard his clarion call loud and clear.

For the second year in a row, the world finds itself engulfed by the dark cloud of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which continues to claim thousands of lives daily. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The global efforts to develop vaccines have been a scientific victory and a testament to human ingenuity. In just under a year the unexpected has happened. Several different vaccines have been tested and produced to be delivered to millions around the world. Unfortunately, the global roll-out of the vaccines has not been impervious to the scourge of inequality. Vaccine apartheid has resulted in significant disparities in terms of the roll-out and availability of vaccines, with many people in developing countries left out. It is a pity that we have a situation where in some countries citizens are at the stage of receiving booster shots while in others many are still waiting to receive their first doses of vaccine. Let us bear in mind that no one is safe unless we are all safe.

COVID-19 has affected poorer countries more acutely and unevenly. Faced with high levels of debt and no access to finance, developing countries are struggling to mitigate the severe effects of the crisis. Namibia, however, aims to deploy innovative approaches to ensure sustainable economic development in this volatile period of pandemic and climate change. Given our renewable resources such as solar and wind power, as well as the ocean, Namibia has decided to prioritize the development of green and blue economies. We are also well positioned through our recent membership in the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy to design and champion a sustainable blue economy, which will grow our economic base and create much-needed jobs while also tackling climate change. Additionally, Namibia has made progress in incubating renewable energy assets in the form of green hydrogen

and ammonia as part of its energy order, in order to enable us to act in the best interests of our planet and its citizens.

Africa has come a long way from the days of the first wave of African leaders who paved the way towards independence. They were extraordinary personalities who forced us to fight for our independence. That first wave was followed by a second wave who were caught up in Cold War confusion, one-party States and military coups. Following the period of global conflict that was manifested in the form of the Cold War, a third wave of African leaders has ushered in an era defined by democratic elections and term limits. The first wave of African leaders were our founding fathers. The second were caught up in the Cold War confusion, and the third are those now in power who have come through regular elections and abide by term limits. But despite the fact that we have recently had a setback in two countries, unlike in the past, when others would tell Africans what to do, it has been Africans — in the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union — who have made decisions about this, ostracizing such leaders and demanding constitutional order. That is now the new Africa that we believe in, a new Africa that believes in constitutional order.

Namibia stands firm in its belief that there is no room for discrimination of any kind in this world. In that regard, we remain committed to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which embodies our firm determination as the international community to rid the world of the scourges of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels.

The question of Palestine, now in its seventy-third year since the Nakba, remains unresolved. On that crucial issue, Namibia wishes to amplify the Secretary-General's statement, which said explicitly that the leaders on both sides should resume a meaningful dialogue, recognizing a two-State solution as the only pathway to a just and comprehensive peace. Similarly, after nearly 50 years the people of Western Sahara are still waiting to exercise their right to freedom and independence. Namibia welcomes the Secretary-General's appointment of Mr. Alexander Ivanko as his Special Representative for Western Sahara. We hope he will devote his full attention to the matter to enable the people of Western Sahara to have the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination without further delay.

In the same vein, in accordance with resolutions unanimously adopted by the General Assembly, we call for an end to the United States' economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. The people of Cuba deserve to pursue their development aspirations and attain economic freedom. We call on President Biden — who was an invaluable member of President Obama's Administration, which sought a rapprochement between Washington and Havana — to rekindle the spirit of respect and peace between the United States and Cuba that President Obama pursued.

As a member of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government, Namibia is committed to reform of the Security Council. We therefore call on all countries to support that reform in line with the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

As we continue to build back better, we have a collective responsibility to ensure the participation of women at all levels of governance and economic activity as a symbol of freedom and equality in society. Namibia believes that women's participation and representation is central to equitable and sustainable development. We therefore continue to advocate for greater gender equality around the world and have set ourselves the challenge of leading by example in our policies, programmes and actions. We also take cognizance of the fact that our youth are the backbone of the global village and custodians of the keys to humankind's future. Namibia therefore remains committed to supporting the development of our young people and promoting greater youth participation in all areas of society, since they have a critical role to play in promoting global peace and development. In illustration of our commitment to youth empowerment, my delegation includes two young ladies under age 30 — one of whom is only 25 years old — who are both deputy ministers. They, together with their peers, are the future.

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are facing one of the most critical periods in human history. Global peace, human dignity and the future of our global village are at stake. As we meet in this global parliament of humanity, we are called on by the citizens of our world to craft a collective way forward that will ensure that we recover from the devastation of COVID-19 and chart a way forward towards a brighter future. Although the task may seem

daunting, through unity of purpose we will prevail. For where there is unity, there is the hope of overcoming COVID-19. Where there is unity, people can return to rebuilding sustainably. Where there is unity, we can respond to the needs of the planet and respect the rights of all. Indeed, through unity, we will revitalize the United Nations, transforming it into a bastion of global democracy that will save the world from the scourge of war and reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights, dignity and worth of each and every human being on this planet.

I always say, one Namibia, one nation. I say one Africa, one continent. I say one world, one universe.

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

Mr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia

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

Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome His Excellency Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Pendarovski (*spoke in Macedonian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I am especially honoured and privileged to be addressing this gathering for the first time on behalf of the Republic of North Macedonia. The very fact that most leaders are here in person today, rather than addressing the Assembly via video messages, is testament to the fact that the beginning of the end of the pandemic is in sight.

For nearly two years, there is almost no country that has not been severely affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Faced with an unprecedented

plight, humankind came together and mobilized all of its capacity to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic and prepare for a post-COVID era. Despite the disparities that have surfaced once again between the most developed countries and all the rest, we have witnessed a great series of exemplary cases of solidarity and humaneness all around the world. Although there is still a long way to go, we can finally see a light at the end of the tunnel and refocus on the future. We therefore need to support new ideas and initiatives such as the Group of Seven's Build Back Better World, an infrastructure partnership aimed at assisting the developing world, which has been severely affected by COVID-19.

Like every other terrible scourge in human history, the pandemic is a lesson that must be learned. It is a fact that most of the challenges confronting humankind, not just COVID-19, do not stop at national borders or differentiate among countries, religions or ideologies. We can only deal with global challenges, whether in the areas of security, disease or climate change, by exercising more empathy, cooperation and solidarity. The reality today is that our world is far from being a safe place to live in. Conflicts around the world, whether fresh or frozen, terrorism or hybrid threats, continue to disturb our peace and ways of life. They continue to threaten human rights and freedoms, provoking humanitarian catastrophes and waves of refugees.

We are particularly worried about the latest developments in Afghanistan. We share the concerns of many leaders, including the Secretary-General, who has warned that the world is facing yet another humanitarian plight and called for helping hands, united efforts and solidarity. Guided by our sense of moral obligation as well as solidarity, my country, North Macedonia, immediately announced its readiness to host a considerable number of Afghan refugees, particularly those in the most vulnerable categories and those who have worked for United Nations agencies in Afghanistan for many years. Hundreds of them have already received safe haven, in addition to the conditions for a dignified life. A baby was born in the local hospital immediately after the first plane carrying Afghan refugees landed at Skopje airport, a symbolic spark of hope and proof that life does indeed prevail. We stand ready to contribute to the international community's efforts to ensure a better life for the people affected by the military chaos and destruction. The new developments in Afghanistan have only accentuated

the existing threats of terrorism and violent extremism. We must continue to work together and address the root causes of terrorism with a multidimensional approach. We should reinforce our efforts nationally, regionally and under the United Nations umbrella in the quest for solutions and mechanisms to fight that evil.

Multilateralism, with the United Nations as its core and universal embodiment, should be the driving force strengthening the instruments and methods for assuring security, democracy, freedom, human rights, sustainable development and prosperity for all. We must reinvigorate an effective and inclusive multilateralism that gives us a sense of joint participation in shaping our destiny. In that regard, I would particularly like to stress the efforts of the Secretary-General as expressed in his report on *Our Common Agenda*, which reaffirms the core values of the Organization and offers concrete proposals for a more effective United Nations based on inclusive multilateralism. We also commend the activities of the Alliance for Multilateralism, initiated by Germany and France, which we see as a useful platform that could give new impetus to enhanced international cooperation. In the spirit of multilateralism, North Macedonia will continue to fulfil its international obligations and support the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in creating and implementing public policies on issues of global importance.

It is well known that every crisis also represents a new opportunity. COVID-19 calls on all of us to rethink our attitude to various aspects of living. Public health, education and science deserve much more attention if we intend their development to be systematic, integral and sustainable. When tackling complex and interdependent problems in this new era, we will need stronger and deeper partnership and solidarity, not only so that we can cope better with their consequences, restructure economies and secure further development, but also so that we can change mindsets that hold us back and hinder progress. However, human dignity should be the focus of our efforts, nationally and internationally. The eradication of poverty is only a starting point in the work of ensuring at least minimal rights and needs for all, and a precondition for that is ensuring that new generations are brought up in a spirit of greater solidarity and less inequality among people. Establishing responsible visionary leadership within our own borders and beyond them is fundamental to the work of achieving those noble goals. We should

not shy away from our own responsibilities. We must learn from our own mistakes and misperceptions, caused sometimes by our unwillingness to leave our comfort zones, and demonstrate more courage and determined leadership.

Moreover, it is absolutely essential to hear and include different views as we make decisions. We should spare no resources or effort in ensuring the structural empowerment of women, with the ultimate goal of full gender equality across all categories of society, whether in entrepreneurship, security, education or foreign policy. In that context, we must open a debate on democracy, which is under threat globally, and continue to actively invest in democratic values while discouraging authoritarian tendencies, high-level corruption and systemic human rights abuses. As President of a country that knows the meaning of a different system of governance, from the very beginning I supported President Biden's idea of convening a summit for democracy in December this year. If we want to maintain the moral superiority of democracy over other models of political governance, we must invest in it, especially among younger generations. It is important for young people to learn from our failures, which are often motivated by good intentions. In practice, the old truth that we borrow this Earth from our children means opening up space for their contributions, freedom and creativity. Universal education, accessible to all, as a foundation for personal development, will prepare our youth to face today's challenges more easily and make the world a more dignified place to live in than it is today.

A broad international consensus is slowly forming that the greatest challenge of our time is probably climate change, which we see happening every day with varying intensity and in different forms. Despite the fact that we feel the effects of climate change in our daily lives and are increasingly aware of the need to mitigate them, it seems that we unfortunately have difficulty in mobilizing our strength against this menace. Horrifying scenes from across the globe have been unfolding in front of our eyes — the terrifying floods here in New York and in Western Europe and the series of deadly fires in South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean that resulted in the loss of lives and enormous human suffering. Reaffirming its past pledges, North Macedonia remains committed to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, while at the same time increasing its national contribution incorporated

into national laws and policies and regulatory measures. We look forward to and have great expectations for the upcoming twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, considering it a crucial phase in our common efforts to restore the only home we have — our planet Earth.

Moving from global to regional and national issues and dilemmas, let me say that the Western Balkans is facing serious challenges to its European integration aspirations. The current impasse in that process frustrates our citizens and continues to diminish their enthusiasm for positive change. This state of play also opens the door not only for geopolitical competition but also for different models of governance, making it harder to ensure the democratic reforms that are vital to the region's prospects for stability and prosperity. It is high time to reconsider the current phase of the largest continental project since the Second World War, the idea of a united, free and peaceful Europe. Is the current status of European integration in the region in line with the vision conceived by its founding fathers decades ago? If we care about a stable and prosperous Western Balkans as an important link in continental and transcontinental stability and security, we must acknowledge that a breakthrough in the European integration process is urgently needed.

As a small country in South-Eastern Europe, North Macedonia has proved its ability, together with Greece and under the mediation of the United Nations, to resolve even complex problems such as the so-called "name issue", and thereby contributing to added stability in the region. The effects of the Prespa agreement, which is now being implemented in good faith, will benefit both of our countries and the region as a whole. At the same time, we are ready to engage in constructive dialogue with one of our other neighbours, Bulgaria, to ensure the full implementation of our treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness and cooperation. We continue to bolster our internal stability and development as a functioning multi-ethnic society, based on the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. We are indeed aware that the best possible contribution we can offer to the wider stability and prosperity lies in the enforcement of those values at home for our citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the messages we are sending this week from New York should not remain mere words. Without concrete

decisions today, we will not make the world a better place for tomorrow. We have a unique opportunity and responsibility, as a generation of leaders who are guiding their countries through their greatest challenges since the end of the Second World War, to take steps towards creating a more peaceful and just world in which faith in humanism, freedom and solidarity and respect for human dignity will be restored.

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

Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, President of the Republic of Nauru

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nauru to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Nauru.

Mrs. Deiye (Nauru): I have the distinct honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, President of the Republic of Nauru.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex IV and see A/76/332/Add.5).

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

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Zimbabwe to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Chimbindi (Zimbabwe): It is my singular honour and privilege to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex V and see A/76/332/Add.5).

Address by Mr. Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Transitional Military Council, President of the Republic of Chad, Head of State of Chad and Head of State

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I give the floor to the representative of Chad to introduce an address by the President of the Transitional Military Council, President of the Republic of Chad, Head of State of Chad and Head of State.

Mrs. Baroud (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Transitional Military Council, President of the Republic of Chad, Head of State of Chad and Head of State.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Military Council, President of the Republic of Chad, Head of State of Chad and Head of State.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex VI and see A/76/332/Add.5).

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

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): 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 (*spoke in Spanish*): 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*): I would first like to express to the United States authorities our sincere thanks for the warm welcome they give us each time we arrive in the beautiful city of New York to take

part in this great annual meeting. I want to express our sincere sympathy to the American people, who are commemorating the twentieth anniversary this month of the cowardly attacks of September 2001, and I join in the tribute to the victims of that barbaric act.

