



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

9th plenary meeting
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Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Blanco Conde (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 6.50 p.m.

Address by Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic

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

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I have the distinct honour and privilege to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex I and see A/76/332/Add.4).

Address by Mr. Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, President of the Dominican Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, President of the Dominican Republic.

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. Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, President of the Dominican Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Abinader Corona (*spoke in Spanish*): As we approach the second anniversary of the beginning of the worst catastrophe in almost a century, humankind has not yet been able to bring this terrible chapter of the coronavirus disease pandemic to an end. Nevertheless, we come to this forum with the hope of renewing and strengthening the bonds of cooperation and solidarity as fraternal nations.

This community of States faces enormous challenges that can be effectively addressed only through renewed multilateralism. Indeed, in the face of pandemics, the climate emergency, the technological revolution and the need to articulate a new paradigm for the welfare state, it is vital to strengthen unity and cooperation among all nations.

We have a historic responsibility to leave the world a better place than when we found it, but that is possible only if we take seriously the global transition towards a new ecological, sustainable, inclusive and equitable production model, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That change is possible only through a global and multilateral effort that guarantees the rule

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 law, human rights and the well-being of all peoples, leaving no one behind.

Despite the unfortunate scenario created by the pandemic, our Government has promoted a free vaccination plan, the success of which can be seen in tangible results and telling statistics: 57 per cent of the eligible population is fully vaccinated, approximately 70 per cent has received at least one dose and more than 10 per cent has received a third dose, with a case fatality rate of 1.14 per cent — one of the lowest in the world.

In line with our vision of shared responsibility to find a way out of the pandemic and because we have an inventory of vaccines that has allowed us to do so, we have donated, in a spirit of solidarity, some 820,000 doses to other countries in our region, as we are convinced that we will be safe only once we are all vaccinated.

However, although we have begun to emerge from the pandemic, that will not be enough to overcome the current economic and financial crisis. In the interest of maintaining social peace, we are called upon to find a solution to the enormous debt that middle-income countries have been forced to incur in order to cope with the economic and social havoc wrought by the pandemic. There is currently no mechanism for accessing concessional finance that would allow us to solve the liquidity crisis. To address that challenge, we are forced to seek innovative yet also urgent solutions.

Recently, the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund provided an allocation equivalent to \$650 billion in special drawing rights, with the objective of strengthening global liquidity. States members of the International Monetary Fund received those funds according to their country quotas. That meant that a large proportion of those resources went to developed countries — precisely those that need them the least.

In order to resolve that unjust situation, industrialized countries should devote those resources to the creation of a mechanism to channel the quotas they received to low- and middle-income countries, giving them access to concessional funds. Multilateral financial institutions would play a key role in such a mechanism, ensuring that those resources reach the countries that truly need them. That initiative would have a very positive impact on international financial markets, as it would make debt more sustainable and

strengthen confidence in our economies while also improving the cost of financing.

The Government over which I have the honour to preside is firmly convinced that democracy is the political system that best guarantees the dignity, well-being and happiness of the people and that it can be sustained only if it is deepened and broadened. For that reason, I am proud that we have called all sectors of national life in our country to an open and pluralistic dialogue to achieve reforms that contribute to strengthening the social and democratic rule of law in the Dominican Republic.

In that connection, the Dominican Republic is a firm defender of democracy and human rights, which implies strengthening checks and balances of the executive branch, such as an independent judiciary, the decisions of which are widely respected by all. Our Government is committed to ensuring the independence of the Public Prosecutor's Office and other oversight bodies, as well as the reform of the national police, in order to guarantee the rule of law and citizen security.

In the same vein, our fundamental purpose is to defend the public sector: the common heritage of Dominicans. That requires fully transparent management, which is one of the achievements that gives us the greatest satisfaction. In the midst of the current difficult circumstances, our citizens continue to demand that we act courageously against corruption, and we have been demonstrating our conviction in that regard with clear, precise and forceful actions.

Regarding the economy, I am pleased to note that even in the midst of such difficulties, our country has reason to be optimistic. We are forecasted to end the year 2021 with an economic growth rate of 10 per cent and to maintain a growth rate of more than 5 per cent in the years to come.

I would like to suggest three actions that we consider urgent and necessary for our region and our country.

First, the Dominican Republic, as a small island developing State, is one of the countries that produces the least greenhouse- gas emissions but suffers the most from the effects of climate change. Now is the time to promote a global transformation of the economy that aligns with development levels and ensures that the required standards do not impose excessive burdens leading to additional costs that harm competitiveness and the production of goods and services. It is also just

and necessary that the enormous investments required to restore our natural resources affected by global warming should be paid for by the countries that have generated the most carbon dioxide.

The second action concerns the fact that the current financial crisis and increased levels of indebtedness caused by the pandemic cannot be resolved solely by increasing taxes in our respective countries, given the attendant social pressures and potential for upheaval. We must be creative, and we are convinced that, at no cost to their Governments, the multilateral and bilateral financial institutions can provide credit facilities through transparent, accessible, concerted and non-discriminatory mechanisms that will help countries in difficulty to quickly regain financial sustainability and access to international financial markets, with preferential rates that are not affected by the country risk index.

Our third and last recommended action concerns Haiti. Since we took office, we have warned repeatedly that the situation in Haiti could potentially spill over its borders and lead to insecurity in the region. That is why this community of nations must urgently, once and for all, attend to the Haitian crisis as one of its highest priorities, requiring ongoing follow-up. We have taken note of the fact that some Governments have recently adopted measures to deal with the consequences of the Haitian crisis. For years, our country has had to face the consequences of that tragic situation every day virtually alone. We are convinced that no unilateral action will be sufficient to overcome it.

It is imperative that we state in the strongest and most emphatic terms possible that the international community must not and cannot abandon the Haitian people when the current levels of insecurity are leading to their self-destruction. I want to say this today as sincerely as possible without the niceties of diplomatic language. Given the current division within the Haitian leadership and the dangerous presence of criminal gangs that control a significant part of their territory, the Haitians people will not by themselves be able to bring peace to their country, much less guarantee the necessary conditions for establishing a minimum level of order.

Consequently, the most important and urgent issue is bringing about security in Haiti. Only after that has been achieved can free, fair and credible elections be held. Subsequently, with a new Government as a legitimate

interlocutor, a truly comprehensive economic and social development plan will have to be prepared, with all required resources and the support and solidarity of the international community, for it is no longer possible to think only about humanitarian measures.

At this solemn gathering, I would like to state that the Dominican Republic has shown and will continue to show the solidarity and collaboration that the Haitian people deserve, but I also reiterate that there is not now and never will be a Dominican solution to the Haiti crisis.

The number of challenges facing our States is significant with regard to building a world under the banner of equality. However, we must not face them alone. Unity and multilateralism are the best ways to advance towards the goal without leaving anyone behind. I firmly believe that with every passing day, the leadership of the United Nations will continue to be revitalized and strengthened. The Dominican State reaffirms its commitment to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations — peace, human dignity, justice, social progress and freedom. Let us move firmly towards a renewed and more equitable welfare state. We cannot fail our peoples. We cannot fail history.

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

Mr. Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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

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

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

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

President Embaló (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): I warmly congratulate the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly, and wish him every success.

As we face the challenges brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the theme chosen for this year's general debate could not be more pertinent. Only with renewed hope will we be able to build resilience to overcome the socioeconomic and humanitarian difficulties caused by the worldwide health crisis and to adequately and sustainably respond to the current challenges.

In an increasingly globalized world, the relevance of the existence of the United Nations and its agencies has become of the utmost importance. It is therefore urgent to improve the efficiency of the Organization and adopt the necessary reforms of all its organs, including the Security Council, with a view to revitalizing the United Nations system in its entirety. That is the only way for us to work better towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to promote human development in all its aspects, particularly gender equality and respect for human rights. We must support the most vulnerable, promote the creation of adequate health-care systems and ensure that all countries, without distinction, have prompt and equal access to vaccines.

Guinea-Bissau, which has for many years been supported by the international community, particularly the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the African Union, is focused today on the effective achievement of its national goals such as domestic peacebuilding and the creation of better living conditions for its population, in order to provide renewed hope to the society of Guinea-Bissau.

In that context and given the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau late last year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and all Guinea-Bissau's friends and partners for their support and to affirm that, by dint of our own efforts, we have assumed the full responsibilities of the State, thereby ensuring political stability and the proper functioning of the country's institutions.

