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## Note by the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to circulate, pursuant to decision 75/573 of 14 July 2021, the present compilation document of the statements delivered by Heads of State or other dignitaries by means of pre-recorded statements during the general debate and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall.

The statements contained in the present document were delivered on the afternoon of Monday, 27 September 2021, at the 17th meeting of the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.17). Document A/76/332 and its addenda 1 through 12 contain the statements delivered at the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th and 9th through 17th meetings of the General Assembly (A/76/PV.3, A/76/PV.4, A/76/PV.6, A/76/PV.7 and A/76/PV.9-A/76/PV.17).

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](mailto:estatements@un.org).



**Dominica** (see also A/76/PV.17, annex I)

**Address by Mr. Kenneth Darroux, Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
International Business and Diaspora Relations of the Commonwealth  
of Dominica**

*Delivered on Monday, 27 September 2021, at the 17th meeting of the General Assembly*

Secretary-General

President of the 76th Session

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and People of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and wish you every success.

Mr. President, we are convening this 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, at a time when our Planet Earth is at its warmest and each and every member state is grappling with the impact of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Dominica's Experience:

Excellencies, the Commonwealth of Dominica recorded its first COVID-19 case on March 22, 2020, and for more than 12 months, even with limited resources, we managed to keep our number of active cases within double digits and without recording a single COVID-19 related death.... because from the onset, our Government adopted comprehensive COVID-19 containment measures and protocols.

We have however in recent weeks seen a spike in cases, and have recorded our first COVID-19 deaths and we have had to redirect scarce resources to combat this surge, while increasing investment in primary health care services.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we consider ourselves fortunate and express gratitude for being a recipient of donations of vaccines from the Governments of Republic of India, the Peoples' Republic of China, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and through the COVAX facility.

We are fully aware, however, that there are still several countries with limited or no access to COVID-19 vaccines and we call on member states and the International Community by extension, to acknowledge the importance of resolution 74/274, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which calls for the strengthening of supply chains that promote and ensure universal, fair, inclusive, transparent, equitable, efficient and timely access to medicines, vaccines and other health supplies in order to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dominica firmly supports the view that vaccines are a public good and that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Excellencies, Science has proven that vaccines are an important way out of this pandemic, and a coordinated response to COVID-19 is not possible without an open and supportive multilateral system.

I wish to thank the World Health Organisation, the Pan-American Health Organisation, the Caribbean Public Health Agency and all our other bilateral partners for their continued support in our effort at preventing, detecting, and responding to this pandemic and we are particularly appreciative of the leadership of PAHO and its provision of vaccines, technical support, medical equipment and supplies under the COVAX Mechanism.

Mr. President, Dominica would like to place on record our deepest gratitude to the Government of India for allowing us to be among the first of developing countries to begin the vaccination of our citizens.

We also express our gratitude to the Government of Republic of Cuba for allowing its medical brigade to compliment the services of our health care workers who have been stretched to capacity and to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for supplying PPEs and test kits as part of our response.

The Government of the People's Republic of China continues to be a true friend to Dominica, by being one of the first countries to our aid, with the supply of masks, other Personal Protective Equipment, ventilators, testing and other diagnostic supplies and ventilators, especially during the early days of the pandemic, when these were in short supply.

Mr. President, to survive this pandemic and to better prepare for the future, priority must therefore be given to universal access to quality healthcare services to all citizens. This will require a greater role for the World Health Organization and its hemispheric counterparts such as the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Caribbean Public Health Agency (CAPHA).

For small developing states like Dominica, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse the gains that we have made in the socioeconomic development of our people, by placing additional burdens on national budgets as our governments are forced to provide increased support to our citizens.

Excellencies, the closure of businesses, and the additional cost of operating businesses during the restrictions occasioned by the actions to contain the virus, is having an extremely debilitating impact on the private sector.

Our tourism industries have been dealt a devastating blow, as the impact has been most severe in the hotel, hospitality, and service sectors. We must therefore work collectively to end this deadly pandemic.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates; living with the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing for future pandemics must now become essential components of sustainable development.