I would also like to add my voice to those of the eminent persons who have preceded me on this rostrum in congratulating Mr. Abdullah Shahid on his brilliant election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. My delegation and I believe firmly that his human and professional qualities can be put to good use for the success of our work in the context of this session. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay well-deserved tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, for the efficiency with which he directed the work of the seventy-fifth session and fulfilled his noble duties. Finally, on behalf of my country and my delegation, I want to sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on his reappointment to a new term, and to express our appreciation and our gratitude for his sustained investment, as well as that of his entire team, in serving the United Nations, which is facing challenges that make his work increasingly difficult but still essential.

This seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly comes at a particularly crucial moment in the history of the world and of our Organization. It is happening at a time when all nations are deploying their best efforts to master and defeat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its variants, which have brought all the peoples of the world to their knees for nearly two years. On behalf of my delegation, I welcome the surge of salutary solidarity that has made it possible to avoid the worst. Indeed, after the shock of the first days and weeks, human solidarity established and laid the foundations for a struggle that has helped us to gradually regain control of events, little by little. In that regard, the Union of the Comoros salutes the women and men, the scientists, researchers, experts and laboratories, who have worked so effectively and invested themselves in researching and producing vaccines against the virus and have ultimately succeeded in restoring hope worldwide. Of course, we cannot forget the sacrifices made by the thousands of women and men on the front lines in every country and in every category of health care who have risked their lives and found the courage and strength to brave the storm of this deadly enemy.

I want to express our infinite gratitude and a hearty “well done” to each and every one of them.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the economies of the world and upset the centuries-old order among States, nations and peoples. It has forced us and taught us to live differently. Since November 2019, the date of its appearance in the world, we have been living through an unprecedented crisis, a true world war. The pandemic has slowed the course of life, further widened the gap between rich and poor, accelerated inequalities and disrupted the balance of our national economies. No nation has been spared!

The pandemic also revealed the extent of the technological gap between countries and showed us the importance of new information and communications technologies and the need for urgent action to reduce that gap. Likewise, the inequalities we have seen in access to vaccines underscore the importance of acting to secure our spirit of solidarity and remember the essential role of multilateralism. And the reason we need greater solidarity and an understanding of the true meaning of multilateralism is so that we can work together to rebuild the world and save our nations and peoples. It is by integrating this reality that we will succeed in the work of this session of the Assembly and of other major international meetings, in particular the next World Food Summit, the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The theme of this session concerns reform of the United Nations, which represents the best we all have to offer the world in our continuing quest for lasting peace and security. It is therefore an opportunity to evaluate the Organization’s performance with a view to ensuring better representation for developing countries, especially on the African continent, which, as we know, encompass zones of dynamic economic growth but also conflicts, some of them bloody, which delay the development and well-being of their peoples. As a community of nations, we have a duty to tackle problems — in particular those linked to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States — that, if unresolved, will destroy the Organization’s credibility.

On behalf of my Government and the Comorian people, I therefore want to reiterate the vital need for a rapid, just and equitable solution to the question of Palestine, a solution that will secure the Palestinian

people's right to a sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in harmony and perfect health and security with the State of Israel. While I understand the position of certain brother countries in the Arab world that have renewed relations with the State of Israel, it is up to the State of Israel to recognize and act on those bold initiatives for the benefit of all.

Furthermore, and with a view to a lasting settlement of the issue of the Moroccan Sahara, which is of great concern to my Government, I would like to express here our encouragement to the efforts undertaken by the Kingdom of Morocco. We hope that they will lead to a solution that will enable our brother country to regain its autonomy and territorial integrity over that Moroccan province. My Government welcomes any initiative that will help to ensure peace in this region and strongly encourages dialogue between our brother countries of Morocco and Algeria.

Also with respect to sovereignty, the Union of the Comoros reiterates its position on the necessity for the People's Republic of China to regain its integrity where the Chinese province of Taiwan is concerned.

With regard to the Franco-Comorian territorial dispute over the issue of the Comorian island of Mayotte, in recent years we have witnessed the desire of the two parties, the Comoros and France, to capitalize on the achievements of our common past, while maintaining a frank and constructive dialogue with a view to reaching a peaceful and definitive solution that respects international law and is in the interests of both countries.

I want to emphasize that we must not remain indifferent to the hotbeds of tension that undermine peace in various parts of the world and have become fertile grounds for outbreaks of international terrorism, as in the Sahel and more recently in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean. The situation in Afghanistan also concerns us and I would like to renew my country's support for the Afghan people in this crucial phase of their destiny. The recent unconstitutional changes that have taken place in many countries, in Africa and around the world, remind us of the urgent need to consider innovative and lasting solutions that are not bound by short-term geopolitical issues. In order to consolidate peace, security and stability in the world, we therefore need a strong consensus, and we should always put the emphasis in that regard on conflict

prevention, along with providing constant support to efforts to resolve emerging crises.

The principles and values of the United Nations are now united around the Sustainable Development Goals, which are a priority for every country. They constitute an ideal platform for our collective commitment and a foundation for our actions in favour of development. In that process, and as shown in my country's voluntary national assessment report presented to the high-level political forum in 2020, the Union of the Comoros has embarked on a path aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in all their aspects, for which the Emerging Comoros Plan for 2030 is our relevant national framework.

As we tackle the work of this session, let us not forget that according to current studies and research, entire regions are expected to simply disappear, while others will be affected by the intensification of climate events such as floods, droughts, fires, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, the consequences of the harmful effects of the degradation of our environment. While those events spare no country or region, we should note that the situation of small island developing States such as the Comoros is even more worrying and deserves greater attention from us leaders. And like so many others, these States are also dealing with other dangerous problems such as piracy, human trafficking at sea, drug trafficking, illegal fishing and the plundering of natural resources at sea. My Government associates itself with every national and global initiative aimed at waging merciless war on such barbaric acts, which are a major threat to the security of our populations. That is why I intend to reorient our diplomacy's strategic axes so as to integrate the dimension of security into our geostrategic action, especially in the area of the Mozambique Channel and the South-Western Indian Ocean. That new vision, which requires the assistance of our neighbours and development partners, has become the basis for any projection for the future of this part of the world, for which the development of a sustainable and controlled blue economy holds immense and vital potential.

At the national level, I am aware of the need for political stability as a guarantee of the socioeconomic development for which my Government is working tirelessly. Political stability and national cohesion are dear to our country because they are essential to any initiative. Our salvation depends on a peaceful, united

society that is increasingly inclusive of all the strata of which it is composed.

The false information purveyed by social networks, and through unreliable and unofficial channels, has no aim other than to damage the peaceful climate within our islands and undermine the efforts to develop the Union of the Comoros. With a view to improving our national cohesion, I have therefore decided to engage mid-term in a national political dialogue that I hope will help to bring together more Comorian women and men around our essential objectives — that is, peace, security and national unity — which will enable us to capitalize on our efforts for the socioeconomic development of our country. I would like to thank the African Union mission led by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, who has just completed his stay in the Union of the Comoros and in the space of a week was able to meet with all the stakeholders in this dialogue, listen to everyone, appreciate their positions and make recommendations. It is now up to all the parties to this dialogue to move forward. It is clear that our country needs all its national stakeholders to consolidate our achievements of the past 20 years in the areas of human rights and democratic change and thereby advance its development.

Comorians must also be able to trust the justice system, the guarantor of respect for their rights and protection. The Comorian judicial system must remain the support that the State offers the weakest for their defence and the most deprived for the protection of their rights, in the face of an upsurge in violence, especially against women, children and vulnerable members of society. Such acts must be very severely punished. That is why my Government has set up a higher judicial council composed of eminent magistrates with long experience in their field, and has adopted a revised penal code and code of penal procedure, incorporating provisions aimed at providing the country with an improved and adequate political and legal framework.

On the societal front, COVID-19 has occupied our minds, as it has everywhere else, and forced us to prioritize the management of the disease. The Union of the Comoros has had two waves, of which the second was more virulent. Nevertheless, the situation has been brought under control thanks to measures taken and provisions made by the authorities in that regard, with support from all our bilateral and multilateral partners, our communities and members of civil society, to whom we are very grateful. It must be said that while

the Union of the Comoros, thank God, is now in the “green” category, we must continue to be vigilant, especially as an island country, in order to avoid any further spread of the disease. To date, a second stage of vaccinations has been completed, and the third phase, which begins soon, will enable us to reach the goal of 80 per cent of the target population that we have set for ourselves by the beginning of 2022. My Government is also making major efforts to support our people in their daily life, especially with regard to protecting them from the looming global food crisis that is likely one of the consequences of the situation created by COVID-19.

We welcome the assistance of all my country’s development partners. The new framework plan for sustainable development that has just been signed for the next five years with the United Nations system perfectly integrates the priorities adopted by the Emerging Comoros Plan. All the combined efforts of the Government and bilateral and multilateral partners of the Comoros must be focused on the major objective of ensuring our country’s emergence by 2030. I would like to point in that regard to the Development Partners Conference for Comoros held in December 2019, in which hundreds of bilateral and multilateral partners and representatives of the private sector participated. By the end of the Conference, which France was kind enough to host, we had mobilized partners who expressed their interest in supporting the implementation of our plan, which today remains the general benchmark for the development of the Union of the Comoros. The strong presence of our nation’s partners and the importance of the announcements made attest to the success of that historic meeting.

I am also committed to close cooperation with the countries with which we share a common destiny in the South-Western Indian Ocean. Together we intend to implement common actions to significantly strengthen our bonds of good-neighbourliness and cooperation for the well-being of our respective peoples. However, all that momentum has unfortunately been blunted by the major health crisis, which took every country by surprise and weakened our follow-up to the commitments made at the Paris conference. The reality today is that we have to face facts. We have no choice but to learn to live with this virus. We therefore need to find ways to move forward with our previously planned projects. I would like to launch a friendly and fraternal appeal from this rostrum to all our partners so that together we can find the ways and means to realize our commitments made

in Paris aimed at financing the various projects in the Emerging Comoros Plan. The Union of the Comoros has set up an executive secretariat responsible for monitoring the Development Partners Conference, which will work in close collaboration with the relevant national authorities as well as all our partners.

At the regional level, the Union of the Comoros passed the torch of the presidency of the Indian Ocean Commission last May to France, to which we wish every success and the triumph of the ideals and values cherished by the peoples of the Indian Ocean. The Comorian presidency of the Indian Ocean Commission was a success. It advanced the subregional organization in a reform process aimed at making it more efficient, more modern and better able to meet the expectations of our countries' populations, following a ministerial retreat that my Government organized in Moroni. Our Comorian presidency also worked to successfully manage the COVID-19 pandemic in member countries and to establish a regional plan for the blue economy and a strategy for the revival of regional economies.

The Union of the Comoros is also participating in regional efforts aimed at ensuring security in East Africa. We have given unwavering support to our sister republic of Mozambique in the fight against the scourge of terrorism, which unfortunately spares no countries. We must therefore maintain our regional and international solidarity in a relentless effort to combat it and ensure our regional security.

The Union of the Comoros has been very honoured to assume a vice-presidency within the African Union (AU) and is therefore committed to playing an effective role, helping to promote the noble values defended by the African Union in connection with peace, stability, respect for human rights and the achievement of the Agenda 2063 in all its aspects. We are working closely with the AU Bureau, particularly on the quest for a peaceful solution to the dispute between our brother nations of Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia.

Our presence here every year at the United Nations is proof of the importance we attach to multilateralism and of our belief in the major role that this Organization plays in further humanizing the world. In that regard, I want to commend the address by President Biden of the United States and his commitment to multilateralism. Our presence at the General Assembly this year also reflects our common determination, even stronger and more steadfast, to act for the good of our respective

peoples. We are here to say yes to everything that will contribute to a better balance in the world, and to say no to anything that contradicts that. And we especially say no to COVID-19.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): 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. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Gabon to introduce an address by the President of the Gabonese Republic.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic and Head of State, to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

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

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex VII and see A/76/332/Add.5).

Address by Ms. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania

The Acting President: The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Ms. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Hassan: Let me begin by joining previous speakers in applauding the President for his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session and for the exemplary manner in which he has guided the session so far. I also commend him for his effectiveness in making it possible for us to meet in person despite the unprecedented circumstances brought on by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The holding of a physical general debate this year, albeit with limitations, once again demonstrates that humankind and multilateralism cannot and should not succumb to the virus, and therefore that where there is a will, there is a way. That spirit is what we need going forward. It is why I support and subscribe to the theme of this seventy-sixth session, which urges all of us to build resilience through hope in order to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people and revitalize the United Nations.

As this is my maiden speech to the General Assembly, on behalf of the people and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania I would like to thank all the States Members of the United Nations for their messages of condolence to our nation following the untimely passing of our late President, Mr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, on 17 March. May his soul continue to rest in eternal peace. We remain indebted to all for the thoughtful and comforting messages that have helped us to prevail over that unprecedented test of our nationhood. I also want to thank the outgoing President of the seventh-fifth session for dedicating a slot on 16 April, at the 59th plenary meeting of the General Assembly (see A/75/PV.59), to pay tribute to our beloved President Magufuli. It was indeed a gesture of solidarity and brotherhood.