The problem of climate change is an irrefutable reality that has greater and more frequent impacts on

the small island developing States, including Guinea-Bissau. It is an ongoing challenge for all nations. Therefore, my country has developed climate change adaptation plans with both medium-term and long-term perspectives, and we have extended our national land and marine protected areas to cover more than 26 per cent of the national territory.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's commitment to working with our development partners and the entire international community to seek innovative, inclusive and viable solutions to the current challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that together we will be able to motivate our people, revive their hope and build a more harmonious and fraternal world.

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

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

Address by Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti

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

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): I have the distinct honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, on the occasion of the general debate of 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 Djibouti.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex II and see A/76/332/Add.4).

Address by Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for

Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the occasion of the general debate of 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 Kazakhstan.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex III and see A/76/332/Add.4).

The President took the Chair.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Sánchez Pérez-Castejón (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): On Sunday, 19 September, at 3:12 p.m., a volcano erupted on the Spanish island of La Palma in the Canary Islands. Since then, Spain has been following the developments on the island. The Government of Spain is committed to its citizens, who saw the lava reach their homes, their agricultural lands, their farms and their fertile land and have been left with deeply emotional memories whose impact can never be measured.

I came directly from the island of La Palma to the Assembly. I am impressed by how nature again reminds us not only of our fragility but also of our strength. Thanks to science, we were able to plan a response.

Thanks to the effective and coordinated action of our emergency services and several institutions, we kept all our citizens safe. In any event, we are compelled to ensure that no one will be abandoned in the wake of this natural disaster.

Over the past year and a half, the entire world came together for similar reasons — on the one hand because of our vulnerability to a virus that does not respect borders, ideologies or social condition; on the other hand because of a spirit of unity and confidence in science that led us, among other things, to develop effective vaccines for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in an astonishingly short time frame.

The truth is that despite appearances, the virus also reinforced inequalities. The poorest regions had neither the health infrastructure to stop the spread of the disease nor the resources to create a social safety net to protect citizens from the economic crisis. The pandemic taught us that we are all vulnerable, but it also reminded us that intolerable inequalities persist in the world and are exacerbated by global crises such as that caused by COVID-19.

Today, for example, Spain is filled with hope as we embark on a new period of recovery and transformation, with a successful vaccination campaign that has now enabled 75 per cent of our population to be fully vaccinated. That statistic is in stark contrast with statistics in countries in which the percentage of those protected against COVID-19 barely reaches 1 per cent of the population. That is the case for a country on which we are all focused today — I refer of course to Afghanistan.

As the Assembly knows, on 21 August, along with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, I visited the first group of Afghans who arrived at Torrejón Air Base, just outside Madrid. I can assure members that I will always remember the faces of those women, men and children — today's victims of geopolitical strategies and conflicts mired in the past, of ignorance and contempt among nations, of the terror associated with fanaticism and extremism, of the absence of a strong State that supports a free society, of an unjust and unsustainable model of development and, lastly, of the climate and health emergencies that we are currently experiencing.

In other words, those people were living witnesses to the greatest evils that threaten our planet. Undoubtedly, we can observe issues from afar and deem them to be

foreign and distant, but I believe that we are here to do just the opposite. We are here to provide common answers to the needs and challenges of humankind as a whole.

That is why I have come to this rostrum to make a triple appeal. First, I call for the defence of strong States that have the necessary resources to ensure the prosperity and welfare of their citizens in accordance with the values of justice, progress and equality. That is imperative to ensure an equitable recovery that closes the vast gaps of inequality.

Secondly, I call for the defence of democracy as the only alternative to any totalitarian, exclusionary or intolerant tendencies.

Thirdly, I call for the defence of international cooperation and multilateralism as the only way to provide meaningful solutions to the challenges facing the world today.

These are, in my opinion, the three cross-cutting principles that must guide our steps in the new stage we are entering, in which the key global objectives are vaccinations, socioeconomic recovery and ecological transition.

My political calling began with a lesson my grandfather taught me that I never forgot and that is especially important during these times. It is that inequality ultimately creates only poverty and what is fair for everyone ultimately benefits everyone.

Nothing exemplifies that principle better than the vaccination dilemma facing the world. We are witnessing a new division among countries that is not only producing a sense of injustice but also poses a risk to global health. The fact is no one will be safe until we are all safe. Accordingly, science reminds us at every turn that your health is our health. In that regard, no walls or borders will be able to protect some from the suffering of others.

That is why our actions now need to be both ethical and smart. I would like to announce here that Spain will increase its donation to third countries by 7.5 million vaccine doses. Instead of the 22.5 million vaccine doses that we had previously pledged, we will donate 30 million, and we will continue to augment that number as much as we possibly can.

I would also like to underscore the severity of the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region

that represents 9 per cent of the world's population but has suffered almost 30 per cent of the deaths caused by COVID-19. The Government of Spain has therefore sought to prioritize support for that region.

In fulfilling the commitment that I announced at the Ibero-American Summit held in Andorra this year, Spain has already sent more than 7.5 million vaccine doses, both through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility and bilaterally. Of the remaining 22.5 million doses that Spain will be donating in 2021, the Government of Spain has committed to sending another 7.5 million doses to Latin America and the Caribbean. In these difficult times, Spain must stand with the nations of Latin American and the Caribbean with which we share so much.

We also plan to earmark 7.5 million vaccine doses for sub-Saharan Africa and the Southern Neighbourhood countries of the European Union. I would also like to announce that we will contribute €2 million to the International Drug Purchase Facility, which is responsible for the Diagnostics Pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, in addition to the €175 million that Spain has already pledged to the development and production of vaccines in 2020–2021 and our contribution to the Diagnostics Pillar through the Global Fund. Accordingly, we will work with countries in special need of capacity-building to deal with the pandemic.

Finally, I would also like to underline that patent rights can never be an obstacle to addressing the unprecedented global health emergency. I therefore reiterate the Government of Spain's proposal to resolve the bottlenecks in production and distribution, including through a possible temporary waiver on vaccine patents and the elimination of obstacles throughout the value chain.

I sincerely believe that the pandemic laid bare another very important self-evident truth — that only through the exceptional measures and resources harnessed by all Governments throughout the world, according to their respective abilities, have we been able to avert an unprecedented economic and social catastrophe. The Government of Spain confronted the emergency from the very clear standpoint of the welfare state and multilateralism. We agreed historic measures with our European Union partners and advocated a just recovery based on the fundamental principle of leaving no one behind.

In that regard, I am very pleased to see that many other Governments of the world are also seeking a global paradigm shift away from the mistakes made in past crises. I believe strongly that now is the time to reverse the inequalities and public-service cutbacks that so weakened our societies in the face of the unexpected arrival of the pandemic. That is why I reiterate that there are no purely national solutions. If we are to champion equality as the key to progress within our societies, we must also do so in the international sphere by following the same principle of finding common solutions to global problems, as I mentioned earlier.

In that regard, we seek to guarantee inclusive, equitable and quality education not only in my country, Spain, but also in the rest of the world. That is why Spain recently announced a new contribution of €20 million to the Global Partnership for Education. By reforming our development model to make it much more sustainable, we strive to combat poverty and exclusion in all its forms — above all those linked to child poverty and gender inequality — in Spain and throughout the world. We therefore welcome the historic agreement on international taxation reached at the beginning of July. And from this rostrum, I call on every country to join the agreement and implement it as soon as possible.

We seek to ensure that international financial institutions can provide the financial and technical support required by many developing and emerging economies at this time. We therefore commend significant achievements such as the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, the Common Framework for Debt Treatment beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20 and the new allocation of special drawing rights by the International Monetary Fund.

Spain believes that the Common Framework can also benefit middle-income countries with liquidity problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic — in addition to benefiting the most vulnerable low-income countries. We also support the creation of a tool within the framework of the International Monetary Fund that would allow for the transfer of special drawing rights from the developed to the most vulnerable countries, regardless of their level of income, so that they can finance the necessary reforms that will ensure their sustainable recovery and allow them to combat and adapt to climate change and tackle poverty and inequality. In that regard, my country stands ready to

contribute to the best of its ability to such an instrument once it has been adopted.

We must now ensure in every way that the initiatives under way have the greatest possible impact as soon as possible. Let me be clear on this point. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains our guide on the path towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I believe that the pandemic has dealt a harsh blow to expectations, but it has also served to strengthen the conviction, particularly that of the Government of Spain, that meeting those Goals is more urgent and necessary than ever.

I have discussed overcoming the pandemic and managing the socioeconomic recovery — but clearly the climate emergency is the overarching crisis of our time. There is no time left for denial. It is a reality that is evidenced every day by its increasingly catastrophic consequences, such as huge wildfires, chronic droughts, floods and unprecedented weather events, which are diminishing our resources, dramatically changing our way of life and leading to irreversible losses of biodiversity. Once again, this is a common problem with common causes that demands a common response at the highest level of multilateralism.