Developing countries like Dominica are at risk of not being able to meet our Sustainable Development Goals if this pandemic continues to severely impact our people and countries.

Thus, our international development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, must be responsive to our new realities and calls for more creative financial instruments that take into account these new realities.

Dominica is of the view that, this new dispensation must also reward countries for progressive policies directed at creating sustainable systems for production and consumption.

Universal access to quality healthcare must now be pursued more aggressively, whilst at the same time, access to quality and relevant education must continue, if small states are to build capacity and advance their national sustainable development agendas.

#### Climate Change

Mr. President, rising sea levels coupled with more frequent and extreme weather events, make the Caribbean one of the most vulnerable regions in the world.

Recent weather phenomena in the Commonwealth of Dominica suggest that the climate is indeed changing, with increases in temperature, changes in the seasons and erratic temperature variations.

Fellow Delegates, according to the World Bank study entitled: “Turn Down the Heat”, the number of severe hurricanes is projected to increase by 40 per cent, with double the intensity, as warming rises by 2°C and up to 80 per cent in case of a 4°C warming.

A single disaster event can affect an entire territory or economy and cause a disproportionately high loss of GDP as was the case with Hurricane Maria, which affected all the economic and social sectors in Dominica with an estimated impact of 226 per cent of GDP.

Distinguished Delegates, Dominica continues to call on the major polluters to take more aggressive actions to reduce global warming, as our planet will not be able to sustain life as we know it, if they continue to pursue their unsustainable systems of production and consumption unabated.

Dominica is working on becoming the world’s first climate resilient nation and we are committed to doing more than just adapt to the impact of climate change but these major polluters MUST take up their responsibilities to support Small island developing nations like ours, to achieve these goals.

We would like to thank our International partners who have helped to create the Climate Resilient Execution Agency of Dominica (CREAD), to coordinate donor-funded climate resilient projects, as we mainstream resilience across sectors.

Mr. President, recently, the Government of Dominica approved the Comprehensive National Resilience Development Strategy and the development of Dominica’s Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan (CRRP), which further underscores Government’s commitment towards disaster risk reduction, resilience building at all levels and the development of sound response and recovery mechanisms.

Dominica looks forward to the renewal of discussions at COP 26 in a few weeks time, where commitments made under the Paris agreement can be revisited and honoured, especially as it pertains to climate financing.

This is a matter of climate justice!

As Dominica and other SIDS are not responsible for the warming of our planet but we are disproportionately impacted by the effect of climate change.

#### Renewable Energy

Mr. President, one of the major contributors to climate change is the consumption of fossil fuel for the production of electricity and for transportation

and the importation of fossil fuel, has over the years, had the greatest impact on the economic vulnerability of many Small Island Developing States.

The transition of the energy sector away from fossil fuel, therefore, is central to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, building resilience to economic and climate related events and ultimately, pursuing a sustainable development pathway.

Mr. President, the Commonwealth of Dominica continues to pursue the development of its geothermal resources as this will allow us to move away from the importation of fossil fuel for the generation of electricity within the next five years, while also reducing the cost of electricity to our people.

The development of geothermal energy also has the potential to sustain clean mobility and to create a new industrial revolution powered by a cleaner and more affordable energy.

To date, our efforts to develop our country's geothermal potential have been supported by several partners: the UK, World Bank, SIDS DOCK, Caribbean Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the European Commission, the Government of New Zealand, the Clinton Climate Initiative and the United Arab Emirates., and we would like to thank them all.

Mr. President, the plight of our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Haiti continues, much to the concern of Dominica and the rest of the Caribbean Community. Over the last decade, Haiti has struggled with rising poverty levels, sustained political instability and numerous disasters, resulting in extreme hardship the citizens of this sister Caribbean nation.

Haiti is currently in the top 10 countries experiencing a food crisis.

The United nations must therefore take leadership in coordinating targeted support to the Haitian Government for the benefit of its people.

Excellencies, our Caribbean region also continues to call for the discontinuation of the economic, financial and trade embargo on our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Cuba.