It is not sheer coincidence that I chose to attend the general debate for my first trip outside Africa since taking office. I did so out of my deep sense of conviction and faith in the ability of multilateralism to solve the multitude of challenges that our world faces today. I am here to assure the Assembly that under my stewardship, Tanzania will remain a formidable member of the United Nations and a dependable supporter of multilateralism. We will keep our arms open to those who embrace us and engage with us. We will continue to be the Tanzania that States have known and relied on, a Tanzania that peacefully and respectfully coexists and cooperates with all countries, big or small, mighty

or weak, rich or poor, to make this world, our world, a better place for all of us.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how vulnerable we are as individual countries, regardless of our size, wealth or geography. As we meet here today, we have less than a decade ahead to meet our collective commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I note with great regret that right now, according to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, the world is not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, mainly owing to the adverse impact of COVID-19. The report further shows that in some areas the pandemic has even reversed progress that was achieved years back. For instance, it is expected that around 71 million people who had been able to emerge from extreme poverty will be pushed back into that situation because of the pandemic. What is depressing is the fact that these effects are not felt evenly. We in the developing world are the worst affected. It is therefore imperative that we undertake concerted efforts to address this devastating situation.

Developing nations must be helped to address the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19. On that note, we are grateful to the multilateral financial institutions for their efforts to save many economies from collapsing. Those kinds of interventions are important. We cannot afford to take refuge in the excuse of COVID-19 as a pretext for not making sufficient progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Tanzania has not been spared by COVID-19. After the onset of the pandemic, we in Tanzania, and I believe in many other developing countries, were stuck in the twilight of protecting lives and livelihoods. The measures advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO) were geared to protecting lives. However, in a country like Tanzania, in which a large proportion of the population, whom we need to keep afloat, lives on a subsistence economy, my country has had to adopt all necessary measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, including joining the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, in order to ensure that Tanzanians can gain access to the vaccine. The vaccination campaign started in July with the most vulnerable communities, to be followed by other age groups.

Globally, when COVID-19 vaccines were being developed, some of us were hopeful that this would mean something good for all of humankind. We

have nevertheless learned that the virus is moving faster than the global production and distribution of vaccines, and that the vast majority of vaccines have been administered in high- and upper-middle-income countries. At the current pace, it is unlikely that we will meet the WHO threshold of vaccinating at least 40 per cent of people in every country by the end of 2021 and at least 70 per cent by the first half of 2022. The level of vaccine inequity that we are seeing is appalling. It is truly disheartening that while most of our countries have inoculated less than 2 per cent of their populations and are therefore seeking more vaccines for them, other countries are about to roll out a third dose, which they call a booster vaccine. We tend to forget that no one is safe until everyone is safe. It is crucial that countries with surplus COVID-19 vaccine doses share them with others. On another note, it is our humble request that the patent rights on the vaccines be waived for developing countries so that they can afford to produce the vaccines themselves. That is not only essential to ending this pandemic but the right thing to do if we are to save humankind.

On the economic front, Tanzania, like others, has not been spared by the effects of COVID-19. Before the pandemic, our economy was growing at a steady rate of 6.9 per cent, while the current rate is estimated at 5.4 percent. We are now embarking on reviving our tourism sector, which was badly affected because of the travel restrictions imposed in many countries in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. While slowly trying to revive most of the economic activities suffocated by the pandemic, my Government continues to work hard to improve the business environment and attract more investment. Aware of the nexus between economic growth and governance, we have managed to maintain peace and political stability, with a vibrant democracy and institutionalized good governance practices that uphold the rule of law and human rights.

I would like to note the Secretary-General's report on *Our Common Agenda*, which raises key issues of common concern, such as gender equality, climate change and youth development. With regard to gender equality, COVID-19 is threatening to roll back the gains that we have made. For me, as the first female President in my country's history, the burden of expectations for delivering gender equality lies more heavily on my shoulders. It is for that reason that I commend the initiative of UN-Women, France and Mexico in organizing the Generation Equality Forum

that took place in Paris in June, at which my country volunteered to champion women's economic rights and justice. My Government is aware that being passionate about gender equality is not sufficient and is therefore reviewing our policy and legal frameworks in order to come up with actionable and measurable plans to ensure women's economic empowerment and other aspects of gender equality and gender parity. We are also working on designing and implementing gender-responsive microeconomic plans, budget reforms and stimulus packages with the objective of reducing the number of women and girls living in poverty.

The challenges of climate change are really affecting livelihoods and peace and security and have resulted in the forced displacement of some of our people. The Government of Tanzania spends between 2 and 3 per cent of our gross domestic product on mitigation and on building community resilience, and that is a lot in a country that is still grappling with poverty, along with the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, which itself has compromised our capacity to respond to the harmful impact of climate change. Our actions today will therefore determine the future of our planet in terms of climate change. In that regard, I call for a transparent modality for financial disbursement and emphasize that developed countries should fulfil their commitment to contributing \$100 billion annually by 2025 so as to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

In conclusion, I would like to echo my country's commitment to pursuing the principles of multilateralism as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. I urge other nations to continue supporting this great institution. The onset of COVID-19 has taught all of us the lesson that we are deeply intertwined, and that unilateralism will not get us anywhere when it comes to challenges that transcend our national boundaries. A wise person once said, and I quote, "Alone, one will go fast, but together we will go far". Multilateralism must always prevail.

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

Ms. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

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

Mrs. Mc Gill (Liberia): It is my distinct honour and pleasure to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency 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.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex VIII and see A/76/332/Add.5).

Address by Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq

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

Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq, 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. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Salih (spoke in Arabic): We would like to congratulate the President on his election to lead the General Assembly, and to wish him every success in his task.

I am speaking to the Assembly today as a representative of Iraq, a founding State of the United Nations. I am speaking on behalf of its people, whose roots go back to the most ancient times, to the civilizations of Ur, Sumer, Babylon and Assyria, the oldest known to humankind. We meet here today as we continue to face the health challenges created by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as those of violence, terrorism, sustainable development and climate change. These are grave challenges that require serious solutions. They once again underscore the central role of the United Nations and of international organizations in uniting those with differing positions in order to address these dangers, and it is time to address them together. Our meeting

this year is an opportunity to cooperate and agree on a road map for action for the future.

In Iraq, the Government has taken a series of necessary health measures to control the pandemic, despite our limited medical infrastructure, which suffered from extensive destruction during the wars we endured in recent decades. We have been able to increase the capacity of the governmental institutions providing treatment and prevention. Iraq was one of the first countries to join the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility to ensure vaccines for its citizens and foreign residents. I would like to take this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of my Government and people for the international organizations, particularly the World Health Organization, that have supported us in addressing this pandemic.

In the past 40 years alone, Iraq has suffered from wars, embargoes, tyranny and genocide campaigns. We have known mass graves, the Anfal or Kurdish campaign, the use of chemical weapons in Halabja, the draining of our marshes and the grip of terrorism on our cities. We have been able to overcome those terrible tragedies and liberate our cities from the evil forces of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), thereby delivering the world from their crimes, thanks to the courage of our army and police, as well as the Popular Mobilization Forces and the Peshmerga, with the support of the international coalition and our neighbours and friends, as well as the great role played by the religious authority of An-Najaf al-Ashraf in mobilizing people for that fateful confrontation. Our armed forces continue to act with determination to stamp out the remaining terrorist cells that threaten the security of Iraq, its region and the world.

We cannot understate the danger posed by terrorism. If we become lax or distracted by regional conflicts, we will simply see these obscurantist forces return to threaten our peoples and our security. Cooperation and solidarity are the only choice in our fight against terrorism and the groups that support it. We have to fight its funding, address its dangerous effects and provide reparation to its victims, ensuring that the horrible suffering we have seen is not repeated. Our obligation today is to rebuild our liberated cities and ensure that the displaced can return home. We have made some progress on that, and we hope to benefit from the support of the international community in rebuilding our regions freed from terrorism. We must respond to people's urgent humanitarian needs and

improve our capacity for rebuilding our country's infrastructure so that our citizens will be able to once again live a dignified and normal life. In that context, I would like to underscore Iraq's enactment of a law on Yazidi female survivors in order to ensure justice for the members of that group, who have suffered the worst kinds of oppression and exploitation at the hands of Da'esh. The law also covers women from other societal groups.

There is another problem, that of corruption, which is also a threat to the security and stability of the whole world. Our country is dealing with the corruption that has arisen in the wake of the heavy burden left behind by the wars, conflicts and violence that squandered a huge part of the country's resources, depriving Iraqis of its riches. For Iraq the fight against corruption is therefore a national battle. We cannot normalize our country's situation without defeating corruption. That means we must eliminate the sources of corruption and block their various forms of access. We must ensure the restoration of the funds that have been plundered or trafficked, much of which has been used to perpetuate violence and chaos in our country. We have no choice but to win this war.

Based on its commitment to fighting corruption, Iraq joined the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 2000, as well as the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention of 2010. We are also working on a bill for recovering plundered assets, and the Government recently held an important conference aimed at coordinating efforts to that end. In that context, I would like to call on our friends in the international community to help us to find and restore the money that has been stolen from Iraq due to corruption, which would be a decisive deterrent step. We also reiterate our call for establishing an international alliance to combat corruption and restore pillaged funds, similar to the International Coalition against Terrorism. We cannot eliminate terrorism unless we eliminate corruption, which itself constitutes a political economy of violence and terrorism. Corruption and terrorism are interlinked, intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

Our planet is facing an existential danger from extreme climate change, which is threatening future generations. While our political views may differ, we must remain united in facing climate change, which is a danger that threatens us all. Iraq is experiencing difficult climate conditions. Desertification and scarce water resources have put us in fifth place among the

countries most weakened by climate change, according to the sixth Global Environmental Outlook's regional assessment for West Asia. Iraq has acceded to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and we are working on a strategy aimed at preserving the environment and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We have drafted a document on national contributions to guide our economic transformation and promote the concept of a green economy in order to attract new investment to Iraq and ensure greater participation by the private sector in addressing climate change.

We must revive Mesopotamia. This region was previously known as the Sawad Land and the Garden of Eden, thanks to its green and fertile areas. Because of its geographic location in the centre of the region and its diverse environment, which includes palm trees, marshes and the mountains of Kurdistan, Iraq has the potential to be an environmental meeting point for the countries of the Middle East. That will require international support in every area in order to assist Iraq in its efforts to implement those national policies and strategies.

No country has been spared or excluded by the climate crisis, and we cannot reduce or adapt to its disastrous and harmful effects through individual measures. No country that believes its measures can protect it from the risks of climate change will succeed if similar measures are not taken by its neighbours, its region and the whole world. Our sandstorms, water scarcity, rising temperatures and growing desertification are cross-border problems that will not be solved without shared coordination and planning, internationally and at a high level, combining national, regional and international plans.

Iraq is located in the heart of the Middle East, a region that is still suffering from wars and conflicts that are the result of a breakdown in its security and political systems over the past 40 years at least. The fact that Iraq ceased to play its natural role in the region has been one of the reasons for the region's destabilization. That is why we have adopted a balanced policy based on dialogue and reducing tensions while building on common ground. We underscore the need to create a new organization based on cooperation and the economic links among the countries of the region with the participation of the international community — an organization that is able to respond to shared challenges,

whether they are those of terrorism, extremism, unstable economic conditions, an inability to provide jobs for ever-growing numbers of young people, or the repercussions of climate change. My Government has therefore organized the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership in order to underscore that Iraq, which was a synonym for conflict, is now a meeting point for the interests of the peoples and States of the region. We will not see peace efforts succeed without Iraq, an Iraq that is safe, stable and fully sovereign and whose pivotal role in the region has been re-established. That requires regional and international support as well as an end to competitive behaviour and conflicts of others on our land.

We also note that the ongoing crisis in Syria and its terrible humanitarian ramifications for the Syrian people have long ceased to be acceptable. We want to remind the world that hotspots of terrorism are always active and thrive on the continuation of this crisis, thereby threatening the Syrian people and my country, indeed the entire region. It is high time that we moved seriously to end to the suffering of the Syrians, based on respect for their right to peace and freedom and by eliminating the pockets of terrorism that are still active there.

Iraq emphasizes its position on the importance of arriving at a comprehensive and fair solution to the Palestinian question. There can be no peace in the region without guaranteeing and achieving all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to an independent State. The ongoing war in Yemen and its security and human repercussions are also a source of concern demanding a solution that ensures security and peace for its citizens and the countries of the region.

Next month, Iraq will see a decisive national event, the holding of early elections in response to a popular movement and a massive national consensus on the need for radical reforms and a new political and social pact that will address the previous system's failings and ensure good governance. The elections will be decisive and will have major effects in Iraq and possibly the entire region. They will be held at the time when our people make their pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Al-Hussain in Karbala, embodying the noblest human values of reform, peace, the rejection of injustice and oppression and the importance of living a dignified life. Iraqis are firmly determined to preserve their nation, carry out reforms, fight corruption and achieve the right to a free and dignified life. In order to realize those

noble goals, it is essential that we restore Iraqis' trust in their elections and ensure their broad participation. That is a top priority for us. We have enacted a new electoral law, more just and representative than the previous iteration, and established a new electoral commission, supported by the Government so that we can ensure that the elections will be well organized. In addition, we have a new electoral code of conduct aimed at ensuring the elections' success and enabling them to pave the way for peaceful reforms through a Parliament and Government that genuinely respect the voice of the people without manoeuvring or manipulation. The fact is that one reason for the political tension in our country has been the flaws and the lack of popular trust in previous electoral processes. In that regard, I would like to thank the countries that contributed to the Security Council's adoption of its resolution 2576 (2021), on supporting the electoral process in Iraq. We would also like to thank the Secretariat and the European Union for their role in sending international observers tasked with ensuring the greatest possible transparency, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq for all of its efforts in supporting the elections.

Iraq is a living example of diversity and profound human coexistence in history. Our people draw strength from that diversity and deep-rooted coexistence. We are aware that nations become stronger when respect for diversity becomes a criterion of their culture.