In that regard, I can say that Spain, together with the European Union as the bloc of countries with the most ambitious nationally determined contributions, leads by example. One of the main challenges we will face at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-26), to be held in Glasgow, will be to ramp up ambition in terms of climate finance, in particular in the area of adaptation. We must meet our commitments under the Paris Agreement and significantly increase future commitments. Spain will contribute to achieving that goal by allocating €30 million to the Adaptation Fund in 2022 and will work to make COP-26 a success. The time to act is obviously now; we cannot wait.

It is also time to agree on a new global framework for biodiversity protection beyond the targets set in 2020. I would like to recall in that regard that this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Madrid Protocol, also known as the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, which was a major step forward in protecting the environment and dependent ecosystems of the Antarctic. On 4 October, an international conference will be convened in Madrid to take stock of

the achievements of the past 30 years and reflect on the challenges ahead.

Spain has made the climate crisis a top priority for Government action — of the projected investments in European funds and in our national recovery, transformation and resilience plan, 40 per cent will be earmarked for the ecological transition. By 2030, our target is for 74 per cent of the electricity we generate and 42 per cent of the total energy we consume to come from renewable sources. We also recently adopted an ambitious climate change and energy transition law in the Spanish National Parliament.

Only the determination and will of States will allow us to achieve decisive progress. However, we must not forget the importance of placing people at the centre of our decisions so as to avoid a dynamic of winners and losers. The ecological transition requires radical changes that have a direct impact on the daily lives of people, especially the most vulnerable, including on their jobs and consumption habits.

Therefore, in the same way that we are leading a just recovery project to overcome the economic crisis, we must also commit ourselves to a just green transition, which we are convinced is the most effective way to reach new levels of progress and well-being. For example, Spain's integrated national energy and climate plan foresees that our green transition policies will create 250,000 to 350,000 jobs per year. Once again, what is fair for everyone will always benefit everyone.

Our response to the three crises we face — the pandemic, the economic crisis and the climate emergency — will have a decisive impact on the international political scenario in the short and medium terms. Spain will maintain an active presence and fulfil its commitments in that scenario.

First, Latin America and the Caribbean is a region with which we share very close ties. This year, our Ibero-American Summit will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary against the backdrop of the major challenges posed by the pandemic and the tragedy of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, which have stretched the social support systems of several countries in the region to their limit. Spain advocates a comprehensive approach to the situation that addresses its causes as well as its consequences. We want to continue to be the lead actor in strengthening ties between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, because

we are convinced that will result in stability and shared prosperity on both sides of the relationship.

Secondly, we share a destiny with the Mediterranean region, in particular its coastal countries, that must also include shared opportunities, prosperity, regional integration and social inclusion. That requires securing peace and stability and resolving existing conflicts.

It is necessary to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution on Western Sahara, as established in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Spain continues to champion the central role played by the United Nations, and we support the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard.

Important steps have been taken this year on another issue that is very important to Spain — the stabilization process in Libya. That process, which Spain fully supports, must continue to be led by the Libyans themselves. The holding of elections at the end of the year should be the priority objective.

Thirdly, I would like to highlight Spain's new policy for Africa — a continent with enormous potential. We want to accompany Africans in their own quest for prosperity and progress, in the firm belief that their progress is intrinsically linked to ours. Spain is committed to efforts to restore security and peace to the people of the Sahel. I believe that stability in that region is essential to preserving the security of our citizens on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Fourthly, we cannot forget about the world's long-standing conflicts. We are approaching the thirtieth anniversary of the Madrid Peace Conference, which brought Arab nations together with Israel for the first time and launched the peace negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords. I believe it necessary to resume peace talks and make progress on the two-State solution.

With regard to Afghanistan, we must learn to work together in the new context, especially with neighbouring countries, in order to address the humanitarian crisis and prevent further destabilization in the region. We cannot afford to let our guard down in the face of the real and existing terrorist threat, which already struck a heavy blow in the midst of the evacuation operation. Afghanistan absolutely cannot be allowed to become a haven for terrorists again.

Spain is firmly committed to the pursuit of international peace and security. We deploy our men and women, both civilian and military, to United

Nations missions in Lebanon, Mali, the Central African Republic and Colombia. We work alongside NATO in Iraq, the Baltic States and the Mediterranean. We also contribute more than 25 per cent of the European Union's military force abroad, particularly in the Sahel, as part of our clear commitment to develop greater strategic autonomy for the European Union and strengthen our common security and defence policy.

On 31 December 2020, in the light of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, Spain and the United Kingdom reached a bilateral understanding on Gibraltar. That understanding should serve as the foundation of the future relationship of the territory with the European Union, given that an agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom in relation to Gibraltar is expected to be reached shortly.

That agreement must fully respect the United Nations doctrine on the territory, with which Spain is fully aligned. It must also respect my country's legal position with regard to its sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territory. Our objective, in short, is to work towards the creation of an area of social and economic prosperity that encompasses the entire area of Gibraltar and the Campo de Gibraltar.

Defending the international institution- and rules-based order is a strategic priority of the Spanish Government. We demonstrated that one year ago, together with the Prime Minister of Sweden, when we launched an initiative with a group of countries from various regions that were willing to exercise their leadership to support multilateralism and strengthen it with concrete responses.

Since then, we have been working together to realize the commitments made in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1). We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in presenting his report entitled "Our Common Agenda" and we are dedicated to working towards its implementation.

History has taught us that no country can achieve any important objective through unilateralism, individualism or solitude in a world that is increasingly globalized and international. The enemy of multilateralism is extremism. Let us not be fooled by those who, out of selfishness and individualism, would have us believe that the collective causes that unite us are not worth pursuing. In that context, in which the equilibrium of the multipolar world continues to shift, I

believe that the European Union must assume its rightful position of leadership with strength and determination. That has very concrete implications, starting with the need to develop greater strategic autonomy and strengthen its security and defence policy.

I would especially like to emphasize our commitment to strengthening the North Atlantic Alliance and adapting it to the global challenges of today and tomorrow. Spain will work with commitment and determination to ensure that the next NATO Summit, which will be held in Madrid in 2022, will lead to a new strategic concept that will provide the organization with the necessary instruments and mechanisms to face the challenges of the coming decades.

I began my speech with a reference to the hundreds of Afghan citizens who arrived in Madrid on 21 August, thanks to the joint work with our partners in the European Union and NATO. I do not consider that to be a victory; rather, I would like to highlight it as a reminder of all those in the world who remain unjustly trapped, persecuted and threatened by the enemies of progress and tolerance.

Given the scale of the tragedy, our evacuation efforts may indeed seem like a small feat. Yet we must not forget that each person is a human being with their own dreams, desires and capabilities. Their lives are equal to ours, and they deserve a new opportunity to move forward. We should therefore be encouraged to continue working to serve others. I am especially concerned about the women and girls who have played such an essential role in Afghanistan's development in recent years. Today, the future of Afghan women teachers, lawyers, journalists and politicians is in jeopardy. We must place the rights and freedoms of thousands of women and girls at the top of our priorities, because no society that allows only half of its population to advance and deliberately holds back the other half is sustainable.

I would also like to call attention to the plight of the nearly 10 million Afghan children whose survival depends on humanitarian aid, as UNICEF reminded us. The humanitarian crisis in the country, caused by drought, has deteriorated, and we are on the brink of a major humanitarian disaster. Preventing that must now be our highest priority.

The crisis in Afghanistan has led some to question the way some countries participate in the international arena. In response to such doubts, I would like to state

here that the democratic model is the only form of Government that guarantees the defence and protection of human rights and individual freedoms and that that model will remain the compass and guiding light for our action. We will continue to defend our belief that every human society, in every corner of the world, should be free to live in accordance with the basic principles of freedom, social justice, participation and dignity while respecting established law, the will of the majority and the rights of minorities — and therefore the code that supersedes any other nature or identity, namely that of human rights.

Afghanistan is not the only place where the fight for democracy continues. That fight continues on every continent, including in the world's most developed countries. It is a daily struggle against those who wish to impose inequalities that benefit a select few, those who seek to exclude or blame the most vulnerable minorities, those who incite hatred based on ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation or belief, and those who call for walls and borders that hinder the spread of the ideas of equality, freedom and fraternity.