Notwithstanding this decades-old embargo, the Republic of Cuba continues to make a positive impact on our region, and the wider world and we renew our call to the Government of the United States to allow the people of Cuba to be fully integrated into the global trading system, to improve their lives and to allow the world to continue to benefit from their tremendous contributions especially in science and technology.

Mr. President,

Dominica is convinced that as a collective we have the ability to solve all of the challenges which confront us.

The extreme pace of human advancement in the 21st century has demonstrated that we have the capacity and ingenuity to combat climate change, and to develop means of production and consumption to sustain humanity, while at the same time protecting our planet.

We must all recommit to playing our part to save our planet and to improve the lives of citizens worldwide: Those who suffer from hunger and starvation, and others who continue to be marginalized will be pointless without peace and security.

The destruction brought about by wars within and between countries continues to displace millions of people from their homes creating unprecedented refugee crises.

Mr. President, Excellences, Distinguished delegates, the United Nations is a critical player in maintaining world peace and security and Dominica remains committed to collaborating with the United Nations and all its agencies, as well as Member States, to strengthen the Mission of this noble institution.

We commend the leadership of the Secretary General in this regard and we reaffirm our confidence in the UN system as the ultimate negotiating and deliberating body for addressing major challenges confronting the world.

Mr. President, history will record both our actions and inactions that can result in educating and saving our generation from this pandemic, and from global warming and climate change, thus ensuring a safer planet for our children, and future generations.

I Thank You.

**Morocco** (see also A/76/PV.17, annex II)

**Address by Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
African Cooperation and Moroccans Living Abroad of the Kingdom  
of Morocco**

*Delivered on Monday, 27 September 2021, at the 17th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Secretary-General of the United Nations, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I should like to congratulate Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. I wish him success in performing his noble duties. I would also like to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of your predecessor, Volkan Bozkır, and the aplomb with which he presided over the previous session, against the backdrop of an unprecedented pandemic.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its congratulations to His Excellency António Guterres on his election to a second term as Secretary-General. We express our full confidence in and support for his efforts to achieve the Organization's overarching aims. In these difficult circumstances, we eagerly look forward to the emergence of a more equitable and effective international order that meets the aspirations of our peoples for collective health security and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

No State has been spared the impact of a pandemic that has severely tested our national capabilities and governance as well as our collective will as an international community, threatening to destroy everything that we have accomplished over decades. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has exacerbated inequalities in unprecedented ways and given rise to new inequalities among and within nations.

The political, socioeconomic, security and environmental impacts of the pandemic have reminded us of our fragility as human beings. The pandemic has wrought havoc with territorial boundaries and national priorities; disrupted the production, consumption and distribution of resources, and even exposed gaps in the medical, employment and social protection systems.

At the international level, the pandemic has exposed many deficiencies in multilateral governance. At a time when national policies have been at the forefront of global efforts to confront the pandemic and curb its spread, it is regrettable that multilateral action has fallen short.

While countries have indeed been aware that their fates were interlinked in combating the spread of the virus, that awareness has been expressed only in political statements that met with a consensus but failed to materialize as an effective system of international cooperation.

The aim here is not to criticize multilateral action, but instead to assess rationally and objectively the tangible and practical action that we, the States Members of the United Nations, have taken. The pandemic crisis has also been a comprehensive real-life test of the effectiveness of the international system; our responsibility is therefore a historic one.

Is it reasonable and acceptable for the United Nations to emerge from the greatest threat to human security since the Organization was established in the same state it was in at the beginning of 2020?

In the words of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, the United Nations is “the living conscience of humanity and the cornerstone of a new world order. Its pillars are peace, comprehensive security and common development, informed by the values of equality, tolerance, democracy and fraternity”. Therefore, we must work together to establish a new world order that will be a platform for effective joint action, action that enables us to move beyond statements of intent or intellectual argument to achieve transformational mobilization, on the basis of a practical road map that enhances every aspect of collective security and rises to current and emerging challenges.

We believe that multilateral action should not remain a language spoken only by Governments, inaudible to our peoples. Instead, it must be the lever of broad and pragmatic alliances that bring together States, the private sector, civil society and academia. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that there is an urgent need for pragmatic multilateral action whose legitimacy is rooted in the effective realization of the rights of citizens to security, health and development.