(spoke in Kurdish; no interpretation provided)

I would like to conclude by reaffirming that we are partners on this planet. We are partners in our aspirations, fears, concerns and human values. We urgently need solidarity if we are to halt the degradation of our environment and avoid wars and conflicts. Responding to those issues is the greatest gift that we can give future generations.

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

Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting. The 11th plenary meeting to continue the general debate will begin at 3 p.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 2.45 p.m.

Annex I

Address By Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa

President of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, Mr Abdulla Shahid,
Secretary General, Mr António Guterres,
Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Colleagues,
Friends,

We join today's General Debate from around the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed the nature of multilateral engagement, of diplomacy, of business, of basic human interaction.

And yet even as we are separated by the expanses of geography, the noble ideals of fellowship, solidarity and cooperation stand firm.

They are the bedrock on which the United Nations was formed 76 years ago, and they have been our guide as we confront the worst global health emergency in over a century.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused great devastation around the world.

Millions of lives have been lost and livelihoods have been destroyed.

It has shaken our sense of well-being and security.

Yet, the strong bonds of solidarity between nations have enabled us to overcome great challenges.

It was through multilateral solidarity, support and cooperation between Member States that countries in need were able to access much needed medical equipment and supplies.

In dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic it is generally agreed that vaccines are the greatest defence that humanity has against the ravages of this pandemic. It is therefore a great concern that the global community has not sustained the principles of solidarity and cooperation in securing equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

It is an indictment on humanity that more than 82 per cent of the world's vaccine doses have been acquired by wealthy countries, while less than one per cent has gone to low-income countries.

Unless we address this as a matter of urgency, the pandemic will last much longer and new mutations of the virus will emerge.

South Africa reaffirms its call for fair and equitable distribution of vaccines.

We urge all member states to support the proposal for a temporary waiver of certain provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights to allow more countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries, to produce COVID-19 vaccines.

In this interconnected world, no country is safe until every country is safe.

We need to prepare now for future pandemics and work with greater determination towards the goal of universal health coverage.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must increase investment towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by providing low-income countries with the means of implementation.

In this respect, the G20 Debt Standstill Initiative is a welcome response to the fiscal and liquidity challenges faced by least developed economies.

The agreement on the allocation of \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights is significant, but it is insufficient to meet the extent of the need.

South Africa therefore reiterates its call for 25 per cent of the total allocation, amounting to around \$162 billion, to be made available to the African continent.

Mr President,

Climate change is an existential crisis for the entire world, yet poor countries are particularly vulnerable.

Although we bear the least responsibility for causing climate change, African countries are among those that carry the greatest cost.

For the forthcoming COP26 in Glasgow to respond adequately to the crisis we face, we need to see greater ambition and progress on mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation.

COP26 must therefore launch a formal programme of work on the implementation of the Global Goal on Adaptation.

The pandemic has been a stark reminder of our mutual dependency, and that instability in one region of the world inevitably impacts its neighbours.

That is why we seek to enhance the relationship between the UN and the African Union in maintaining peace, financing peacebuilding efforts, and advancing post-conflict reconstruction and development.

South Africa continues with its efforts to contribute to international peace and security through our membership of the Peacebuilding Commission and our continued engagement in UN peacekeeping.

The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination has been raised in this General Assembly for almost as long as this body has been in existence.

We raise it again today, not because we are bound by practice to do so, but because we resolutely believe that there shall be no peace and no justice until the Palestinian people are free from occupation and are able to exercise the rights for which this United Nations stands.

We have a responsibility, as the nations of the world, to spare no effort in finding a just, lasting and peaceful solution based on internationally agreed parameters enshrined in the relevant UN resolutions.

We reiterate our position that the people of Western Sahara have the right to self-determination in line with the relevant African Union decisions and UN Security Council resolutions.

South Africa further affirms its solidarity with the Cuban people and calls for the lifting of the economic embargo that has caused untold damage to the country's economy and people.

Mr President,

This year marks 12 years since the start of the Inter-Governmental Negotiations process and 16 years since the World Summit of 2005, where world leaders unanimously agreed on early reform of the Security Council.

We have not honoured this undertaking.

South Africa reiterates its call for urgent reform and a move to text-based negotiations through which an agreement can ultimately be reached.

We must address the underrepresentation of the African continent in the UN system, and ensure that the voice of the African continent and of the Global South in general is strengthened in the multilateral system.

Concurrent with achieving equitable geographical representation in the UN we must also address the question of gender parity.

Yesterday, we marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the World Conference against Racism in South Africa.

This remains the international community's blueprint for action to fight racism and other forms of intolerance.

We are bound by a common responsibility to fight both the legacy of past racism and the manifestation in the present.

Racism, like sexism, xenophobia and homophobia, demeans us all.

It undermines our humanity and stifles our efforts to build a world rooted in tolerance, respect and human rights.

Let us use this anniversary to renew our commitment to combatting racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance wherever they are found.

Mr President,

The challenges we face are immense.

We have to drive the global recovery.

We have to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We have to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We have to address climate change, maintain peace and security, and protect society's most vulnerable.

Above all, we must close the wounds of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment that are preventing societies from realising their full potential.

This can only be done within the framework of a revitalised and reformed multilateral system, with a strong, capable United Nations at its centre.

At this defining moment, this General Assembly of the nations of the world is once again being called upon to inspire, to guide and to lead.

The UN stands as a beacon of hope for all who dream of a better world.

Let us, together, with the United Nations as our instrument, write a new history for humankind – one of equality, freedom, fundamental rights and shared prosperity for all.

Leaving no-one behind

I thank you.

Annex II

Address by Mr. Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez, President of the Republic of Cuba

[Original: Arabic, English, French and Spanish]

Mr. Secretary General;

Mr. President;

We are living uncertain times. Under the demolishing impact of a pandemic that has worsened structural inequities and the global crisis, the role of multilateralism and the United Nations becomes ever more important. And international cooperation has been insufficient.

The implementation of neo-liberal formulas for decades has been reducing States' capabilities to meet the needs of their populations.

The most vulnerable have been left unprotected, while rich nations, the elites and the pharmaceutical transnational corporations have continued to profit.

Not only it is urgent that we unite our wills and pool our efforts for the wellbeing of humanity. It is morally imperative

More than 4.5 million people have died because of the pandemic, which has worsened the living conditions in this planet. Its sequels and impact on societies today are incalculable, but it is already known that they will not be ephemeral.

It has been so pointed out by the "2021 Sustainable Development Goals Report", while according to the International Labour Organization forecasts, there will be 205 million people unemployed in the world by 2022.

It is widely believed that the sustainable development goal of eradicating poverty by 2030, by which date the global poverty rate is projected to be 7 per cent, or around 600 million people, is already seriously compromised.

In the midst of this bleak prospect, Covid-19 vaccines have emerged as a hope. In August of 2021, more than 5 billion doses had been administered globally; however, more than 80 per cent of them were applied in middle or high income countries, even when they account for much less than one half of the world's population.

Hundreds of millions of persons in low-income countries are still waiting to receive their first dose and cannot even estimate when or if they will ever receive it.

At the same time, it is hard to believe that the world's military budget in the year 2020 amounted to almost \$2 trillion.

How many lives would have been saved should those resources had been invested in health or the manufacturing and distribution of vaccines?

The possible answers to this question involve changing the paradigm and transforming the unequal and antidemocratic international order that subordinates the legitimate aspirations of millions of persons to the selfish attitudes and narrow interests of a minority becomes an imperative.

We will never tire of repeating that the squandering of natural resources and the irrational capitalist patterns of production and consumption, which deplete

the environment and cause the climate change that jeopardizes the existence of the human species should cease.

There must be a collective effort; but developed countries, the main responsible for the current situation, which own all the resources that are needed, have the moral obligation to take responsibility.

It is necessary to struggle so that solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect prevail if we are to provide an effective response to the needs and aspirations of all peoples and preserve what is most valuable: human life and dignity.

Our peoples have the right to live in peace and security; they have the right to development, wellbeing and social justice. A revitalized, democratized and strengthened United Nations is called to play a key role in this effort.

Mr. President;

A dangerous international schism, permanently headed and instigated by the United States, is being promoted.

Through the pernicious use and abuse of economic coercive measures, which have become the instrument defining the foreign policy of the United States, the government of that country threatens, extorts and pressure sovereign States so that they speak and act against those it has identified as adversaries.

It forces its allies to create coalitions to overthrow legitimate governments; break trade agreements; abandon and prohibit certain technologies and adopt unjustified judicial measures against citizens from the countries that refuse to submit.

It often uses the term “international community” to refer to the small group of governments that tend to irretrievably follow Washington’s dictates. The rest of the countries, which account for the overwhelming majority of this Organization, seem to have no place in the “international community” definition advocated by the United States.

It is a kind of behaviour associated to ideological and cultural intolerance, with a remarkable racist influence and hegemonic ambition purposes. It is neither possible nor acceptable to identify the right of a nation to economic and technological development as a threat; nor is it possible to question the right of every State to develop the political, economic, social and cultural system that has been sovereignly chosen by its people.

In short, today we are witnessing the implementation of unacceptable political practices in the international context that go against the universal commitment to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign right to self-determination. Independent and sovereign states are being driven under multiple pressures to force them to subordinate to the will of Washington and to an order based on its capricious rules.

Mr. President;

For more than 60 years, the US government has not ceased for a single minute in its attacks against Cuba. However, at this crucial and challenging moment for all nations, its aggressiveness exceeds all limits.

The most cruel and longest-lasting economic, commercial and financial blockade ever applied against any nation, has been opportunistically and criminally

tightened during the pandemic; and the current democratic administration maintains unchanged the 243 coercive measures adopted by the Donald Trump administration, including Cuba's inclusion in the spurious and immoral list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism

It is in this context that an Unconventional War is launched against our country, to which the US Government has allocated, in a public and notorious manner, millions through manipulation campaigns and lies, with the use of the new information technologies and other digital platforms, in order to portray, internally and externally, an absolutely false image of the Cuban reality, sow confusion, destabilize and discredit the country and vindicate the 'change of regime' doctrine.

They have done everything to erase the Cuban Revolution from the political map to the world. They accept no alternatives to the model they conceive for their own backyard.

Their plan is perverse and incompatible with the democracy and freedom they advocate.

But our enemies must be clear that we will not give away the Homeland and the Revolution that several generations of patriots bequeathed to us by standing their ground. Today I would like to reiterate before the respectable and real community of nations that every year votes almost unanimously against the blockade, what Army General Raúl Castro expressed some years ago: "...Cuba is not afraid of lies, nor does it give in to pressures, conditions or impositions, wherever these may come from..."

Mr. President;

We are not daunted by the colossal challenges. We will continue to create for Cuba.

We offer selfless solidarity to those who need our support and we also gratefully receive it from friendly governments and peoples and the Cuban community abroad. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support at this juncture, which dignifies humanity values and unconditional international cooperation without any interference.

At the same time, in response to the requests received and guided by its profound fraternal and humanistic vocation, Cuba has sent more than 4 900 cooperation workers, organized into 57 medical brigades, to 40 countries and territories affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our dedicated health workers have not had a minute of rest in the struggle against the pandemic inside and outside Cuba.

They are the same who took to the streets to assist the brother people of Haiti after the devastating earthquake that shook that country hardly a few weeks ago. Those who travel from the most remote places to a Cuban province go, without dusting off the dust of the road, to deliver their expertise and knowledge to the mission of saving lives.

They are much more than everyday heroes; they are the pride of our nation and a symbol of its vocation for justice. Dozens of personalities and thousands of people have signed their candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize.

We also take pride in the Cuban scientific community which, despite huge scarcities, created three vaccines and two candidate vaccines against the COVID-19

pandemic. They represent the realization of the idea expressed by Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution in 1960, who asserted that the future of our homeland must necessarily be a future of men and women of science.

Thanks to the support of our men and women of science and the health staff, during the first 10 days of this month, more than 15.8 million doses of the vaccines Abdala, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus have been administered; and 37.8 per cent of the Cuban population is fully vaccinated.

We expect to achieve full immunization by the end of 2021, which will make it possible for us to advance in the struggle against the new outbreak of the pandemic.

Mr. President;

We ratify our aspiration to achieve the full independence of Our America and a socially and economically integrated Latin American and Caribbean region, capable of living up to the commitment established in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, in the face of the attempts to re-impose the Monroe Doctrine and neo-colonial domination.

We are opposed to every attempt to destabilize and subvert the constitutional order and the civic and military unity and destroy the work that was initiated by Commander Hugo Chávez Frías and continued by President Nicolás Maduro Moros in favour of the Venezuelan people.

We reiterate that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will always be able to count on Cuba's solidarity.

We ratify our firm support to the brother people of Nicaragua and its National Reconciliation and Unity Government, led by Commander Daniel Ortega, who are courageously and proudly defending the achievements attained against the threats and interventionist actions of the US government.

We support the Caribbean nations' claim for fair reparations for the horrors caused by slavery and slave trade. We likewise support their right to a just, special and differentiated treatment, which is indispensable to meet the challenges resulting from climate change, natural disasters, the unjust international financial system and the difficult conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We reaffirm that the brother people of Puerto Rico should be free and independent after more than a century of submission to colonial dominance.

We stand in solidarity with the Republic of Argentina in its just claim for its sovereign rights over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

We reiterate our commitment to peace in Colombia. We are convinced that a political solution and a dialogue between the parties is the appropriate way to achieve it.

We also call for an end to foreign interference in Syria and full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, while we support the search for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on that sister nation.

We call for a just, comprehensive, all-encompassing and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, which includes the end of the Israeli occupation of the usurped Palestinian territories and the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian

people to build its own State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We condemn the unilateral coercive measures imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We reaffirm our unswerving solidarity with the Saharan people.