There is no doubt that democracy is under threat; we know that. Democracy is not a gift bestowed on us but, rather, a hard-won historical conquest that we must cherish and protect among ourselves. At a time in which we face fast-moving history, profound changes to the global order and new paths to growth and inhabiting our world, I ask that we step up our commitment to democracy and participate in a project that has been embraced by millions of human beings and continues to welcome us all on equal terms. There are no racial, cultural, historical or anthropological grounds for undermining freedom. That is why democracy is the only way forward.

There is no question that democracy is the most effective system for improving people's lives, increasing their prosperity and creating opportunities. In any case, democracy needs no explanation or justification. That is why, if I may, I will conclude with words of a great Spanish social democrat of the first half of the last century, Fernando de Los Ríos. "Freedom for what?", he was asked. He replied simply, "Freedom for us to be free".

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

Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway to introduce an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Ms. Juul (Norway): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex IV and see A/76/332/Add.4).

Address by Mr. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Johnson (United Kingdom): I thank the members — the faithful few — who waited until the end of today's very important meeting. It is very good to see my audience.

An inspection of the fossil record over the past 178 million years since mammals first appeared reveals that the average mammalian species — and indeed we are all mammals — exists for about 1 million years before it evolves into something else or vanishes into extinction. Of our allotted lifespan of 1 million years, humankind — *Homo sapiens* — has been around for

approximately 200,000 years. In other words, we are still collectively a youngster.

If we imagine that 1 million years as the lifespan of an individual human being or approximately 80 years, then we are now sweet 16. We have come to that fateful age when we know roughly how to drive, unlock the drinks cabinet and engage in all sorts of activity that is not only potentially embarrassing but also terminal for ourselves and others.

In the words of Oxford philosopher Toby Ord, we are just old enough to get ourselves into serious trouble. We still cling with parts of our minds to the infantile belief that the world was made for our gratification and pleasure. We combine this narcissism with an assumption of our own immortality. We believe that someone else will clean up the mess we have made, because that is what someone else has always done. We trash our habitats again and again, with the inductive reasoning that since we have gotten away with it so far, we will get away with it again.

The adolescence of humankind is coming to an end and must come to an end. We are approaching that critical turning point in less than two months, in just over 40 days, when we must show that we are capable of learning and maturing and finally taking responsibility for the destruction we are inflicting not just upon our planet, but upon ourselves.

It is time for humankind to grow up. It is time for us to listen to the warnings of the scientists. If we look at coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we have an example of the gloomy scientist being proved right. It is time for us to grow up and understand who we are and what we are doing.

The world, this precious blue sphere with its eggshell crust and wisp of an atmosphere, is not some indestructible toy, some bouncy plastic romper room against which we can hurl ourselves to our hearts' content. Daily, weekly, we are doing such irreversible damage that long before a million years are up, we will have made this beautiful planet effectively uninhabitable, not just for us, but for many other species.

That is why the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26) — the summit soon to take place at Glasgow — is the turning point for humankind. We must limit the rise in temperatures, whose appalling effects were visible

even this summer, to 1°C. We must come together in a collective coming of age. We must show that we have the maturity and wisdom to act.

And we can. Even in the past 16 years, as it were, in this feckless youth that we have just passed, we have shown our skill. We have harnessed clean energy from wind and wave and sun. We have released energy from within the atom itself and from hydrogen. We have found ways to store that energy in increasingly capacious batteries and even in molten salt. We have the tools for a green industrial revolution. We have the kit, but time is desperately short.

Two days ago, here in New York, we had a meeting in which we heard from the leaders of the nations most threatened by climate change — Marshall Islands, the Maldives, Bangladesh and many others — and they spoke of the hurricanes, the flooding and the fires caused by the extreme meteorological conditions the world is already seeing. The tragedy is that because of our past inaction, there are further rises in temperatures that are already baked in — and baked is the word. If we keep on the current track, then the temperatures will go up by 2°F or more by the end of the century.

Never mind what that will do to the ice flows, dissolving like ice in a martini here in New York. We will see desertification, drought, crop failure and mass movements of humankind on a scale not seen before, not because of some unforeseen natural event or disaster, but because of us, because of what we are doing now. And our grandchildren will know that we are the culprits, and they will know that we knew, that we were warned. They will know that it was this generation that came centre stage to speak and act on behalf of them, on behalf of posterity, and that we missed our cue. They will ask themselves what kind of people we were to be so selfish and so short sighted.

In just 40 days' time, we need the world to come to Glasgow to make the commitments necessary. We are not talking about stopping the rise in temperatures. We cannot do that; it is too late to stop the rise in temperatures. But to restrain that rise to 1.5°C, we need to pledge collectively to achieve carbon neutrality — net-zero — by the middle of the century, and that will be an amazing moment if we can do it, because it will mean that for the first time in centuries, humankind is no longer adding to the budget of carbon in the atmosphere, no longer thickening that invisible quilt that is warming the planet.

It is fantastic that we now have countries here at the United Nations, representing 70 per cent of the world's gross domestic product, that are committed to this net-zero objective. I am proud to say that when my friend and colleague Alok Sharma, the President-designate of COP 26, began his mission — his peregrinations around the world — that number was only 30 per cent of the world's gross domestic product.

We are getting there. That is the point I am making. We can go further, and if we are going to stave off these hikes, these rises in temperature, we must go further, and we must go far faster. We need all countries, every single country represented in this Hall today, to step up and commit to very substantial reductions by 2030. I am absolutely convinced, and I passionately believe, that we can do it by making commitments in four areas, and I want the Assembly to remember them: coal, cars, cash and trees. I repeat: Coal, cars, cash and trees. It is very simple.

By the way, I am not one of those environmentalists who takes a moral pleasure in excoriating humankind for its excess. I do not see the green movement as a pretext for a wholesale assault on capitalism — far from it. The whole experience of the COVID-19 pandemic is that the way to fix the problem is through science and innovation, through the breakthroughs and the investments that are made possible by capitalism and free markets.

It is through our Promethean faith in new green technology that we are cutting emissions in the United Kingdom. When I was a kid, we produced almost 80 per cent of our electricity from coal. I know that some of the delegations in the Hall tonight come from countries that rely very heavily on coal. But in the United Kingdom, that percentage is now down to 2 per cent or less, and coal will be gone altogether from our energy production by 2024.

We have put in great forests of beautiful wind turbines on the drowned prairies of Doggerland, between Britain and Holland in the North Sea. In fact, we produce so much offshore wind that I am thinking of changing my name in honour of the God of the North wind to “Boreas’ Johnson”. Here I go: shoving in a classical allusion at this time of night to see if delegations are paying attention. I know that we are ambitious in our scheme — the developing world ending the use of coal power by 2040 and the developed world doing so

by 2030. But the experience of the United Kingdom shows that it can be done, and profitably too.

By the way, I want very much to thank President Xi of China for what he has just done to end China's international financing of coal, and I hope China will now go further and phase out the domestic use of coal as well. Would that not be a great thing? The experience of the United Kingdom shows that it can be done.

When I was elected Mayor of London, a mere 13 years ago, I was desperate to encourage more electric vehicles. We went around the city putting in charging points. In those days, charging points were pretty lonely objects, not much patronized. But, today, it is totally different, and the market for electric vehicles is growing at an extraordinary pace, maybe by two thirds every year. And Nissan is sufficiently confident now to invest a billion pounds in a new electric-vehicle factory plus a gigafactory for batteries. That is because my Government has set a hard deadline for the sale of new hydrocarbon internal-combustion-engine vehicles by 2030, which is the most aggressive deadline in the whole of Europe. Again, we call on the world to come together to drive this market in a low-carbon way, so that by 2040 there are only zero-emission vehicles on sale anywhere in the world.

My point is that we can make these massive cuts in pollution and emissions while driving jobs and growth. We have cut our greenhouse-gas emissions by 44 per cent in the last 30 years while expanding our gross domestic product by 78 per cent, and we will now go further by implementing one of the biggest nationally determined contributions (NDCs) currently being offered. The NDC is the pledge that, in the run up to COP 26, every country has been asked to make in terms of cutting carbon.

We are going to go down by 68 per cent by 2030, compared to where we were in 1990. We are making a big bet on hydrogen. We are going to be expanding our nuclear capacity. The logic of going for more renewables is clear when we look at the spike in hydrocarbon prices, particularly gas. We are helping people to reduce their own households' carbon-dioxide emissions by retrofitting their homes and going for new sources of heating. We are working towards building a “jet-zero” — the first large, guilt-free, carbon-free passenger plane. We also recognize that this is not just about using technical fixes in technology to cut carbon dioxide; we also need to work together around the

world to restore the balance between humankind and nature — a balance that has obviously been proved so hopelessly out of whack by the emergence of a zoonotic pandemic, for instance.