Mr. President,

The bid to deliver vaccines, our last line of defence against the pandemic, is in fact an opportunity to assert our will and demonstrate our ability to infuse multilateral action with a new impetus. While the tremendous work done by scientists and researchers to develop and test safe and effective vaccines is worthy of note, we emphasize in the strongest terms that the ultimate goal remains to ensure universal access to the vaccine, given that it is the common property of humankind, as well as to ensure the equitable distribution thereof in all countries and societies.

Equitable distribution of the vaccine is far more than an ethical obligation. It is a prerequisite for the collective security that our Organization was established to guarantee. Administering vaccines at diverging rates can only bring about a temporary recovery that will inevitably be followed by a setback, prolonging the crisis. When vaccines are scarce in any given region, it is only a matter of time before that region becomes a hotspot from which the virus — be it the known variants or mutations — will spread widely, with dire consequences for national economies and the well-being of societies. As King Mohammed VI said in July 2020 on Throne Day, “It is our duty not only to address the pandemic, but also to address its social and economic implications, with a comprehensive, forward-looking perspective that will allow us to draw beneficial lessons from this period”.

The Kingdom of Morocco salutes the tireless work of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations agencies to ensure universal and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatment. Morocco also expresses its support for the Only Together campaign launched by the Secretary-General, which calls for vaccines to be made accessible to all.

However, that initiative should serve as an opportunity to focus seriously and objectively on the issue of mutual recognition of available vaccines and of those that have yet to be manufactured, on the basis of internationally agreed scientific, health and ethical standards rather than political or marketing calculations.

My country looks forward to enabling WHO to make optimal use of available resources and mechanisms in carrying out its mission to the best of its ability, including by monitoring emerging health threats, as part of the One Health approach.

Morocco, which is in favour of drafting, under United Nations auspices, an international treaty on epidemics, intends to organize an international conference on pandemic preparedness and response in 2022, in cooperation with the Republic of Rwanda, WHO and the World Bank. The aim is to unify international efforts to strengthen the capacity of States to cope with epidemics and prepare for emergencies.

Guided by the noble directives of his Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, the Kingdom of Morocco has been carrying out an ambitious project to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines within the fill-finish industry. In addition to bolstering the health sovereignty of the Kingdom, this ambitious initiative also contributes to consolidating the health security of African countries and bring their vaccination rates closer to the global average. This is how Morocco implements its African solidarity policy.

The African continent's woefully and unacceptably low rate of access to vaccines — at just under 2 per cent — serves as a powerful incentive for collective action. Africa must become the top priority of the global health strategy, along with national development assistance policies. The world owes it to Africa!

Mr. President,

Although the pandemic currently tops the list of global challenges, it will not diminish our interest in such broad issues as migration, counter-terrorism and climate change.

While the consequences of the pandemic have also eclipsed the issue of immigration and human movement, the Kingdom's serious and sustained engagement with the issue remains unchanged. Resolute and steadfast, Morocco continues to implement its national strategy — the first of its kind in the region — on migration and asylum. The strategy is based on the monarchy's insightful vision of migration issues, informed by humane and responsible governance grounded in solidarity.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, has been recognized as a leader on migration issues in the African Union. Morocco hosted the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakesh in December 2018. In late 2020, the capital city of Rabat became the headquarters of the first African Migration Observatory in the African Union.

Along with the proven commitment of Morocco to the work of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which it has co-chaired since 2016, the country's active involvement in counter-terrorism efforts have include the opening of a United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism programme office in Rabat. The choice of Morocco to host this important United Nations office constituted an explicit recognition of the Kingdom as a capable partner in combating this scourge and as a haven of security in its region and continent.

Morocco has been actively involved in promoting peaceful coexistence and dialogue between cultures and religions. It launched the initiative that led to the General Assembly's adoption by consensus last July of a resolution proclaiming 18 June as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

The involvement of Morocco in local, regional and international efforts to address the effects of climate change has been guided by the proactive vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, as the country embarks on a plan to shift towards the use of renewable energy and diversify sources of clean energy. The Kingdom of Morocco has voluntarily set the ambitious target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45.5 per cent by 2030, after raising its initial reduction target from 42 per cent.