We strongly condemn the unilateral and unjust sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We reiterate our unshakable support to the "one China" principle and oppose any attempt to harm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China, as well as any interference in its internal affairs.

We reject the attempts to expand NATO's presence up to the Russian borders; the interference in Russia's affairs with regard to its sovereignty and the imposition of unilateral and unjust sanctions against that country.

We call for an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Belarus and reiterate our solidarity with President Alexander Lukashenko and the brother people of Belarus.

The United Nations cannot ignore the lessons learned in Afghanistan. It took two decades of occupation, a toll of thousands of deadly casualties, 10 million displaced and billions of dollars in costs — which turn into profits for the military-industrial complex — to reach the conclusion that terrorism cannot be prevented or fought with bombs; that occupation only leads to destruction and that no country has the right to impose its will on sovereign nations. Afghanistan is not an isolated case.

It became obvious that wherever the United States intervenes, instability, death and hardships increase, leaving behind long-lasting scars.

Mr. President;

We ratify Cuba's determination to continue speaking the truth in a transparent way, however much this might be upsetting to some; defending the principles and values we believe in; supporting just causes; confronting violations as much as we have confronted foreign aggressions, colonialism, racism and apartheid and struggling ceaselessly for the greatest possible justice, prosperity and development of our peoples, who deserve a better world.

Thank you, very much.

Annex III**Address by Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Faso
and President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso**

[Original : French]

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

My country, Burkina Faso, welcomes your brilliant election as President of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I can assure you of our full support for the success of your mandate in contributing to the success of the “presidency of Hope”, under the seal of which you were elected.

I would like to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, for the outstanding manner in which he presided over the fate of our collective Organization during his term of office.

Mr. Secretary General,

Your brilliant reappointment on 18 June for a second five-year term at the helm of our Organization will give you the opportunity to ensure the implementation of your 2021 priorities and look forward to the coming years with greater peace of mind. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and wish you every additional success during your second term.

You rightly pointed out when you took your oath of office on 18 June that the past 18 months have been unprecedented in the history of the United Nations and that our greatest challenge is to turn the crisis of those months into opportunities.

The strategic vision you presented for your second term confirms your commitment and determination to work towards strengthening multilateralism and the United Nations in solving the multiple problems facing our world, especially in these difficult times caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Mr. President,
Heads of Delegation

The 76th session of the UN General Assembly, which opened on 14 September, is being held under the overarching theme, entitled, “Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations”.

The theme, which corresponds to the five priorities of the President of the General Assembly, calls on us all of us to act in line with the fact that they are centred upon global challenges that no country can meet alone. More than ever, we need an even stronger and more committed multilateralism.

Indeed, in addition to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries in the world today are facing other scourges, such as terrorism, climate change, poverty, etc.

All indications are that if the trend continues, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals will unfortunately not be met.

With regard to the coronavirus disease, in particular we must continue to mobilize and further strengthen international solidarity to fight the pandemic, which is causing millions of families to mourn and aggravating the already-worrisome economic situation of countries.

At the national level, Burkina Faso has adopted a response plan, which is addressing health needs and determining the social and economic recovery measures to be taken. Thanks to the COVAX Facility and the Governments of friendly countries, vaccine doses have been received, and the vaccination programme is under way.

I thank the multilateral, bilateral and private partners that have supported Burkina Faso in the efforts to jointly counter the pandemic. I urgently call for greater international solidarity so that we can truly be shielded from the devastating effects of the pandemic.

Furthermore, the fight against COVID-19 cannot allow us to forget the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is also regarded as a pandemic. I welcome the holding of the High-level Meeting on AIDS on 8 June 2021 and the adoption of the political declaration calling for action to defeat AIDS by 2030.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Terrorism also remains a great challenge that we must face in view of the many victims throughout the world. In Africa, in particular the Sahel region, development efforts have been undermined in recent years by recurrent terrorist attacks.

In Burkina Faso, the security situation continues to deteriorate, especially in the tri-border area (Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger), as well as other parts of the country.

In order to ensure the return of security in all regions under threat, the Government has adopted measures to guide national security policy and continues to strengthen the capacities of its defence and security forces so as to ensure satisfactory operational effectiveness.

Everything will be done to guarantee security in all regions under threat of the country, and I would like to reassure the international community that military operations, like those that have already been carried out, will be conducted in strict compliance with respect for human rights in keeping with Burkina Faso's international commitments in that area.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the fight against terrorism, the sole efforts of the affected countries will have a significant and lasting impact only if they are supported by the international community.

Indeed, stability, security and peace in the Sahel do not only concern the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad), especially since the situation is the result, it should be recalled, of the collapse of Libya in 2011, which led to the exponential increase in the circulation of arms in the Sahel region.

I take this opportunity to remind you that this is a matter of international peace and security and that it is therefore necessary, indeed urgent, for the international community and particularly the Security Council to support the G-5 Sahel countries in the fight against terrorism. Once again, the best way to do that would be to place the mandate of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

For now, I commend the coordination and cooperation efforts of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in our common fight against terrorism. The appointment at the 59th ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State of Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, former President of the Republic of the Niger, and Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, as champions of the resource mobilization for the 2020-2024 Action Plan for the eradication of terrorism in the region is a positive indication and a major demonstration of ECOWAS' commitment.

I would also like to acknowledge and commend the multidimensional assistance of all bilateral and multilateral partners, the European Union, the United Nations and many others in this fight and reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his personal commitment to the Sahel.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the period from 2016 to 2020, Burkina Faso is currently implementing a new development framework, the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES II) for the period from 2021 to 2025, which focuses on the following areas:

- 1) consolidating peace, security and social cohesion and promoting national reconciliation;
- 2) deepening institutional reform and modernizing public administration;
- 3) building the dynamic begun to transform the productive bases of the national economy;
- 4) consolidating human development and solidarity.

The implementation of PNDES II will require 19,000 billion CFA francs, or about 34 billion US dollars, 63 per cent of which will be provided by the national budget.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the bilateral, multilateral and private technical and financial partners that have supported us in the implementation of PNDES I, as well as the development of the new National reference framework.

I would like to thank them in advance on behalf of the Burkinabe people for the support they will unfailingly provide in mobilizing the resources necessary for the implementation of our National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period from 2021 to 2025.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Concerning climate change, the frequency of extreme weather events with their devastating consequences calls on us to take urgent, firm and concerted action. The climate emergency has been confirmed by the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which highlights the acceleration of global warming and unequivocally attributes it to human behaviour.

In Burkina Faso, it has been estimated that 34 per cent of the territory has been degraded owing not only to human activity, but also, above all, drought and endemic floods.

Competition for scarce natural resources undermines peaceful coexistence and leads to greater instability.

Burkina Faso has ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and was among the first countries to make nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in 2015 when the Agreement was adopted. Burkina Faso's NDCs are based on mitigation and adaptation measures and cover such areas as agriculture and water, livestock, housing and urban planning, biomass, energy, forestry and land use.

As there is no Planet B, all countries, whether large, small, developed or developing, must contribute to saving our planet and making the world a better place for both current and future generations to live.

Five years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the COP26, scheduled to be held in November in Glasgow, Scotland, will be an important moment to assess our common commitments and global attempts to fight the climate crisis. The pandemic has delayed the Conference, thereby providing us with the unprecedented opportunity to rethink post-pandemic economic recovery.

In order to succeed in our fight against the climate crisis, adaptation is paramount. It is therefore becoming urgent that we rethink our lifestyles and production and consumption patterns.

To that end, Burkina Faso commends the initiative to convene the Food Systems Summit, which will allow us to assess our current systems and reflect on ways to implement Sustainable Development Goal 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture".

It is our hope that the Summit will be well attended by Member States, and its outcome successful.

Despite the security and health situation it is experiencing, Burkina Faso has ceaselessly maintained its commitment to serving the cause of peace within the United Nations theatres of operations.

I take this opportunity to express my satisfaction with the consensus reached this year with regard to the proper functioning of the eleven peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned earlier, the situation in Libya deserves the international community's special attention, as a political solution to the Libyan conflict will

undoubtedly contribute to stability and security in the Sahel region. I take this opportunity to express the solidarity of the Burkinabe people with the brotherly Libyan people, whose suffering has gone on for far too long.

With regard to the Western Sahara issue, Burkina Faso reaffirms its support for the ongoing political process conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General to reach a realistic, pragmatic, lasting and compromise-based political solution to the regional dispute in accordance with the recommendations of the 17 Security Council resolutions that have been adopted since 2007.

In view of the significant progress made during the two round tables in Geneva, which brought together representatives of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario Front, Burkina Faso encourages the participants to maintain their commitment to the process in a spirit of realistic expectations and compromise.

In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a genuine challenge for the international community.

We must therefore heed the call made by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process before the Security Council in May following the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. He called for the creation of a political horizon that will allow the parties to resume constructive negotiations, as the absence of a political horizon “kills hope”. It is therefore urgent to resume negotiations.

As for the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been imposed by the United States of America on Cuba for more than 60 years, the General Assembly once again broadly rejected it on 23 June. The resolution, in addition to the 29 other resolutions of its kind adopted since 1992, emphasizes the need to end the embargo, the already-disastrous socioeconomic and health consequences of which have been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Burkina Faso commends the resilience of the Cuban people and calls for the lifting of the embargo for the sake of the well-being of the Cuban people.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 16 June, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the President's oral decision on a rollover of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council at the subsequent session and in informal plenary meetings, “building on” the meetings held during the previous session, the document, entitled Elements of Convergence, prepared by the co-Chairs, and the positions of and proposals by Member States contained in the 2015 framework document.

The historic consensus that has emerged around a basic document is an important step in the right direction.

Burkina Faso welcomes the adherence of the majority of delegations to the African common position and takes this opportunity to reiterate its support for it, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, and the indivisible nature of the two components of the African position.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is facing tough challenges. In order, to meet them, we obviously need an even stronger United Nations and multilateralism and an international community that is more committed than ever.

Let us all therefore work in synergy for a world of peace and justice, a world without hunger or armed conflict and a world free from terrorism and the COVID-19 pandemic. That will be possible if we all commit ourselves to those goals.

I thank you.

Annex IV

Address by Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, President of the Republic of Nauru

Mr. President,

It is an honour to address the opening of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (albeit virtually rather than in-person once again).

On behalf of the Republic of Nauru, I would like to congratulate Your Excellency, Mr. Abdulla Shahid on your recent assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. Let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support as you steer our important work during this session. It is heart-warming to see a fellow islander take on this prestigious role, bringing our shared challenges, resilience, and the vibrancy of big ocean states to the forefront of the work of the General Assembly.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır for his exceptional stewardship of this august body during the 75th anniversary session.

Mr. President,

This past year has truly been a turning point for the United Nations, marked by a historic anniversary and marred by disasters, conflict, and untold human suffering, all of which have been multiplied by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to overcome these adversaries, we must remain hopeful, and the hope for our shared humanity must inspire bold action.

The obstacles facing the global community now in many ways mirror the history of Nauru. We have survived epidemics that decimated our population, rebuilt and recovered from the scourge of the World Wars, overcome exploitation, and have experienced great prosperity and great loss.

Persevering through it all with the lesson that we are all deeply connected and that an outbreak in one corner of the world can produce a ripple of destruction that touches us all.

Recognizing that we are all bound together, we must all work to change course and deliver on the promise of multilateralism: an effective and robust United Nations that is fit for purpose, capable of tackling the challenges of today and the future, to build a safer, sustainable world for generations to come. A world that realizes the promise of peace, human rights and sustainable development for all and shifts away from the current trend of increasing violent conflict around the world. Previous approaches have not left the world safer, and it is time to re-commit to the vision of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. President,

This forum, which reflects the views of every Member State, has the capability to chart our path towards a resilient, just, and equitable world. Nauru as one of the smallest member of the UN family and one of the most vulnerable, is committed to multilateralism as our only way forward together, though we must open our eyes to the reality of its current failures and act to implement our historic agreements across many issues like sustainable development, climate change, development finance, and more. The policies and plans to avert further catastrophes have been negotiated and adopted in the UN's hallow halls only to meet lacklustre implementation attempts

and sit idly on bookshelves and in hard drives while the world moves on and battles new crises and shocks.

As such we applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to spearhead a revamped and reinvigorated United Nations as detailed in his report on Our Common Agenda and in principle support many of the proposals contained therewith.

Mr. President,

Inequality is growing at a rapid pace, with the pandemic deepening divisions between and within countries. Nauru is not exempt from this, and COVID-19 has only exacerbated our isolation from the global community. We have remained in a state of emergency since March 2020. The national COVID-19 Taskforce has worked tirelessly under a whole-of-government approach involving communities, the private sector, and civil society.

Through the Grace of God — we remain COVID free today. One of five countries to have this distinction.

For Nauru, and our small population of 12,000, with limited health infrastructure, our best defence against the virus is our closed borders and a capture and contain policy. However, this does not mean that we have been spared the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic. Emergency measures and costs are growing unceasingly. As a country reliant on imported goods, including produce and other foods, the challenge of supply accessibility is a stark reality.

Mr. President,

What we need to safely combat COVID-19 and begin to reopen our economy is equitable and timely access to safe, effective, and affordable vaccines. It is clear that no one is safe until we are all vaccinated everywhere. Yet, despite this knowledge access to vaccine remains elusive and uneven. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind. Therefore, we support the Secretary-General's proposal for an Emergency Platform, and a global vaccination plan.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a grave threat to the health systems of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It is of the utmost importance that we can access COVID-19 prevention, mitigation, and treatment interventions; and essential, safe, affordable, effective, and quality medicines and vaccines to prevent, contain and stop transmission of the virus.