We need to halt and reverse the loss of trees and biodiversity by 2030. We should achieve that goal by making a pledge to do so at COP 26 in just 40 days' time. That is why we in the United Kingdom are committed to beautifying the landscape and strengthening our protection against flooding by planting millions more trees — beautiful trees that stop soil erosion, provide habitats for insects, birds and mammals, and which of course help to fix carbon in the atmosphere. We must also work towards the crucial United Nations summit on biodiversity in Kunming, China.

By the way, on the subject of planting trees, we are going to plant millions in the United Kingdom, but I was absolutely blown away the Pakistani pledge. Indeed, I invite everybody to follow the example of Imran Khan of Pakistan, who has pledged to plant 10 billion trees in Pakistan alone, and he is doing so.

It is very important that we in the developed world recognize our obligation to help less developed countries down the path of embracing these technologies. We have got to be honest. We in the United Kingdom, we in Britain, started this industrial hydrocarbon-based revolution. We were the first to send great puffs of acrid smoke into the heavens on a scale large enough to derange the natural order. Although we were in fact of course doing something rather wonderful in one sense — we were setting in train a new era of technology that was itself to lead to a massive global reduction in poverty, emancipating billions of people around the world — the industrial revolution was a good thing fundamentally — but we were also unwittingly beginning to quilt the great tea cozy of carbon dioxide around the world.

We therefore understand that when the developing world looks to us to help, we must take our responsibilities. That is why two years ago, when I last came to the General Assembly, I committed the United Kingdom to providing £11.6 billion to help the rest of the world to tackle climate change. I want the Assembly to know that in spite of all the pressures on our finances in the United Kingdom caused by COVID-19, we have kept that promise to the letter. I am therefore very pleased and encouraged by some of the pledges we have heard in this Hall, including from Denmark and

now a very substantial commitment from the United States that brings us within touching distance of that \$100 billion pledge that we need every year.

But we must go further. We must be clear that government — government cash alone — is not going to be enough. We must work together so that international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, are working with Governments around the world to leverage in the private sector. It is the trillions of dollars of private-sector cash that will enable developing nations and the whole world — all of us — to make the necessary changes. To give an example, it was the United Kingdom Government that set the strike price for the private sector to come in and transform our country into the Saudi Arabia of wind, in a manner of speaking. We do not resemble Saudi Arabia in many ways, but we in terms of offshore wind, we produce more offshore-wind power than any other country in the world.

Only yesterday, the United Kingdom's first sovereign green bond raised £10 billion on the markets, from hard-headed investors who want to make money. My point is that these investments will not only help the countries of the world to tackle climate change, but they will also produce millions — literally millions in the decades to come — millions and millions of high-wage, high-skilled jobs. Today's workforce and the next generation of green-collar workers will have the extra satisfaction of knowing that beyond being well remunerated, they are doing something useful, providing green energy and helping to save the planet at the same time. Every day, green start-ups are producing new ideas from feeding seaweed to cows to restrain their traditional signs of digestive approval to using artificial intelligence and robotics to enhance food production, capture carbon dioxide and put it into brownies and so on. It is these technological breakthroughs that will cut the cost for consumers so that we have nothing to fear and everything to gain from this green industrial revolution.

When Kermit the frog sang "It's not easy being green" — we all remember that one — he was wrong. I want Assembly members to know that it is easy. It is not only easy; it is lucrative. It is right to be green, even if Kermit was unnecessarily rude to Miss Piggy. It is easy to be green because we have the technology, as we used to say when I was a when I was a kid. We can do it. In 40 days' time, we will have the choice before us.

The poet Sophocles is often quoted — or often quoted by me anyway — as saying that there are many terrifying things in the world, but none is more terrifying than humankind. It is certainly true that Sophocles was right in sensing that our species is uniquely capable of its own destruction and the destruction of everything around us. But if we look at look at the Greek, what Sophocles actually said was that humankind is awesome.

We are both terrifying and awesome. I think he was right on that point. We have an awesome power to change things — and for the better — and an awesome power to save ourselves. In the next 40 days, we have to choose — the world has to choose — what kind of awesome we are going to be.

To get back to my metaphor of adolescence, I hope that COP 26 will be a sixteenth birthday party for humankind — not a miserable party, but a party in which we choose to grow up, recognize the scale of the challenge that we face and do what posterity demands that we must.

I therefore invite members of this great General Assembly to come in November and take part, by their actions, in what I hope will be a global coming of age and to blow out the candles of a world on fire. That is what I think we should do. I thank members for the pledges that they are making. I hope that they will increase them and do what is needed.

Mr. President, I will see you in Glasgow.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting. We will continue the general debate tomorrow at 9 a.m. in this Hall.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.

Annex I

Address by Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic

[Original: French]

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

I would like to extend my warm congratulations and best wishes to you on the occasion of the seventy-sixth regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, who, with his team, has reinvented the administrative apparatus of the United Nations to adapt it to the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19), thus avoiding any functional paralysis of the Organization.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme we are meeting around this year is in fact a call to action. It compels us to take immediate action in the health field to end the COVID-19 pandemic, which has lasted too long. It calls on us to tackle the many social and economic dimensions of the health crisis.

Mr. President,

Like the year before it, 2021 has also been deeply marked by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A few months ago, while hopes were raised for the gradual eradication of the pandemic, thanks in particular to the scientific prowess that has allowed the world to be provided with vaccines, the multiple rebounds are concerning and the Delta variant is finally forcing us to raise our level of vigilance once again. Indeed, the pandemic has led to a significant rebound in poverty and has contributed to further widening social inequalities and the gap between developed and developing countries.

According to the World Bank, the pandemic has triggered the first recession in sub-Saharan Africa for 25 years. The situation is particularly worrying in countries with fragile economies, especially the least developed countries (LDCs).

In order to overcome the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to seriously address the issue of developing countries' debt.

While welcoming the G-20's decision to approve the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) last year, I would like to reiterate the call by the African Union and United Nations agencies to see the debt burden of our countries cancelled or at least relieved. It is therefore important that the international community endeavour to respond to the conclusions of the Paris Summit on the Financing of African Economies to enable our countries to overcome the effects of the pandemic and ensure a sustainable post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

In addition, my country supports the ACT Accelerator, co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the World Health Organization (WHO), in partnership with UNICEF and the World Bank. The Coalition's COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility workstream is

now accelerating the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines. Although that initiative has helped to facilitate access to vaccines for the most disadvantaged populations, the vaccine gap remains very pronounced and the results fall far short of expectations for the programme. Indeed, while in the countries of the Global North, more than 50 per cent of the population has already been vaccinated, in Africa, for example, only approximately 1 per cent has received the vaccine.

Our efforts to eradicate the pandemic cannot be done exclusively or without an equal distribution of available vaccines to enable mass vaccination among the populations of African countries.

To that end, we encourage and support ongoing efforts to provide equitable access to vaccines in order to effectively ensure global herd immunity.

Mr. President,

Just as there is disparity in the enjoyment of the right to a vaccine, global recovery also risks splitting the world into two blocs. On the one hand, most advanced economies have access to the vaccine and can expect a rapid normalization of activities, whereas, on the other, countries with little or no access to vaccines will continue to face a resurgence of infections and increased deaths. That picture of a polarized world facing a common adversity is not the one we want.

It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that the global recovery benefits all. In light of the challenges faced by our world today, multilateralism can no longer be just another diplomatic mechanism to address those issues. It must serve to shape a global order and an innovative way of organizing international relations based on cooperation, the rule of law, collective action and the principles of shared global prosperity.

Mr. President,

The current emergency is not only a health emergency, but also an environmental one. The climate is currently showing alarming symptoms. Climate change is the greatest challenge that humankind has faced in recent decades.

The threat to human societies and ecosystems from global warming is growing. The disastrous effects of climate change on all continents are evident, including melting glaciers, hurricanes, rising sea levels and droughts that fuel fires across entire regions, leaving our peoples deeply vulnerable.

More worryingly, the annual report on the gap between needs and prospects for reducing greenhouse gas emissions indicates that, even if all the current unconditional commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change were implemented, temperatures would still rise by 3.2°C, with even more widespread and destructive climate consequences.

Current collective efforts will therefore have to be multiplied fivefold to reach the 1.5°C emissions reduction target, as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its special report on Climate Change and Land.

We must take action and we must do so now. That is why my country encourages Governments, businesses, cities and all financial institutions to join the global Carbon Neutrality Coalition. We also welcome the fact that, in the run-up to COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, countries representing more than 65 per cent of global carbon emissions have made ambitious commitments on the issue and are calling on others to join them.