Mr. President,

The trying circumstances left in the wake of the pandemic have not deterred Morocco from continuing to pursue its development efforts, spearheaded by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, to allow the country to progress and its people to prosper. His Majesty has issued directives to hold large workshops for reflection, broad research and inclusive participatory action. That initiative led to the establishment of a new development model that will be implemented over the next 14 years. This ambitious national project overlaps with the Sustainable Development Goals and even exceeds them in certain areas.

The model has laid the creative foundations of a new development doctrine and labour principles informed by trust, mobilization and responsibility, in order to free up capacities and create conditions conducive to a more open, innovative and competitive economy; human capital that is stronger and better qualified to take on the future; greater inclusion, especially for women and young people; and more resilient institutions capable of coping with development and environmental challenges.

In line with the noble directives issued by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, the guidelines of the new development model will serve as the basis of a charter agreed by all national forces.

Mr. President,

Peacekeeping remains one of the pillars of the United Nations. We take this opportunity to hail the Blue Helmets, especially during the pandemic, and to lament the loss of those who have made the supreme sacrifice in service of the noble values and principles of the United Nations.

Moroccan forces are currently deployed as United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. The country is also contributing to the effort to adapt peacekeeping operations to contemporary challenges, per the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in 2022 Morocco and France will organize the second Ministerial Conference on Peacekeeping in the Francophone Area, which hosts roughly half of all United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Morocco is the Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, presiding over that important committee on disarmament and international security for the first time. That Morocco was selected to represent Africa makes it clear that the country is regarded within the Organization as a committed and credible actor in international efforts to combat the nuclear and conventional arms races and that Moroccan efforts to achieve peace, security and regional and global stability are also recognized.

Mr. President,

Since the Kingdom of Morocco gained its independence, support for regional and global stability has been at the heart of its diplomatic creed. Morocco remains committed to reaching a definitive settlement of the regional conflict over the Moroccan Sahara, ensuring full respect for its territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

As you know, legislative, regional and local elections were held on 8 September 2021 in the Moroccan Sahara region, as they were elsewhere in the Kingdom. Electoral participation in the Moroccan Sahara was the highest nationwide, at 63 per cent. The electoral process took place in an atmosphere of mobilization and democratic organization, in full compliance with international standards, highlighting the calm and tranquillity of the Sahara region.

The Moroccan Saharan population's enthusiastic participation attests to its commitment to the territorial integrity of the Kingdom and undeniable desire to engage fully and effectively in implementing the new model for the development of the southern provinces launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, in 2015.

From this podium, Morocco reiterates that it stands ready to continue to cooperate with the United Nations as part of the Secretary-General's efforts to reach a realistic, practical, lasting and consensual political solution, ensuring full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Morocco.

The only way to achieve such a solution is for Algeria to bear full responsibility in the series of political round-table talks, inasmuch as it has been the party responsible for creating and prolonging the conflict. The autonomy initiative proposed by Morocco in 2007 remains the only prospect for a definitive political solution to this contrived regional dispute.

Morocco also expresses its grave concern at the tragic humanitarian situation of the population of the Tindouf camps. The host country, Algeria, has abdicated its responsibilities and ceded them to a separatist armed group, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We call on the international community to take action to compel the host country to abide by its treaty obligations, in particular, to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to register and count that population, as the Security Council has repeatedly called on the host country to do.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Morocco, motivated by history, the shared destiny that binds it to Libya and the positive momentum generated by the Libyan Political Agreement of Skhirat, is still working to help reach a peaceful solution to the conflict in that country.

Under the noble leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God grant him victory, Morocco will always stand with the legitimate Libyan institutions and will support international efforts to resolve that Maghreb country's crisis, in line with the agreements reached by the various Libyan parties.

Morocco remains firmly convinced that the crisis in Libya can only be resolved by Libyans themselves, without foreign intervention or agendas. The Libyan dialogue is the most effective means of meeting the Libyan people's aspirations for stability, national reconciliation and development.