In Nauru, with the support of the COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and our development partners we have successfully vaccinated our entire adult population. Despite this achievement our island remains at risk and unable to lift emergency measures without access to vaccines for young people, twelve to eighteen. Our small population size and lack of case numbers mean we have been shut out of qualifying and accessing any additional vaccines. While we have taken the first steps to protecting our people, we cannot achieve full vaccination and effectively protect our country without the support of the international community and equitable access.

Our efforts to respond to COVID-19 and vaccinate our people would not have been possible without the valuable support provided by our partners. We are truly grateful to our genuine friends Australia, India, Japan and Republic of China (Taiwan), for their ongoing assistance.

Mr. President,

We call on the United Nations to embrace willing and able partners like Taiwan who share common global challenges, and to ensure that the people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) enjoy the same rights as the peoples of other nations. The United Nations must live up to its ideals of universality and equality, respecting the worth of every individual. Taiwan is an important partner in the global response to this pandemic, and its exemplary response to the global pandemic should not be ignored. Taiwan is ready to share their experience and aspire to do so by joining the World Health Assembly. Taiwan should have the right to participate as an equal partner in the implementation of the SDGs as they have demonstrated their ability and supported many in the SDG fields. They should also be part of “Our Common Agenda” vision.

Mr. President,

A UN 2.0 with a renewed social contract must ensure that no one is left behind, including those in SIDS and in the Pacific.

We welcome the ongoing progress of the Multi-country office in the North Pacific. The UN Resident Coordinator system provides invaluable support to our countries. The system must be backed up by predictable and adequate funding. We call on our partners to continue to support the reinvigorated resident coordinator system through more predictable sources of financing. With the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and the climate crisis we are in, it is even more important that we have a resident coordinator system that is well funded and fully operationalized.

Ensuring sustainable financing is critical to recovering better. Nauru, like many SIDS face barriers to sustained economic growth due to our geographic remoteness, small scale of our economy, vulnerabilities to climate change, external economic and financial shocks and the rules that govern development assistance.

For years SIDS have reiterated the limitations of the per capita income as a measure of development. This arbitrary measure does not adequately consider our special circumstances and unique vulnerabilities.

Nauru was recently reclassified as a High-Income Country — this classification for us and many island nations renders us ineligible to access concessional financing. Therefore, if structural obstacles and our unique vulnerabilities are not considered and appropriately addressed, the goals of the SAMOA Pathway and the full achievement of the 2030 Agenda will continue to be compromised. We welcome the ongoing work on the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and reiterate the importance of its establishment, so countries like Nauru can access concessional finance. As such we welcome the Secretary-General’s proposal to find more holistic measurements and assessments of progress and development beyond GDP and will work closely to ensure that the concerns and realities of SIDS are reflected in the development of any complementary metric.

Fulfilling the financing promises made in the SAMOA Pathway, 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement is vital to the full and effective implementation of those historic agreements. Without adequate and predictable support from the international community Nauru and many island nations will not be able to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, nor to adapt, and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.

Mr. President,

We must end our war on nature and address the droughts, floods, fires, famine and more that climate change has provoked. Despite the undeniable impacts touching every corner of the world, we are faced with the harsh truth that funding for the root causes of climate change is exponentially greater than funding for our response.

Climate change is the greatest threat to our shared future, to people, the planet, peace, and prosperity.

Nauru, alongside our neighbours in the Pacific echo the alarm raised by the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and its “code red for humanity”. We are undertaking ambitious actions in Nauru to address the climate crisis, but we cannot do it alone. Leaders and nations everywhere must act; and act swiftly and decisively to close the widening emissions gap and keep rising temperatures well below 1.5°C goal.

The lived realities of climate change have been with many of our countries for some time now. Climate change undermines and threatens the ability of Governments and institutions to deliver basic services such as food and water. The pandemic has met the increasing impacts of climate change and multiplied them with rising inequalities and economic regressions, the resulting dangerous blend weakens the ability of any one Government to protect the safety and security of its citizens, risking social and political unrest. The security implications of climate change are transboundary in nature and require a multilateral response.

We will continue to advocate for a new Office for a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Climate and Security.

Climate change has crept into every facet and sector of life from the air we breathe, to the food we eat, to the homes we live in, and our response must be equally diverse and comprehensive. The United Nations and its Member States must take urgent action, protecting the security of the most vulnerable countries and communities, ensuring that our beloved green and blue planet does not turn red.

We are fast approaching COP26, and an opportunity that must be utilized to stem the current record-breaking period of extreme weather and climate disasters. We must follow the science with real effort and not empty pledges.

We call upon the G20 to phase out all fossil fuel subsidies by 2023 and accelerate actions towards transitioning to low Greenhouse Gas emission, climate-resilient economies, in line with Article (2)(1)(c) of the Paris Agreement. We also call on the G20 to take into consideration environmental and social safeguards in their energy systems to have long-term and sustainable alignment to the Paris Agreement.

We have a precious window to repair and renew our relationship with the planet and we must make these opportunities count.

Mr. President,

Nauru is a big ocean state. As people of the ocean, our lives are inextricably linked and connected to the Pacific Ocean. The ocean has shaped who we are, and our commitment to its responsible stewardship.

Nauru recognizes the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the overarching treaty governing access and use of the ocean and its

resources. We have enjoyed the benefits of our large exclusive economic zone and under the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), and alongside our neighbours we have successfully managed highly migratory tuna stocks at sustainable levels. Our strong regional cooperation has also been recognized globally as an example of best management practices of living ocean resources.

Building upon our strong regional ties Nauru was proud to host the Micronesian President's Summit just recently, which endorsed the Naoero Communiqué on strengthened cooperation on several areas related to regional security resulting from climate change and sea-level rise, transnational crime, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. We agreed to develop a subregional strategy to address these issues to ensure the continued security and safety of the Micronesian peoples into the future.

Mr. President,

We are committed to the Rule of Law in ocean affairs and to effective cooperation and implementation of UNCLOS and Nauru made a decision to invoke Section 1, Paragraph 15 of the 1994 Agreement, initiating the process to complete the Exploitation (Mining) Code within the next two years under the mandate of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). This process will allow Nauru, and other developing countries to participate in a new industry, accessing valuable resources in light of a historical context that far too often deprived developing countries from reaping the benefits.

We look forward to working closely with ISA members and observers to complete the draft Exploitation Code within two years and develop environmental regulations that help ensure any exploitation and seafloor collection operations are conducted safely and responsibly. I thank our partners who have been supporting countries like mine build their capacity in this regard.

Accessing these polymetallic nodule resources is critical to building the clean energy transition we need and towards a circular economy. These polymetallic nodules are needed to transform big and small countries energy systems and support our fight against the climate crisis.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to join this debate and the focus placed on looking forward towards a UN fit for purpose to meet the challenges that lie ahead, and with an emphasis on the youth of today and future generations.

Nauru looks toward the future with the guide of the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and our national plans. Education and capacity building remain priorities and key areas of investment to ensure that young Nauruans have a quality education accessible to all, that provides a platform for sustainable livelihoods. As such we welcome the proposal for a Transforming Education Summit in 2022 and coalition to promote and track green jobs and career paths for youth. We also welcome the establishment of the President of the General Assembly's Youth Fellowship Programme, in particular the focus on building capacity for young professionals from countries in special situations.

Mr. President,

I will conclude in hope for our ability to come together in solidarity, to overcome COVID-19, address climate change and achieve equality. 'Let's hand-in hand,

shoulder-to-shoulder,' as Scripture guides us, 'walk forward to meet the challenges of tomorrow.'

Together we can deliver for we the peoples.

May God bless the Republic of Nauru and may God bless the United Nations.

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

Your Excellency Abdulla Shahid, President of the

76th Session of the General Assembly;

Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary

General of the United Nations;

Majesties;

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me, Your Excellency, to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on your election as President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your vast experience will help advance the implementation of the global agenda during this Session.

I also pay tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. Volkan Bozkır, for providing outstanding leadership during the 75th Session, at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the work of our Organization.

Allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on his election for a second term. My country's stands ready to work closely with him and other Member States to achieve our shared goal of a better life for all.

The Seventy-Sixth Session in convening against the backdrop of the persistent COVID 19 pandemic. However all hope is not lost. Drawing from the collective milestones achieved to date, enhanced multilateralism and unity of purpose remain critical in mitigating this global health emergency. The hoarding and inequitable distribution with the resultant uneven vaccination patterns across the globe is not acceptable. Vaccine nationalism is self-defeating and contrary to the mantra that 'no one is safe until everyone is safe. Whether in the global North or South, rich or poor, old or young, all people of the world deserve access to vaccines.

The pandemic has demonstrated the urgent need to build resilient economies and societies that are able to cope in times of shocks and hazards. The pandemic has necessitated the need for us to build back better and greener, to emerge stronger.

The theme for the Seventy Sixth Session — "Building Resilience Through Hope — to Recover from COVID-19, Rebuild Sustainably, Respond to the Needs of the Planet, Respect the Rights of People and Revitalize the United Nations" — resonates well with the needs of the world at this juncture. Together we can indeed conquer the challenges facing humanity and realize a sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

We must restore dignity and hope, particularly for our women, youth and the vulnerable, who look to us for inspiration and assurance that their well-being and future remains at the core of all our endeavours.

Mr President;

This year's high-level meetings mark important dialogues at the heart of sustainable development in its three dimensions. The Biodiversity Summit and the Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, as well as the Nutrition for Growth Summit, all lined-up this year, complement our efforts towards a healthy planet.

Green energy is an enabler for building back better and is crucial in the direct achievement of SDGs, while playing a key role in mitigating climate change. The High-Level Dialogue on Energy Dialogue on energy sets the stage for exploring viable renewable and green energy solutions. As we do so, let us link economic growth with the accelerated transition to net-zero emission for a climate-resilient future.

My country and parts of the Southern African region continue to experience the devastating impacts of climate change, ranging from cyclone-induced floods, recurrent droughts and shorter rain seasons, hotter summers and colder winters. This is in spite of the fact that our Continent is the least polluter.

COP26 in Glasgow must therefore be about action and the fulfilment of decisions of the past. In addition, concrete financial support is essential to combat climate change beyond mere rhetoric. The 2030 Agenda remains our shared roadmap to achieve the future we all want.

For us in Zimbabwe, eradicating poverty and eliminating hunger remain a top priority. Climate change and resultant erratic weather patterns, growing populations, coupled with the effects of the pandemic on food supply chains, demand a shift from our traditional food production, processing, distribution and consumption systems.

My Government has established a firm foundation for sustained food production through the land redistribution programme as well as increased support for communal and small-holder farmers. This has led to broader and sustainable incomes for the majority of people living in rural areas who now contribute to the increased levels of household and national food and nutrition security.

The United Nations Food Systems Summit provides a welcome platform for new actions, innovative solutions and plans to deliver progress across all of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe launched Vision 2030, aimed at improving the lives of our people, sustainably managing the environment and ensuring that no one is left behind. The pursuit of this inclusive and transformative vision has seen the creation of more decent jobs, reduction of inequalities and access to quality social services.

Expanded new economic opportunities for all citizens are yielding positive results across all sectors of the economy. The multi-pronged reforms we are undertaking has seen us being one of the fastest movers in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index.

Zimbabwe presented the second Voluntary National Review during the July 2021 High Level Political Forum Remarkable progress has been registered towards universal health coverage and the creation of a competence based education system which vaults innovation for a knowledge driven economy. Higher agriculture production and productivity, through improved land and water utilization as well as the adoption of climate smart agriculture is being promoted.

The Voluntary National Review further highlighted progress made in supporting productive employment, decent work and the formalization of the informal sector. My administration continues to entrench democracy constitutionalism and the rule of law through sound legislation as well as fair and impartial administration of justice. This is indicative of our strides to achieve sustainable development by 2030. We remain available to share experiences for mutual benefit.

My Government recognizes and applauds the complementary role that the private sector, development partners, civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the realisation of SDGs in Zimbabwe.

In speaking of challenges faced in achieving SDGs the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the vulnerability of our economy which is already crippled by the adverse effects of unilateral illegal sanctions imposed on my country. This has further worsened our capacity to respond to the pandemic for the good of our citizens.

I am pleased to highlight that my Government has approved the visit to Zimbabwe by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of the Unilateral

Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights in October 2021. This will afford the Special Rapporteur an opportunity to witness first-hand, the devastating impact of these illegal sanctions on my country.

We reiterate our call for the urgent unconditional removal of these illegal sanctions.

Zimbabwe remains grateful to the SADC region, the African Union and other progressive nations who continue to stand with us and add their voices to the call for the unconditional removal of these unwarranted and unjustified illegal sanctions. We are committed to engagement, re-engagement and peaceful co-existence and to be a friend to all and an enemy to none as we build equal partnership for win-win cooperation and a common future.

Mr President;

The state of global peace and security is a cause for concern. Terrorism, illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, transnational organized crime, cybercrime and illicit financial flows among other aspects, continue to impede our march towards the realisation of sustainable peace, security and stability.

The recent acts of terrorism in our SADC region are constant reminders of our vulnerability to the scourge of terrorism which has become one of Africa's greatest security threats. African Nations need to be capacitated to effectively counter this vice along with the Continental flagship programme on "Silencing the Guns" through, "African solutions for African problems.

As we commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons during this High-level week, let us be mindful of the need to build trust based on international law, to realize the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We remain alarmed by the global rise in racial tensions, violence and hate crimes. Twenty years after the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the socioeconomic and political structures that encourage, promote and justify racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances must be torn down.

The recent adoption of the resolution establishing the Permanent Forum of People of African Decent is commendable. The Forum must inspire all of us to

build a world which harnesses our racial diversities, for global peace, harmony and sustainable development.