Mr. President,

In my country, Togo, although the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on public investment in social sectors is greatly slowing down our efforts to promote human development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), human security and the well-being of the population remain at the heart of the Government's general policy. That need guides the daily work of sector-led initiatives, giving priority to the most vulnerable groups, namely women, children and young people.

The Government's road map, adopted in the aftermath of the pandemic in conjunction with our national development plan, reflects our shared vision of making Togo a country of cohesion and peace — a modern nation with inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Achieving our goals requires concrete actions that guarantee, inter alia, access to drinking water, access to quality education and health care, access to energy, rural entrepreneurship and agricultural business, productivity and wealth creation, employment, the empowerment of women and young people and social protection.

More specifically, while maintaining consistency in the progress already made in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction, Togo will spare no effort to ensure true social harmony for its population, which is a guarantor of inclusive development.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On 26 July, the General Assembly decided to convene a high-level meeting on universal health coverage, under the auspices of its President, for 2023. In the same vein, and in order to guarantee access to quality health care for all strata of the population through a risk-pooling mechanism, the Government adopted a law providing for universal health insurance to enable the Togolese people to lead healthy lives and enjoy well-being throughout.

The same applies to the national programme for medical and financial support for pregnant women and newborns, known as “Wezou”, which was officially launched on 26 August 2021 and is intended to contribute to a significant reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality. Such health coverage will contribute to improving maternal and child health indicators through free prenatal and maternal care for all pregnant women.

In the field of education, it should be noted that after the eradication of school fees at the pre-school and primary levels, the gradual extension of school canteens for all pupils in public primary schools and the establishment of a social and medical coverage system, the Government has recently decided, for the year 2021-2022, to exempt pupils in Togo's public secondary schools from all fees.

That latest measure, which aims to relieve parents by enabling them to prepare for the resumption of classes with peace of mind, is one to add to the list of numerous decisions taken by the Government to curb the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the Togolese population.

In terms of the fight for gender equity and equality and the advancement of women's and girls' rights, my country has made significant progress in recent years. The representation of women in decision-making bodies has evolved from 23 per cent in 2019 to 35 per cent in 2021. It is in that context that Togo has joined the global solidarity movement for greater gender equality and equity, “HeForShe”, which was

launched by UN-Women and the national campaign for which was officially launched in Lomé on 23 July.

In the field of business, Togo remains committed to improving the climate for the development and competitiveness of Togolese companies and to attracting investment. The efforts made to date have not been in vain, as evidenced by Togo's ranking in the 2021 World Investment Report, published by UNCTAD, as the country of choice for foreign direct investment in 2020 with an 85 per cent increase compared to 2019.

The results achieved so far only reinforce our ambition to make Togo an industrial hub with a strong emphasis on public-private partnerships. That is reflected in the launch of the Adetikope Industrial Platform (PIA) — one of the major milestones of our development policy. The purpose of that new industrial park is to make up for the shortfall in local earnings due to the export of raw materials. In concrete terms, it will create high value-added chains through the promotion of local industry in agro-industrial sectors such as cotton, soy, sesame, coffee, cocoa and poultry.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

For more than 75 years, our Organization has worked tirelessly to promote international peace and security, including through early warning and conflict prevention, electoral assistance and observation and peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Nevertheless, the threats we face are growing and diversifying. All over the world, religious intolerance and extremism are claiming many victims.

Africa is paying the highest price. A global response is therefore urgently needed to support the efforts of African countries and regional organizations to combat that scourge, which threatens to take root on the continent.

To do so, the funding challenges faced by the G5 Sahel and even MINUSMA must be diligently overcome. Indeed, it is incomprehensible that, to date, nearly 50 per cent of the pledged contributions have not been disbursed and that MINUSMA is facing budgetary constraints to ensure it can provide logistical support to the G-5 Sahel.

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Global prosperity depends on peace and stability in regions affected by conflict. Togo therefore reiterates the joint appeal of the G7+ member States for a global ceasefire across the planet.

I remain convinced that, by pooling our efforts, this session of the General Assembly will contribute significantly to strengthening the determination of our States to make our world a safer place, fully committed to the well-being of our peoples.

I thank you.

Annex II

Address by Mr. Omar Guelleh, President and Head of Government of the Republic of Djibouti

[Original: French]

Praise be to God, peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, his family and his companions

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

First of all, I would like to warmly congratulate you on your election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

We endorse the hope-based vision you have articulated, which we believe you will implement during your term of office.

I wish you success and assure you of my country's full support.

We thank your predecessor, Mr. Volkan Bozkır, and congratulate him on his extraordinary commitment during a challenging, difficult and uncertain year.

I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for submitting his report, entitled *Our Common Agenda*. We welcome the insightful analysis of the threats to the planet, prosperity and world peace it contains and relevant recommendations for a way out of the crisis. It is a call for urgent and collective action, and an important way to reflect on laying the foundation for renewed international cooperation, based on solidarity.

Mr. President,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on populations, especially the poor and vulnerable. It has severely affected social indicators, jeopardized progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and increased extreme poverty.

It continues to pose a threat to the health system of countries, given vaccine scarcity and the infodemic. It is therefore urgent to implement a global vaccination plan before current variants mutate and jeopardize the gains made to date in the fight against COVID-19.

In Djibouti, we immediately recognized the danger and implemented a management and response plan to contain the spread of the virus as soon as the first set of cases appeared.

The emergence of variants led to an adaptation of the strategy. We also developed a vaccination plan that includes the installation of vaccinodromes in

the capital and further inland, and promoted a community-based approach, by deploying vaccinobuses.

We designed a social response plan that seeks to:

1. Preserve the livelihoods of the poorest, vulnerable groups and those who have lost their jobs;
2. Put in place short-, medium- and long-term recovery and social support measures;
3. Put technology at the centre of all social activities, while seeking to innovate working methods and the work environment;

On behalf of the Government and the people of Djibouti, I now take this opportunity to thank all international partners that provided vaccines free of charge, in support of our vaccination strategy against COVID-19.

We hope that the summit meeting, scheduled for tomorrow Wednesday, at the initiative of President Joe Biden, will identify concrete ways to sustainably reverse the spread of the virus and urgently ensure the asymmetric deployment of vaccines worldwide.

It is also vital that greater efforts be made to build consensus on the need for the temporary lifting of intellectual property rights to accelerate vaccine production.

Mr. President,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

Due to restrictions imposed worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruptions, the severe contraction of the economy, widening Government deficits and devastating economic consequences, we are faced with the urgent need to develop solutions to stimulate recovery. In this quest, the valuable support of the international financial institutions and that of friendly countries will be crucial.

Mr. President,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

In their statements, many of my predecessors have underscored the growing concerns and uncertainties about the future of our planet.

Paradoxically, the global health crisis that has affected us for nearly two years is a unique opportunity that may not present itself again in the future. It has brought to light the intrinsic link between human health, the economy and the environment.

Indeed, the various facets of the impact of COVID-19 compel us to make a choice — continue to harm our planet and our environment or adopt a collective approach that is both courageous and that demonstrates solidarity. Yes, solidarity — solidarity with nature, solidarity with our environment, solidarity with our peoples.

It is true that in 2020, the world faced an unprecedented slowdown in economic and trade activity, according to statistics from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. In that regard, allow me to highlight some of them:

- 42 per cent drop in foreign direct investment; 20 per cent contraction in world trade
- Quadrupling of the price of container transport

With regard to the environment, there has been a considerable decrease in global greenhouse gas emissions, which contributed to a slowdown in the deterioration of the ozone layer.

To address the risks of economic collapse, Governments invested nearly \$12,000 billion in the fall of 2020 to counter the economic effects of COVID-19.

Now more than ever, given the multiple devastating effects of climate change, such as prolonged droughts, increased hurricanes, sea level rise, extreme temperatures, flooding and even locust invasion, to name a few, we have a compelling obligation to rethink our actions.

Although the Paris Agreement was a historic achievement, we must acknowledge that the efforts made have not lived up to the hopes, following COP21.

Because of their climate vulnerability, the international community must support developing countries so that they can benefit from technology transfer and expertise, as well as appropriate funding.

Allow me, at this time, to again welcome the announcement made in January this year to provide \$5 billion to help restore degraded landscapes, improve agricultural productivity and boost livelihoods, as part of the Great Green Wall, connecting Dakar to Djibouti and passing through 11 countries.

It appears that COVID-19 is a unique opportunity to, at last, lay the foundation for more egalitarian, environmentally friendly societies. We must build on the momentum to restore our societies and economies and redefine our interaction with our planet.