Morocco believes that it is crucial that elections be organized in Libya as a decisive step on the path to achieving peace in that country. Morocco stands ready to provide assistance in coordination with all Libyan institutions.

With the same deeply rooted, robust and sustained commitment to peace in the Middle East, the Kingdom considers the cause of Palestine and the Holy City of Jerusalem to be among its top priorities and deems it equal in importance to the cause of Moroccan national unity.

The Kingdom of Morocco is hopeful that a just, comprehensive and sustainable peace will be reached in the Middle East, leading to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, on its national territory within the borders of June 1967 and with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

Morocco believes that this hope remains contingent on the realization by all that neither party will be able to attain security until the other does.

To that end, all parties must make the courageous decision to agree to relaunch the peace process and put an end to all manner of violations, restrictions and provocations, which serve only to fuel hostility and undermine prospects for understanding and dialogue.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose sovereign, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, is the President of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, reiterates its firm and principled position regarding the importance of preserving the unique legal, historical and spiritual status of the Holy City. Owing to that status, the city is a land of coexistence among the followers of the monotheistic religions, an agent of rapprochement among peoples and of peace and stability in the region.

Convinced that peace begets peace, the Kingdom of Morocco is working to establish peaceful and sound relations with the State of Israel, in the hope of advancing the cause of peace in the region, enhancing regional security and providing new opportunities for the region as a whole, according to the tripartite declaration signed on 22 December 2020 before His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

Mr. President,

The time has come to take urgent, practical and coordinated action to strengthen the role of the United Nations as a global framework for international cooperation. In order to bring about profound changes in our international system, we need two things, namely, will and urgent intervention, that is, to induce States to act on their awareness of shared responsibility and to translate that awareness into an agenda driven by solidarity and effectiveness.

Resolute and in a spirit of earnest responsibility, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to perform its role within the main organs of our Organization, thereby contributing to strengthening its credibility and effectiveness and expanding its influence.

May peace and God's mercy be upon you.

**Trinidad and Tobago** (see also A/76/PV.17, annex III)**Address by Mr. Amery Browne, Minister for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

*Delivered on Monday, 27 September 2021, at the 17th meeting of the General Assembly*

Mr. President,

It is an honour to address this august Assembly of States on this the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. On behalf of the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend congratulations to you on your election to the Presidency. My delegation is confident that with your experience and able leadership, this crucial session will be highly successful in advancing our work for peace, progress and sustainability for humankind.

Permit me, to also express our gratitude to His Excellency Volkan Bozkır for steering our work during the 75th session. Notwithstanding the innumerable challenges encountered during his presidency, he has effectively advanced a comprehensive framework to ensure the continuity of the work of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

I also take the opportunity to congratulate His Excellency António Guterres on his reappointment as Secretary-General. The continuity of his astute leadership serves to ensure that the United Nations remains a critical partner in our aspirations to build back better.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the profound fragilities of our interconnected societies and economies. None among us have escaped severe economic contraction and consequential loss of livelihoods. Most of all, the heavy death toll has created new and complex social issues in our societies that require intervention by governments. We are of the firm belief that multilateralism is the only vehicle by which we can jointly save humanity, safeguard livelihoods, and reenergize our economies.

It is happening right before our very eyes, COVID-19 has now become a pandemic of the unvaccinated, the majority of whom live in the Global South. As a responsible community of nations, we ought to take immediate measures to ensure equitable access to and distribution of vaccines across this globe. This would be the only secure way to protect our populations from further demise and our economies from further convulsions, as the current situation of vaccine inequity benefits only the virus.

In Trinidad and Tobago's experience, it has proven an uphill battle to source vaccines on the open market due, we were told, to our relatively small size and issues of low demand. Such dismissive and unfair responses really deny the universally accepted principle that every human being, whether they live in the Developed North or the Developing South, is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

Recognizing the dire consequences that countries of the Caribbean Community would have to confront, Trinidad and Tobago used its chairmanship of CARICOM

to convene a Heads of State and Government Meeting to address the pressing question of vaccine availability. Such is our conviction of the relevance and power of multilateralism, that the Trinidad and Tobago Chairmanship took it one step further and raised with the Director General of the World Health Organisation, the convening of a global summit on vaccine availability.