Respecting and upholding human rights is the obligation of all States as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Equally, self-determination and independence are fundamental rights that should be enjoyed by all people. We therefore call for the full implementation of United Nations Resolutions to end all forms of colonialism and occupation.

Mr. President,

Based on the principles of sovereign equality and independence of States, the United Nations Organization must be fair, just and anchored on multilateralism, inclusivity and transparency, to best serve the collective interests of all members. The reform of the Security Council must be expedited. My country equally supports the ongoing efforts to revitalize the General Assembly. The encroachment of other UN organs on the mandate and competence of the General Assembly is of concern.

Finally, the increased challenges facing the world today call for stronger solidarity and a renewed commitment to strengthen multilateralism, as a viable mechanism for achieving and maintaining peace, security, equality, justice, sustainable economic development and the protection of our environment.

I thank you.

Annex VI**Address by Mr. Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, Chairman of the Transitional Military Council, President, Head of State and Head of State of the Republic of Chad**

[Original: French]

President of the General Assembly,
Heads of State and heads of delegations,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its 76th session and wish him every success in his duties. Chad assures him of its support during his term.

I would also like to express our sincere gratitude and pay a well-deserved tribute to His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, outgoing President of the General Assembly, for having successfully completed his term of office, despite the difficult context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, I would like to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on his re-appointment on June 18 this year, as well as for his leadership.

Chad reiterates its support and sincere appreciation for his excellent work during his previous term and for his dynamism in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chad commends the quality and relevance of the important reforms he has implemented in the areas pertaining to the pillars of peace and security, the development system and management, as well as to gender strategy within the United Nations system.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The theme of this session, “Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations”, eloquently reflects the myriad of challenges the world continues to face, for the second consecutive year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This pandemic has traumatized humankind with its multifaceted and multidimensional consequences across the globe. It continues to wreak havoc, putting a strain on our health systems, economies, public finances, basic social services, and even the very functioning and security of our States, to name but a few of those consequences.

With more than 4.5 million deaths, 220 million people infected, and economies in tatters throughout the world, developing countries, in general, and those in Africa in particular, are deeply affected because of their structural vulnerabilities.

We welcome the solidarity demonstrated by our bilateral and multilateral partners to mitigate the shock. However, in the light of the ongoing pandemic and its devastating consequences, mobilization and vigilance must be maintained in order to scale up the global response and sustain post-COVID-19 recovery efforts.

Virus mutations and new variants must encourage us to demonstrate more solidarity, pool our efforts and resources to adapt the response, accelerate research and share equitably the vaccines that have already been developed and those to come.

In this respect, I note with regret that unequal access to vaccines remains extremely profound. Rich countries have achieved vaccine coverage of more than 50 per cent, while most African countries are at less than 2 per cent.

According to the World Health Organization, of the more than 5 billion doses administered worldwide, only 2 per cent went to Africa. Nothing justifies this imbalance, given the interdependence of our world and the need to eradicate the virus from the planet. In this context, it is incomprehensible, even unacceptable, that some countries stockpile surplus vaccines while others are in dire need.

The virus does not respect continents or borders, and even less so, nationality and social status. Unvaccinated countries or regions will be the source of new variants of the virus and their spread. In this regard, we welcome repeated calls by the United Nations Secretary-General and the WHO Director-General to make the vaccines accessible to all. Humankind's survival depends on it.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The improved prospects for post-COVID-19 economic recovery are closely linked to the improvement of the health context and the eradication of the pandemic. The expected economic recovery is also dependent on reducing the divide between all areas of the North and the South.

Developing countries, severely affected by COVID-19, are already facing various recurring challenges, such as the debt burden, difficult access to resources to fund their development, unfair trade terms with the developed world, scarce foreign direct investment, reduced remittances from the diaspora, the collapse of their tourism sector, etc.

In addition, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, including Chad, are also affected by the failure to meet official development assistance commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Chad again urgently calls on all our partners in the North to honour their commitments to vulnerable countries so as to contribute sustainably to a better post-COVID-19 economic recovery and to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, in accordance with the noble goal of the United Nations to be achieved by 2030 to "leave no one behind".

In this regard, Chad reiterates the call made several times by the member countries of the G-5 Sahel to cancel the debt of countries hard hit by terrorism and climate change, as well as by COVID-19 and widespread poverty.

It should be recalled that the lack of prospects for young people in the Sahel makes them fall victim to extremist ideologies and take the path of illegal immigration to Europe, with all the attendant risks.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to speak to you about the political and security situation in my country, Chad.

As you know, following the tragic demise of its President, the late Marshall Idriss Déby Itno, who died in battle on 20 April, while fighting mercenaries from Libya, Chad has embarked on a period of political transition.

A Transitional Military Council was established to ensure State continuity and guarantee the country's security, which has been under serious threat by heavily armed assailants on the prowl in southern Libya.

A broad-based Government, led by a civilian Prime Minister, was established on 2 May 2021 and is working assiduously to meet the deadlines for completing the transition process.

A Transition Road Map was developed and adopted in July. It is based on the following three areas.

- 1 — Strengthening security and defence,
- 2 — Organization of inclusive dialogue and consolidation of peace and national unity,
- 3 — Strengthening good governance and the rule of law.

The implementation of this Road Map, whose cost is estimated at nearly \$1.3 billion, is beyond Chad's reach on its own, and requires substantial support from its partners, through the urgent mobilization of much needed financial resources.

In the light of the enormous security, economic, financial and health challenges facing the transitional Government, Chad is calling for strong support from the international community.

In the same vein, all necessary steps have been taken to hold an inclusive national dialogue. The details of its organization and procedure are currently being examined by the committee established for this purpose.

In addition, in an effort to bring together all of Chad's sons and daughters, including armed groups, a Special Technical Committee has been created and set up to prepare for and facilitate the participation of political and military groups in the inclusive national dialogue.

In addition, following extensive and intense consultations, the National Transitional Council, which will assume the role of provisional Parliament, will be installed in the next few weeks.

In any case, the national reconciliation process is well under way and progressing at a pace that is welcomed by national stakeholders and the majority of our partners alike.

In this respect, I am pleased to welcome the return to the fold of several of our compatriots in exile and members of some armed groups, who responded favourably to the Government's policy of extending a helping hand.

I urge all our brothers who are still outside their country to return, without fear or hesitation. They will take their rightful place. Their valuable contribution to the effort of national reconciliation and the building of our country is welcomed and expected. We will welcome them all with open arms.

With this in mind, and aware of our duty to history and to the Chadian people, I would like to reassure the Assembly that nothing will weaken our commitment and determination to bring the current transition process to a successful conclusion.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Chad, which shares more than 1,000 km of a border with Libya and is linked to this brotherly and neighbouring country by history, geography and culture, even by blood, is bearing the full brunt of the consequences of the Libyan crisis, caused by recurrent armed attacks from the south of the country.

The most recent attack on Chad, which took place between 11 and 29 April and resulted in the death of the former President, the late Idriss Déby Itno, is a regrettable illustration of that fact, not to mention the chronic insecurity and instability that has persisted in the Sahel since 2012.

In this regard, it should be recalled that the United Nations Security Council, during a meeting held on 29 April, at the request of its African members, established a direct link between the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from Libya and the aforementioned painful events in Chad.

With this in mind, Chad is deeply concerned about the strong pressure from the international community demanding the immediate departure of mercenaries, foreign fighters and other irregular armed groups from Libya. The departure of Chadian nationals, who were recruited, trained, supervised, armed and financed for the war in Libya, will have an impact on Chad's security.

For this reason, Chad again urges the international community, in particular the Security Council, to take all necessary measures to establish a mechanism to oversee the planned and coordinated departure of these elements.

Chad supports a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for its nationals in the pay of Libyan factions, while renouncing violence and mercenaryism, in order for them to return to their country. We look forward to the leadership and crucial role of the United Nations in this process and to mobilizing the resources necessary to fund it.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We cannot talk about the Libyan crisis without addressing the seriousness of the security situation in the Sahel and its surrounding areas, which remains marked by the spread of terrorism, organized crime and illicit trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings.

The increase in the number of terrorist attacks against the armies of the countries of the G-5 Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, as well as the civilian populations in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, demonstrate terrorist groups' resilience and capacity to harm, which pose a serious threat to our States and jeopardize their development.

The G-5 Sahel Joint Force and the Mixed Multinational Force have made major sacrifices while combating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin, but the danger persists and continues to wreak havoc in the area, plunging innocent civilian populations into desolation and despair.

In the light of this threat, which transcends borders and puts our individual response capacities to the test, we must review our approach and unite our efforts for responses that are better adapted to the changing context and challenges on the ground. The members of the G-5 Sahel are working on that front by mobilizing their limited military, material and financial resources.

Similarly, the response to the terrorist threat should address issues related to economic development, climate change, the education of young people and access to basic social services by our populations.

In this regard, our countries, which are affected by the scourge of terrorism, which is considered a threat to peace and security, have every right to expect the solidarity of the international community, in a spirit of complementarity. We are compelled to act together in the face of global challenges.

In this same spirit, while welcoming the efforts made by the various forces operating in the Sahel, Chad stresses the urgent need for greater support for the aforementioned joint forces and individual member States alike.

To this end, Chad reiterates the repeated calls made by the Conference of Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel to the international community, in particular to the United Nations Security Council, to grant the G-5 Sahel Joint Force a mandate, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to provide it with sustainable and predictable funding.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Chad reaffirms its principled position on the reform of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council. This reform, which Africa has championed for several years, simply reflects the legitimate aspirations of more than 1.2 billion Africans. How can we ignore this persistent call from an entire continent that is unjustly excluded from an organ that claims to be representative of all humankind and to act on its behalf?

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Nearly all items on its agenda concern Africa.

It is high time to end the interminable negotiations and be resolute in implementing this reform, which has been long awaited by a large part of humankind, well beyond Africa.

While appealing to the sense of justice and equality among all nations — the founding values of the United Nations we hold dear — Chad reiterates its support for and attachment to the Common African Position as expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, the institution and all Member States, as well as the representatives of regional organizations present in the room, for their solidarity and moral support to Chad, following the tragic and sudden death of former President, the late Idriss Déby Itno.

Lastly, in the name of the founding principles of the United Nations and of friendship among peoples, Chad reiterates its call for the lifting of the unjust embargo imposed on Cuba, which is a serious threat to that country. On this note, while wishing us every success in our work, I thank you for your kind attention.

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

[Original : French]

Mr. President,
Majesties,
Heads of State and Government,
Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his brilliant election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I am delighted to see the hope generated by his vision and his perfect knowledge of international issues.

I would also like to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Volkan Bozkır, for the remarkable work he accomplished in a particularly difficult context.

To the Secretary-General, I reiterate my warm congratulations on his reappointment and my full support for his dynamic action throughout his first term of office, as well as my confidence in his leadership in the search for lasting solutions to the many threats and challenges facing our Organization.

The proposed theme for the general debate of our session, “Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations”, provides me with an opportunity to share our thoughts on major current issues.

As we all know, the unprecedented health crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still prevalent, has completely destroyed the structures our societies, our economies and our way of life together.

The development of several vaccines through international collaboration and the ongoing vaccination campaigns in many countries are a ray of hope for humankind. Vaccination is the only truly effective way to stop the spread of the virus.

Joining forces to overcome the coronavirus pandemic is, in my view, an opportunity to overcome other major crises facing humankind.

Indeed, COVID-19 has revealed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of our economies and health systems, forcing us to rethink our development models in order to render them more resilient.

Some developed countries are already planning to relocate all or part of their strategic productive fabric in order to reduce their external dependence.

Africa should also be part of that paradigm shift in order to break away from the crises that are hindering its development.

That also requires the capacity to build basic infrastructures that guarantee the security of populations, a zero-tolerance approach towards corruption and the efficient management of public resources.

We also need to train quality human capital, invest massively and urgently in health infrastructure and finally break the vicious circle of dependence on raw materials.

Our economies must therefore industrialize in order to create more wealth by taking full advantage of our human capital and natural resources.

To that end, the rigorous and transparent management of debt and resources linked to the export of raw materials is essential in the transition phase.

Finally, it is more vital than ever that we accelerate the digital transition and mobilize internal resources by strengthening financial inclusiveness, particularly in favour of women.

All in all, we must learn the lessons of the pandemic and rebuild our societies in a more sustainable, just and inclusive way.

Once again, I call on world leaders to step up multilateral efforts in order to build together a global economy that takes into account the aspirations of peoples who want to see a more equitable sharing of vaccines and technological progress.

At such a pivotal phase of the dynamics of coming together, it is fundamental to meet the just demands of the universal conscience, including an equitable distribution of the benefits of technologies. Otherwise, we run the risk of seeing an international order that constitutes a source of human fragility, mistrust between nations and global insecurity.

Another issue that calls for our solidarity and is a priority for us today is the climate security of our planet.

The twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), which will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, in November, should therefore be an unprecedented moment of action.

I recall that the objective is to halve greenhouse gas emissions and preserve biodiversity while promoting investment in green infrastructure in developing countries to stimulate and decarbonize their economies.

Indeed, the consequences of climate change, notably sea-level rise, earthquakes and recurrent forest fires, are putting our societies and communities under pressure and should make us aware of the urgency of acting collectively.

Those phenomena interact with socioeconomic and political problems in our countries, highlighting risks such as political and economic instability, food insecurity and large-scale migration, inter alia.

States and communities should now adapt to face the challenges of climate change.

Therefore, without prejudice to mitigation, the international political agenda needs a significant increase in resources for adaptation to climate change.

I remain convinced that no single Government can take on climate change adaptation alone. International cooperation is therefore, in my view, essential to support local action, both as a means to enhance international security and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The link between climate change and insecurity also appears obvious to me.