Mr. President,

Djibouti remains committed to building a better future, lasting peace and strong regional economic integration for the benefit of our people. It deplores the fact that the efforts we made to normalize relations with Eritrea have not yet produced the expected results. As noted by the Secretary-General in his letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 30 July 2021, we deplore the lack of significant progress on the outstanding issues, namely the border dispute and the fate of the 13 Djiboutian prisoners of war. We reiterate our call for Eritrea to agree to resolve these issues, through bilateral dialogue, mediation or binding international arbitration.

We also urge our Eritrean neighbours to proceed with the dismantling of the Anda'ali camp, as a confidence-building measure that would help create better relations between the two countries.

Djibouti is closely following developments in Ethiopia. Djibouti shares historical ties with Ethiopia and has developed productive bilateral relations in the political, economic and cultural fields. These relations are destined to grow and prosper. We reiterate our support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. We hope that, in the near future, a peaceful Ethiopia will emerge, reconciled, and return to growth and economic development.

With regard to Somalia, Djibouti is encouraged by the progress made by the country. Nevertheless, it shares the concerns expressed by the members of the Security Council regarding political disagreements among members of the Government and their possible negative impact on the Somali electoral calendar. Somalia is at a crossroads — every effort must be made to ensure that Somalia's positive trajectory is not in jeopardy!

We reaffirm our support for a just, lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the creation of an independent and sovereign State, based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. We condemn settlement expansion, demolitions and property-seizure campaigns in the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, as well as acts of violence that target Palestinian civilians. We call on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law.

Djibouti welcomes the appointment of the new Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and hopes that his appointment will give a new impetus to the efforts of the international community to achieve a lasting political solution, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

We urge the Houthis to remain constructively engaged in the peace process and reiterate our condemnation of the repeated attacks on Saudi Arabia.

We reiterate our deep concern about the threat of a possible ecological, maritime, economic and humanitarian disaster, posed by the *FSO Safer* oil tanker. It is urgent that the necessary authorizations be granted for the United Nations to proceed, without conditions, with its inspection and make the appropriate repairs in order to avoid the worst-case scenario and minimize the risk of an oil spill in the Red Sea.

Thank you for your attention.

Annex III

Address by Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Dear Mr. President,

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the Presidency of the seventy-sixth session.

I will focus today first and foremost on the triple threat we face together: COVID-19 recovery; the Climate crisis; and the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

In the last year, the COVID-19 pandemic has exploded from 32 million to 225 million confirmed cases.

We are deeply grateful to all health workers, scientists and vaccine makers who produced in a remarkably short time safe and effective vaccines.

But the economic and social repercussions remain very difficult. Unemployment has risen sharply and hundreds of millions of people are losing their livelihoods. More than 130 million people are now living in extreme poverty. Decades of development progress are being lost.

In many ways, the pandemic has exposed our vulnerability and underscored the critical importance of multilateralism and international solidarity. We must “build back” a more equitable, sustainable, and humane world.

We must begin with universal and fair access to vaccines. This matter must be resolved as a matter of global ethics and solidarity.

The unjust “vaccine gap” is a “gap multiplier”.

The IMF notes that the global economic recovery is not “global” because of the widening gap between advanced “vaccinated” economies and emerging or developing “unvaccinated” ones. The net effect will be to wipe out \$4.5 trillion of cumulative global GDP by 2025.

We must exponentially and urgently increase global access to vaccines. Kazakhstan has successfully produced its own QazVac vaccine. Two more vaccines are in development. We stand ready to share them bilaterally or under the COVAX facility.

The World Trade Organization is critical to ensuring supply chains for essential medical goods and equitable vaccine access. As the Chair of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference this November, Kazakhstan calls on WTO Members to deliver a meaningful outcome on WTO’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also need more focused cooperation between governments and the pharmaceutical industry on licenses, technology transfers and technical support.

In the meantime, economic recovery is subject to many other “known unknowns”, including technology tensions. An “economic iron curtain” scenario, in which different technologies and rules split the global economy, is becoming more likely.

Such a scenario would severely constrain those states who want to trade globally and secure tech-related supplies. Eager to avoid taking sides, they could be forced to form a “Technological Non-Alignment Movement” to mitigate risks at the intersection of technologies and geopolitics.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Carbon dioxide levels are at record highs. Wildfires, cyclones, floods and droughts have become the new normal, devastating populations and causing much preventable human suffering.

As a large landlocked country, Kazakhstan’s climate is warming faster than the global average and threatening our population and economy.

The median annual temperature has increased 2°C in the last 75 years with serious droughts now striking twice every five years.

In response, Kazakhstan intends to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. We are launching a national 2050 low carbon development strategy next month to reduce GDP energy intensity by 50 per cent from 2008 levels.

Since almost 70 per cent of Kazakhstan’s electricity generation depends on coal, the energy transition present significant challenges.

Access to green financing and green technologies will be critical to this transition, and we look to the upcoming COP26 conference in Glasgow for clear commitment on these issues. Without ambitious green financing, ambitious climate action is empty.

We also give great importance to the COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming in October 2021.

Turning to Afghanistan, we endorse the UN Security Council’s call for the establishment, through negotiations, of a new Government that is inclusive and representative.

A consensus-based system must be put in place where groups of different values, or ethnic, religious and gender background can coexist in the same country.

In general, Kazakhstan envisions Afghanistan as a truly independent, sovereign nation living at peace with itself and its neighbours. Afghanistan must continue to adhere to its international obligations and ensure its territory is free of terrorists, drugs, and human traffickers.

Whatever our political affiliations or personal feelings, we must not abandon the people of Afghanistan now.

The acute humanitarian situation should be our first priority. UN agencies and other humanitarian actors must have immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

Kazakhstan has provided a temporary relocation for UNAMA and other UN offices for Afghanistan. We are ready to provide a logistical platform for humanitarian aid into Afghanistan, as well as to contribute our fair share.

The Kazakh initiative to establish a UN Regional hub in Almaty can serve this crucial mission. We are ready to work closely with the UN, regional neighbours and interested states and organizations.

The future stability of Afghanistan depends on economic development. Afghanistan is not a threat but an opportunity. If unified and stable, it can contribute to Central Asia's development.

Excellencies,

I turn to several other important UN issues, including the need to revitalize disarmament.

Last month, on 29 August, we marked the 30th anniversary of the decision to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and relinquish the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world.

Kazakhstan again urges the nuclear-weapon States to commit themselves to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by 2045, the Centennial of the United Nations.

Similarly, there is more work to be done against existential biological threats. I proposed last year an International Agency for Biological Safety. This is a bold and ambitious idea, but we believe it is timely. Open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders is ongoing.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs has suffered a considerable setback.

Least Developed countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States — some 91 countries in total — are disproportionately affected by the pandemic given their limited means to respond to shocks and vulnerability to a debt crisis.

As the Global Chair of the LLDCs, Kazakhstan appeals to all UN agencies to work together to deliver on the 2024 Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Program of Action.

The 2030 Agenda will remain unattainable until all countries have the financial capacity to invest in a sustainable and inclusive future. In this regard, we specifically call on all development partners to jointly address international liquidity and debt vulnerabilities. ***

The World Food Programme estimates that 270 million people will face food shortages this year.

Kazakhstan is a major grain producer and exporter and a founding member of the Islamic Organization for Food Security, whose fourth General Assembly was held last month in our capital.

We invite foreign investors to join us in shaping a better, brighter future for sustainable agriculture.

Sustainable development depends not only on economic growth, but also on social and political development.

At 30 years old, Kazakhstan is already a mature and accomplished nation. Over the last few years, we have started shifting from top-down nation-building — which proved extremely efficient during early statehood — to more bottom-up democracy-nurturing. We aim to consolidate our democratic commitment and promote wider citizen engagement in governance.

For example, we have introduced direct election of rural mayors for the first time. This will place far more power and control in the hands of more than 40 per cent of Kazakh citizens. We will do the same for district mayors in 2024.

In line with the concept of a state that listens and responds to its citizens, since 2019, my Administration has launched four blocks of essential democratic reforms to strengthen human rights, the rule of law, and anti-corruption.

For example, I recently proposed applying the recent 30 percent quota for women and youth in electoral party lists to the final parliamentary composition.

There is no room for complacency. Our goal is to further improve the efficiency of the state, transparency, and competitiveness of the political process. Political reforms will have a dynamic follow-up.

In January of this year, Kazakhstan ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, abolishing the death penalty.

In June, the Government approved a Comprehensive Plan for Human Rights Protection, laying down a long-term institutional framework.

In close collaboration with our international partners, we are working hard to eliminate human trafficking, which requires extraordinary global cooperation.