In the meantime, as a result of diplomatic initiatives taken at the bilateral level, Trinidad and Tobago and other members of the Caribbean Community received donations of WHO-approved vaccines from several Governments. We also received supplies via the COVAX facility and from the African Medical Supplies Platform.

The People of Trinidad and Tobago and their Government express once more, their grateful thanks to all those countries and mechanisms whose generous assistance permitted us to scale up an aggressive vaccination campaign.

It would be remiss of me not to express Trinidad and Tobago's deep appreciation for the critical leadership role continuously demonstrated by the United Nations and more specifically, by the WHO in spearheading the global efforts to combat the COVID-19 virus.

The evidence is irrefutable that human induced climate change, threatens the very survival of humankind. Yet greenhouse gas emissions are at record levels, and the devastating impacts of climate change continue to worsen, landing on the doorsteps of Small Island Developing States, sitting as they are, on the frontline of this crisis.

It is therefore Mr. President, our moral responsibility to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement through credible, concrete, enhanced commitments. The commitment made by developed countries to mobilize \$100 billion annually to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries must be met.

Notwithstanding Trinidad and Tobago's miniscule contribution to global emissions, we have committed in our Nationally Determined Contribution to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 30 per cent in the public transportation sector, and to a cumulative decrease of 15 per cent in the other main carbon emitting sectors by 2030. Consequently, these commitments would remove over 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from our atmosphere; placing us among the most ambitious in our region. Even so, we are currently updating our NDC with a view to further increasing our mitigation ambition.

We hope that COP 26 will agree to complete the outstanding issues and to fully operationalise the Paris Agreement on a scale that will support cooperation on mitigation, adaptation and compliance. That approach would be in keeping with the calls for more ambitious commitments to ensure that the 1.5°C target remains within our reach.

Mr. President,

Our acute susceptibility to climate change stems from our inherently complex structural vulnerabilities as Small Island Developing States that trap us in a mire of compounding risks; sentencing us to a cyclical struggle of recovery, rebuilding and redevelopment.

Yet we are told time and time again, that our categorisation as middle and high-income countries render us ineligible to access concessionary finance and

development support. It is as if the international system, almost by design, perpetuates the conditions that stifle our hard-earned albeit fragile progress.

The need to reassess the eligibility of SIDS for concessional finance, beyond income measures, has been widely acknowledged by the international community for almost three decades. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago applauds the Secretary-General's efforts in advancing the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index that will more accurately reflect our composite challenges and open the door to SIDS-sensitive financing. The international economic and financial system must be transformed to better support the most vulnerable countries.

Mr. President,

We also recognize that the increasing incidence of violent crime domestically, bedevils our efforts towards achieving sustainable development and the maintenance of the rule of law. Much of this criminal activity derives from the operations of international criminal networks engaged in the illicit trafficking of small arms and increasingly sophisticated weaponry, illegal drugs, money laundering, human trafficking and piracy across our society.

Recognizing its value to us and to the members of CARICOM as a whole, Trinidad and Tobago played a highly constructive role in the process culminating in the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. We remain keenly engaged to ensure that the Treaty fully achieves its objectives.

Mr. President,

As we reflect on the twentieth anniversary of the tragic events of September 11th in New York, we are reminded of our commitments to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In this regard, the anti-terrorism act of Trinidad and Tobago establishes a robust legal architecture, including measures for criminal prosecution, to detect and interrupt the financing of terrorism, the collection and sharing of information, intelligence and evidence, and the enforcement of targeted financial sanctions in accordance with international law.

Mr. President,

What most preoccupies us, is an evident tendency for the entrenchment of a culture of violence in our society; most disturbingly, the prevalence of domestic violence and violence against women and girls. Trinidad and Tobago has therefore begun to create safe spaces for all women and girls and is now accelerating its efforts to change the negative behaviours and gender stereotypes, at all levels. Consequently, amendments to existing legislation on Domestic Violence, Sexual Offences, Child Protection as well as to allow for electronic monitoring of sex offenders were enacted recently, to provide further protection for women and girls.