As members are aware, Gabon has always been committed to peace and climate security. That commitment will remain intact throughout my country's term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2022-2023.

Welcoming the confidence of the international community, I would like to reiterate my firm commitment to work tirelessly to silence the guns everywhere and to take resolute action in the ongoing search for a global consensus that will ensure the security, dignity and prosperity of the peoples of the world.

Gabon will seize every opportunity to call for the advent of a fairer international order, marked by a reform of the United Nations Security Council that includes both equitable representation within the Council and an improvement in its working methods, in line with the Common African Position expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

In parallel with greater international solidarity and the expected reform of the Security Council, the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and ECOSOC must also be carried out in order to give a new impetus to our Organization.

Those reforms are indispensable as they are likely to have a considerable impact on the achievement of several of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including the response to the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples contained in Agenda 2063.

Mr. President,

The hope of rebuilding our governance models in a sustainable way and to meet the needs of the planet requires the commitments made to be respected and put into practice.

I am thinking in particular of the transfer of so-called clean technologies and the improvement of people's access to renewable energies in order to accelerate their transition into decarbonized, environmentally friendly industries.

Achieving those commitments is crucial to support the efforts of countries like Gabon, which has substantially mobilized its domestic resources in the implementation of climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation projects.

In its investment for climate security, Gabon saves the equivalent of 140 million tons of carbon each year, while emitting only 35 million tons.

Therefore, with a difference of more than 100 million tons of carbon each year, Gabon's action is crucial for the future of all humankind.

The inscription of Ivindo National Park on the World Heritage List, following Lopé National Park, affirms the universal and exceptional value of our protected.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners and friendly countries, as well as all others who, through their multifaceted support, accompany our efforts to conserve and manage our forests sustainably.

Mr. President,

Gabon, like many oil-producing countries, has suffered the full impact of the drastic fall in commodity prices. That situation has led to the slowing down of our economic activity.

In that context, I have instructed the Government to put in place the Transformation Acceleration Plan (TAP). That programme aims to revive our economy by accelerating the transition to a post-oil era and by focusing on new growth engines with the potential to be increased. Those include the mining, forestry and agricultural sectors.

In addition, Gabon is strengthening its energy capacities through the imminent completion of new solar and hydroelectric power plants in order to lend new impetus to its industrialization process.

Beyond the development of infrastructure, the intended effect of the implementation of our recovery plan is to ensure budgetary adjustment and the promotion of the private sector as levers for the diversification and transformation of the national economy.

In the education sector, the Government continues to mobilize significant resources in order to optimize the education system and bring it into line with the real requirements and needs of the labour market.

Mr. President,

Inclusion is another major concern in terms of my country's political orientation.

The scope of our political programme for equal opportunities, which I have promoted in favour of more equitable development, places particular emphasis on the appreciation of women and young people, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

As for the question of gender parity, Gabon is one of the countries in Africa where women are the most present and well represented in public life, including as Prime Minister, President of the Senate, President of the Constitutional Court, Mayor of Libreville and as Governors, inter alia.

All of those positions, which are among the most prestigious in the Republic, are held in my country by women, in whom I reiterate my full confidence.

My firm belief is that, in a globalized and competitive world, parity is a matter of social justice, equality, equity and efficiency.

Indeed, a country must be able to identify, co-opt and promote its talent and intelligence, regardless of gender.

Mr. President,

Development cannot be sustainable without peace and stability. Yet, unfortunately, peace continues to be severely tested in many parts of the world.

The price of instability, due to the impact of terrorism and armed groups, is particularly heavy for many African countries, which find themselves forced to devote substantial resources in that regard. Those phenomena are fuelled, among other things, by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the trafficking of wild species.

I believe that a global and united approach is essential in the fight against those sources of instability and fragility in various regions of Africa. We must acknowledge the fact that a threat to one nation is a threat to all.

Mr. President,

Gabon remains resolutely committed, within the United Nations, as it has always been, to the promotion of stability and peace at the continental level and in Central Africa, in particular in the Central African Republic.

The reform of the security sector in the Central African Republic should be supported in order to enable the country to equip itself with republican defence and security forces and the appropriate human, material and logistical resources.

The aim is to allow for the strategic deployment of those forces throughout the country in order to restore State authority, ensure the security of people and property and encourage the return of displaced persons and refugees.

All of that will inevitably lead to the gradual disengagement of foreign forces operating in the Central African Republic on the basis of bilateral or multilateral agreements.

It is also essential to continue the operationalization of republican institutions in order to make a significant contribution to guaranteeing the non-recurrence of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the country.

Moreover, it is necessary to support the efforts of the Central African Republic authorities to strengthen social cohesion and the economic recovery of the country in order to consolidate the gains made and guarantee lasting security.

To that end, we call on the international community and donors to maintain adequate financial support in order to establish stability and restore hope to the Central African people.

Mr. President,

The results of our efforts to build a better world will always be variable while so many peoples remain subject to harmful sanctions.

I would therefore like to reiterate a solemn appeal for the total lifting of the embargo that has been imposed on the Government and people of Cuba for several decades.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Gabon's commitment to multilateralism and to greater international solidarity, which I am convinced remain our most reliable assets for building a more resilient Organization that is able to effectively face the challenges and threats facing humankind.

I thank you.

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

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

Secretary-General of the United Nations

EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;

AMBASSADORS;

HEADS OF DELEGATIONS;

ESTEEMED DELEGATES;

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am pleased and honoured to address this Seventy-sixth (76th) Session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Government and People of Liberia.

I want to use this occasion to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the Seventy-sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly; and avail to him Liberia's fullest support in the fulfilment of his duties and responsibilities.

I also wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır for his distinguished stewardship in steering the affairs of the 75th Session of the General Assembly.

Let me also congratulate His Excellency Mr. António Guterres on his election to a second term as Secretary General of the United Nations, which begins on January 1, 2022. Mr. Secretary-General, I commend and thank you for your continued diligence and commitment to the work of the United Nations, and for ably steering its affairs, even in the face of unprecedented challenges.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The negative socioeconomic impacts and health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic remind us of the measure of work that is required at the global and national level to combat this pestilence. This is reflected in the theme for this 76th Session:

“Building resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations”

The Theme is a clarion call to all peoples of all nations, that as we try to rebuild our COVID-impaired economies, we must do so in a sustainable manner that will take due account of our environment, and have due regard for the fundamental human rights which are enshrined in the Charter of this noble institution.

Meanwhile, it is important that we pay heartfelt tribute to the courageous and dedicated public health workers around the world for their continued selfless service in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The world owes to them a debt of gratitude.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The Theme of this General Assembly also calls for a revitalization of the United Nations to make it more relevant and effective in the true fulfilment of its mandate in a changing world. This is a task that has been recognized as an imperative priority by successive previous leaders and members of the Organization in recent times.

Six years ago, and true to the ideals and principles of its Charter, the United Nations General Assembly took a giant step forward to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples, and to better their standards of living, when it adopted the landmark 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was meant to be a global plan of action; for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership; with the goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

However; since our transition to the Decade of Action for the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals, the world has been engulfed by a global pandemic which has posed enormous strains on our capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda, and has even raised the possibility of reversing development gains.

In order to build resilience through hope, we must continue to emphasize the need for attention and support to vulnerable societies and developing countries; particularly, the Least Developed Countries. Sustainable recovery from the pandemic must be based on the principle of inclusiveness and solidarity; and within the context of leaving no one behind.

Addressing the particular needs of the Least Developed Countries could significantly contribute to recovery. Support for the upcoming Fifth Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC-5), to be held in Doha, Qatar in January 2022; and the new Program of Action for Least Developed Countries for the coming decade, will also provide the basis for sustainable recovery, and the timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES:

Permit me; on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Liberia, to extend deep appreciation to all our bilateral, multilateral, development, regional, subregional, national and local partners; for their support in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and the assistance they continue to provide in our quest towards recovery.

In response to the pandemic, my Government, in line with our National Development Plan; “The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development” (PADP), has developed a Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan. This Plan aims to reduce the impact of the pandemic by providing the basis for economic recovery through short term actions, and investments in key sectors, including agriculture and tourism.

Under the Economic Recovery Plan, the Liberian economy is already beginning to show signs of resurgence, and in spite of the negative impact of the coronavirus, projections for GDP growth is now positive, and is expected to reach 4 per cent in the coming year.

Through the implementation of difficult macroeconomic reforms, my Government has been able to obtain a substantial increase in domestic revenue generation for the first time in more than a decade, and we are committed to broader economic and investment climate reforms.

In the agriculture sector for example, my Government is endeavouring to vigorously launch agricultural promotion projects, which will increase agricultural production through new entrepreneurship opportunities, innovations, and safe farming techniques. Moreover, conscious of the importance and impact of infrastructure on social and economic development, as enshrined in the PAPD, my Government has identified investment in roads; energy and ports as key priority areas.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

A further reflection on the theme for this year's General Assembly highlights the necessity to respond to the needs of our planet. The reality of climate change facing our planet demands the urgent attention and collective action of all national and international actors.

We have all observed the extension of deserts and recurrent droughts in Eastern and Southern Africa; the increasing intensity and frequency of storms and floods in our region; the alarming rise in the levels of the world's oceans due to the meltdown of the Arctic; and the frequency and size of forest fires that destroy thousands of acres of arable lands and properties. These conditions threaten our survival as inhabitants of this precious earth.

In this regard, the recent re-entry into the Paris Accord by the United States of America is a decision that my Government wholeheartedly welcomes and applauds, as we believe that this manifests and demonstrates the critical leadership needed to mobilize global coordinated action.

In the same vein, it is noteworthy that the President of the United States of America, in a recent nationwide address to the American People on the devastation caused by Hurricane Ida, called for immediate and urgent action to combat and reverse global warming trends.

For far too long, we state actors, including those on my own continent who have faced the harshest extremes of weather and climate, have been guilty of window-dressing climate issues with rhetoric and passive declarations. Liberia humbly submits to this august body that now is the time for concerted and decisive action.

Liberia, for its part, reaffirms our commitment to continue our good stewardship of our critical ecosystem of tropical rainforest, coastal mangroves and interior peatlands.

Our recently completed National Forest Inventory carried out with the support of the World Bank and the Kingdom of Norway, revealed that Liberia is endowed with nearly seven (7) million hectares of forest, representing nearly half of the entire remaining Upper Guinea forest in the West Africa region. If you add to this our 1.9 million hectares of agroforestry and coastal mangroves, it becomes obvious that close to 90 per cent of our landmass sequesters carbon.

Our forests are the last remaining untouched tracts of forested land in this region and contain some of the highest aboveground carbon stocks of any forest in the world, even higher than the carbon stocks in the great Amazonian Forest. As one of the last reserves of such high carbon stocks, it is imperative that Liberia's forests are maintained in the future. My government reiterates its commitment to do so.

Nevertheless, we know that many of the highest carbon stock forests in Liberia contain essential natural capital and ecosystem service benefits; benefits which have

so far eluded us as a developing nation. Liberia has a youthful population and faces enormous pressures for rapid development that provides decent jobs and livelihoods, especially in our productive sectors of agriculture and mining.

Our economy needs to develop, and we want to do so sustainably. We want to continue to maintain our forest and ecosystem endowments, and our incredible biodiversity, as we embrace climate-smart approaches to agriculture and mining, which are our economic mainstays.

However, in order to do so, Liberia needs meaningful partnerships on this journey of sustainable development; partnerships with the United States, as well as with the rest of the developed world, including the private sector, to allow us to leave our forests intact because of their extraordinary capacity to capture carbon for the benefit of the industrial world.

We are therefore looking forward to constructive engagements with all interested parties in this regard.

The impending United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) will provide yet another opportunity to generate more ambitious climate actions and commitments.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Cognizant of the fact that growth and development is always enhanced by the existence of peace and security, my Government remains committed to the sustenance of democracy, the rule of law, and the consolidation and maintenance of peace and security in Liberia. We remain resolute and steadfast in this commitment.

We thank the United Nations for its continued effort to maintain peace around the world. With deep gratitude, we want to thank you, as well as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union, and all our International Partners and Friends, for providing the support for the peace we continue to enjoy in Liberia. We will continue to rely on that support in enhancing our capability to maintain peace in our Land.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

After the brutal civil war that ravished our country and divided our people for more than 15 years, and which finally ended just over two decades ago, it is important to agree on a process that would bring closure to the wounds of the victims, and thereby guarantee the sustenance of peace, stability, justice, and national reconciliation.

As I have mentioned during my previous address to this body, my Government has already begun consultations with our National Legislature — the representatives of our people — in this regard.

Today, we can report significant progress in that we have already received a submission and recommendations from the Liberian Senate, which is the Upper House of our national Legislature.

We are now awaiting a similar submission from the Honourable House of Representatives, after which it is our further intention to have a wider engagement with the Liberian Judicial System, and with our strategic International Partners and Organizations. It is my hope that at the end of this consultative process, a National Consensus will evolve that will determine the pathway to resolving this issue.

In the meantime, we continue to encourage our citizens to utilize the Palaver Hut method, where perpetrators and victims can meet in traditional community forums to resolve their is-sues and their differences.

This is in keeping with one of the major recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was established at the end of the civil conflict.

MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, ESTEEMED DELEGATES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Let me reiterate that the way forward to a resilient post-Covid recovery must begin by ensuring that our interventions will be guided by the 2030 Agenda; ensuring affordable access to vaccines, testing and treatments on an equitable and inclusive basis; and strengthening the capacity of developing countries, particularly, the Least Developed Countries, so that no one is left behind as we strive to achieve the timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. These important and critical objectives can best be realized and accelerated through improved partnership and increased solidarity among all Member States.

I thank you.