We are a candidate for membership on the UN Human Rights Council for 2022-2024. If elected, Kazakhstan will strive to make a real contribution to the Council.

We also aim to advance the “democracy–religion–development nexus” during the seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions next April in Kazakhstan.

Turning to Central Asia, despite challenges to stability and security, we see a gradual strengthening of political and economic cooperation. Three Central Asian informal summits — the latest one held last month — are leading to a more cooperative and resilient region.

Our regional policy aims to gradually replace the zero-sum politics and “might makes right” of the “Great Game” with genuine cooperation and a people-centred Great Gain in the Heart of Asia.

This creates opportunities for greater global community engagement with Kazakhstan and Central Asia. We place great hope in the regional “C5+” dialogue frameworks with major extraregional actors.

In such partnerships, we emphasize Central Asia’s water-related challenges, including water scarcity, degrading quality and inefficient use. Our region’s water security is inextricably linked with energy, food and environment.

Despite the diverging interests of riparian states, Kazakhstan remains committed to a regional water-and-hydropower consortium to coordinate different policies towards mutual goals.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Situated at the Eurasian crossroads of civilizations, Kazakhstan remains committed to its well-balanced, constructive foreign policy. We enjoy good relations

with all our immediate neighbours, the Western countries, the EU, Asian and Middle Eastern states.

This is the spirit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. Next year Kazakhstan, which chairs CICA, will host a summit to mark the 30th Anniversary of the Conference.

Our world is both interconnected and fragile.

We desperately need a meaningful multilateralism that gives results to people and effective expression to global solidarity.

We need far greater engagement and genuine cooperation from international organizations, financial institutions, civil society, business, local and regional authorities, all in service of the common good.

Nothing else will secure our common future. No nation can succeed or prosper alone — there is no vaccine or wall for that.

This moment presents a collective opportunity to change the world for the better.

Thank you!

Annex IV

Address by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway

President, Excellencies,

We are contending with three crises at the same time: a climate crisis, a health crisis, and an economic crisis. All of them call for a coordinated response. All of them underline why we need international cooperation.

We need to remind ourselves of our collective strength. The United Nations was born out of crisis. Because crises have the potential to increase unity and resolve. We must harness the momentum created and take action.

President,

We know the path we need to take — and we have a plan: The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are the roadmap to the world we want.

Let me start with climate change.

We are already living with the impacts. Just ask the many people who have witnessed devastating famine, floods and forest fires. Together, we will work to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C, in line with the goal of the Paris Agreement.

The transition to a low-emission society will require profound change. But it will also create opportunities for employment and growth. To ensure a fair and just transition, we must cut emissions — not jobs. We must invest in renewables and new technology. We must put a price on carbon. Investors and businesses will rise to the challenge once the right incentives are in place.

Many countries have enhanced their targets. More countries, especially large economies, need to raise their ambition level ahead of COP26.

We are doing our part. Norway's new target is to cut emissions by at least 50 per cent —and towards 55 per cent by 2030.

We will also continue to partner with developing countries in their efforts to achieve climate-resilient and sustainable development.

President,

To tackle climate change, we urgently need to restore the health of the ocean. Healthy and productive oceans can help us achieve the SDGs. We know what has to be done.

The High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy has presented an ambitious action agenda. This should form the basis for discussions on the oceans moving forward. Effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity must go hand in hand. Without healthy oceans, we all face an uncertain future.

The Ocean Panel members have made a commitment to sustainably manage all of their ocean areas by 2025. That is one third of the world's exclusive economic zones. This is a bold target. But our ambition is even bolder: We call on all ocean and coastal states to make a similar commitment by 2030.

President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us — yet again — that global problems require global solutions. It has also shown us what we can achieve together: effective vaccines developed in record time. We must not stop there:

We need to reform and strengthen the global health architecture to prevent, detect, and respond to future threats. And we need a fully financed WHO playing a central, coordinating role.

We must invest in health. We must build robust national health systems and ensure universal health coverage.

There is a glaring inequity in vaccine distribution. Some countries have vaccinated their populations, and are on the path to recovery. For others, the lack of vaccines and weak health systems pose a serious problem. In Africa, fewer than 1 in 20 people are fully vaccinated. In Europe, one in two are fully vaccinated. This inequity is clearly unfair.

In some countries, the mindset seems to be that the pandemic is over — whilst others are facing huge waves of infection. The result is a disconnected world. It is unacceptable and dangerous. The truth is: The pandemic is not over, and it will not be over anywhere until it's over everywhere. We need to accelerate the vaccination rollout across the world.

Norway is proud to co-chair the ACT-Accelerator. It was set up to promote equitable access to tests, treatments, and vaccines. Public-private partnerships such as CEPI and Gavi are also part of the solution. Let us all agree: Financing pandemic preparedness is a sound investment — and we all benefit from the returns.

We need to finance a sustainable recovery. We have an opportunity to do things right: We must align our efforts with our roadmap, the 2030 Agenda. We must invest in the green transition. We must invest in people, women and girls in particular. And we must fulfil the promise of the SDGs, to leave no one behind.

We must secure the future welfare of a rapidly growing population. Domestic resource mobilisation is crucial to build back better and to reach the SDGs. Fair and effective tax systems are needed — not only to generate revenue, but also to build trust in government. The agreement reached in the OECD on a new framework for international tax reform is an important step forward.

Without global trade and investments, we cannot solve the challenges we are facing. This will require job creation, openness, rules-based trade and fewer trade barriers. Free trade creates win-win solutions. Protectionism does not.

President,

Respect for human rights is essential to build prosperous and free societies. It is also the basis for equitable and stable societies. Everyone who believes in democracy must now defend its core values.

On a personal note, I stand here as a Prime Minister who lost an election last week. After eight years, my Government will step down and hand over to a new team. I hope they will succeed in taking our country forward. I am mentioning this because orderly transitions cannot be taken for granted. And because democracy at work can help reduce the mistrust in and between countries. The kind of mistrust that the Secretary-General points to in 'Our Common Agenda'.

The decline in democracy and respect for human rights should be of concern to us all. We are seeing grave human rights violations in many parts of the world. In Venezuela. The atrocities and conflict in Tigray. The deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Myanmar, including for the Rohingyas. To mention a few. We count on the Security Council and regional organisations to play a proactive role.

And we are alarmed and saddened by recent developments in Afghanistan. In the past two decades, Afghans have seen a significant progress in the human rights situation. Health care systems have been improved and millions of children have received an education. These hard-won gains must be protected.

We are now particularly concerned about the rights of women and girls, and people belonging to religious, ethnic, sexual and gender minorities.

We fear for those who are at risk because of their work to advance fundamental freedoms. We will continue to support them, and the rest of the Afghan people.

We will judge the Taliban by their actions, not but by their words. The composition of the interim government is discouraging.

President,

Global challenges have a major impact on international peace and security.

Twice this year, the Security Council has discussed the security implications of climate change.

To reach the SDGs, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and disarmament are vital.

We must safeguard and strengthen the norms and structures that maintain peace.

We must make sure that progress in this area is not reversed. We need to protect and promote the framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — first and foremost, the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Great power rivalry can threaten strategic stability. Dialogue and cooperation are essential. The extension of the New START Treaty is a welcome step forward.

The international norm against the use of weapons of mass destruction must be upheld.

The increased threat from chemical weapons must be countered.

President,

Durable peace is crucial to long-term security. In our work in the Security Council, we promote dialogue, partnerships, and preventive diplomacy.

To remain relevant, the Council must respond to threats to international peace and security. It must not shy away from challenging situations.

The adoption of the resolution extending the mandate for delivering cross-border humanitarian aid into Syria was encouraging. It offers hope of finding a political solution to the long-lasting conflict.

UN peace operations play a key role throughout the world. Norway is a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

This includes financial support to enhance the capacity of UN peace operations to carry out their mandate. Especially their mandate to facilitate political processes, protect civilians and implement the women, peace, and security agenda.

Another challenge is maritime security and piracy. We need an integrated global response to make the oceans safe.

Some 90 per cent of piracy incidents take place in the Gulf of Guinea. Norway is seeking to advance this issue in the Security Council, in close cooperation with the countries in the region.

President,

In closing, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for the realistic assessment he presents in 'Our Common Agenda'. We are given a choice between breakdown and breakthrough. I remain optimistic.

We must take the crises we are now facing as our call to action. We must focus all there is to gain from acting together. There is a way forward. We have already charted our course; the 2030 agenda is our roadmap. Let's not hesitate. Let's join forces and get started right away.

Thank you.