Mr. President,

We are cognizant that in several parts of the world people continue to be systematically denied their fundamental human rights and human dignity. Such violations ought to offend us as a community of nations working to improve the standards of living and welfare of all our peoples. It is therefore necessary that we reject and punish impunity wherever it rears its ugly head.

Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago remains unwavering in its commitment to the mandate and mission of the International Criminal Court, in the interest of

banishing the worst forms of human rights abuses and violations from our civilization. We urge those States which are not yet members of the Court to subscribe to it in order to achieve universality.

Mr. President,

Despite recent contusions, Trinidad and Tobago is seizing the opportunity to emerge stronger and better. As an economy predominantly dependent on the hydrocarbon and petrochemical industries, we are sparing no effort to provide the necessary support and the enabling environment to foster diversification, through substantial transformation in the creative sector as well as in manufacturing, finance, medicine, security, commerce, agriculture and renewable energy. Our newly established Ministry of Digital Transformation is leading these efforts to create a competitive digitally-driven economy that will stimulate greater opportunities for all of our people.

However, the misuse of digital technology can pose serious threats to the economy, national security, governance, and social stability. Therefore, we must develop appropriate mechanisms to protect and secure the integrity of our economies and societies and to minimize its use as a disruptive tool.

Mr. President,

The thrust in all our efforts in pursuing sustainable development is to shape a better collective future on this planet, not only for ourselves, but for generations to come. Trinidad and Tobago remains dedicated to ensuring our children and youth, including those in vulnerable situations, have the necessary opportunities, tools and a safe environment in order to reach their highest potential.

Mr. President,

Evidence from the pandemic has shown that severe inequities continue to exist in our societies and that crises do not impact men and women in the same way. Therefore, in building back better, women's participation in all sectors of society must be at the heart of creating more inclusive, resilient and sustainable communities and societies; with enhanced preparedness to respond to future emergencies.

The promotion of gender equality is a priority for Trinidad and Tobago and so we have taken specific measures in certain key areas including access to health care, education and training, employment as well as in the provision of social protection. The important role of the family in the empowerment of women and girls has also been fully acknowledged.

Mr. President,

This year's High-Level Meeting on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action takes on even greater significance with the recent establishment of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and the convening of the first Africa-CARICOM Summit a few weeks ago. Africa has been a vibrant partner of CARICOM both bilaterally and in several multilateral arenas, including here at the United Nations. In historical terms, these ties have been umbilical, but with the joint decision for regular dialogue, cooperation and coordination, they will now be forward-looking as we seek to secure our broader interests in the international system.

The lack of meaningful progress on Security Council reform remains a matter of deep concern. Our commitment to instil new life into the intergovernmental negotiations should amount to more than mere rhetoric. It should serve as a clarion call to Member States to work collaboratively, in good faith, toward early reform of the Security Council to effectively respond to the urgent needs and challenges facing the diverse membership of the United Nations. A representative Council will add substantially to improving the effectiveness and credibility of our organization, as the leading international pillar for peace and security.

Mr. President,

As we have entered the Decade of Action and Delivery to implement the 2030 Agenda, it is important to

ensure that no country is left behind. The unjust designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism along with the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against that country, undermine its ability to cope with the pervasive impacts of the pandemic and its potential to achieve sustainable development. Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its call for the unconditional lifting of the embargo against Cuba, in line with the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

Trinidad and Tobago remains deeply concerned that so little progress has been made in the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has led to extreme suffering on both sides. We urge both parties to respect and adhere to the temporary ceasefire, and to do nothing that would inflame the already tenuous situation. It is our hope that the parties will shortly resume the process of engagement to find a way forward that would guarantee the Palestinians a permanent homeland and recognize Israel's right to exist in peace and security.

Mr. President,

The United Nations provides us all with the opportunity to discuss our differences, to build understanding and to make common cause in protecting our planet and our civilization. Let me reassure you of Trinidad and Tobago's unshakeable resolve to support this effort as well as the work of the United Nations.

Mr President, I THANK YOU.

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