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Official Records

President: Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary)

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

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Fayssal Mekdad, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session, and I thank your predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, for presiding over the previous session. I also thank the Secretary-General for the efforts he is making pursuant to the mandate entrusted to him by the Charter of the United Nations.

We meet today at a time of sensitive and dangerous situations at the international level. Wars, conflicts and threats to international peace and security are increasing along with terrorism and chaos, while the global economy and food security are at risk and climate change is accelerating. It is noteworthy that all of that comes as a result of the insistence by some States on imposing their hegemony on other States, seizing their resources and wealth and seeking to achieve their own narrow agendas, including by investing in terrorism, imposing economic blockades and using lethal weapons in disregard of all the international laws and norms unanimously agreed on by humankind.

Those States have waged wars and occupied others' lands on the pretext of spreading democracy and protecting human rights, but in reality they have destroyed countries and killed many innocent people, and what happened in our region is just one example of that. Those States called the terrorists they supported a moderate opposition seeking freedom. Very moderate indeed. The terrorists were just tools to destroy countries that would not submit to the whims of those States and were not subject to their agendas. They called their sanctions "smart", but in reality they are nothing but tools for killing and collectively punishing the peoples who stand by their countries, their sovereignty and their armies. What they did in Syria in terms of preventing the arrival of food, medicine, heating fuel and other basic necessities of life to the Syrian people is the best evidence of that.

While we are aware of this sad reality, we call for taking the right decision, at this defining and delicate moment in our world history, in a way that will ensure a better present and future for us and future generations and that lays the foundations for building a new, multipolar world order in which everyone works under the umbrella of the purposes and principles of the Charter. Of course, it is understood that we are proceeding in this call based on real experience that cannot be separated from that, because in its broader context the war on Syria was part of the West's attempts to maintain its control over the world. Although that war has failed to achieve its goals, including breaking Syria's will and isolating it from its surroundings and the rest of the world, we cannot deny that it has been

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a bitter and costly experience for us Syrians, who have lived for more than 10 years under the brutality of organized terrorism sponsored by well-known Governments and under the yoke of occupation, illegal military intervention, an inhumane economic blockade and merciless unilateral coercive measures.

At a time when we hoped to achieve peace and stability in our region, we have witnessed an increase in Israel's practices pushing our region to unprecedented levels of tension and instability, whether by carrying out massacres, escalating military aggression against Palestinian territories and killing civilians, or through a continuation of its policies of settlement, Judaization, siege, arbitrary detention, forced displacement and racial discrimination. Israel's practices constitute crimes for which impunity will no longer be accepted. Syria affirms once again that it will not retreat from its support for its brother people of Palestine in their struggle to liberate their occupied territories and establish an independent and sovereign State on all their lands, with Jerusalem as its capital. The right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland must be guaranteed, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Syria supports Palestine's decision to obtain its long-awaited full membership in the United Nations, and we urge the Assembly to ensure that that is not obstructed by certain members of the Security Council.

Ever since its occupation of the Syrian Golan in 1967 Israel has continued to commit the most heinous and systematic forms of gross violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, including building more settlements and changing the demographic composition and institutional structure of the region, especially through attempts to impose Israeli citizenship and ownership documents by force on the people of the Golan, not to mention its looting of Golan's natural resources, burial of nuclear waste in its ground, seizure of land to erect huge wind turbines, and other documented violations. Israel has added a new chapter to its black record by supporting Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. Israel has deliberately and systematically targeted civilian facilities, including civilian seaports and airports, undermining both regional and global peace and security, endangering the lives of civilians and jeopardizing the safety of civil aviation in Syria and the region.

The Israeli leaders who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against Palestinians and

Syrians alike have no right to say from international rostrums that they are keen to protect civilians and human rights. Syria notes that continued support or silence vis-à-vis such Israeli practices by certain States that claim to be the guardians of international humanitarian law and international human rights law make them complicit in such crimes, revealing the double standards applied.

Syria will exercise its legitimate right to defend its land and its people by any means necessary so that the Israeli occupation authorities are held accountable for their crimes. It is our right to recover all the occupied Syrian Golan, a territory dear to the hearts of all Syrians, along the 4 June 1967 borders. It is our inalienable right that is not subject to pressures and statute of limitations, guaranteed in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981).

Any illegal military presence on Syrian territories runs counter to international law and the Charter of the United Nations and must cease immediately without preconditions. Combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and ultimately uprooting terrorism can take place only through cooperation and coordination with the Syrian State, with full respect for its sovereignty, independence territorial integrity and unity. Combating terrorism cannot take place through and illegitimate international coalition that violates the sovereignty of States while destroying villages and cities, massacring civilians, plundering national wealth and supporting separatist militias. Combating terrorism cannot take place by occupying other peoples' territories, implementing forced displacement policies and changing their demographics, nor by setting up so-called safe zones and working with terrorists, nor by collectively punishing civilians by cutting off water supplies.

As for the separatist militias that are still cherishing the illusions of their sponsors, they must be made aware of the realities and abstain from counting on foreign occupiers. Those who do not stand by their homeland have no homeland.

Since the beginning of the 2011 crisis, the Syrian State has called for national and local settlements and reconciliations as a way to return to normalcy throughout Syria, in order to promote national unity and consolidate cohesiveness within Syrian society. To that end, 21 amnesty decrees have been issued, the latest of

which was legislative decree 7 of 2022, by President Bashar Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic. That decree grants a general amnesty for crimes of terrorism committed by Syrians, with the exception of fatal crimes, and is especially important owing to its legal, political and social nature. It represents an effort and determination by the Syrian State to ensure national reconciliation, reach social coherence and achieve lasting stability. The Syrian State will continue its efforts on the basis of such an approach, which has been effective on the ground and has enabled many Syrians to return to normal life.

Despite the difficult circumstances that Syria has undergone, my country has honoured its constitutional deadlines. A few days ago, before I came to New York, we held democratic elections for local councils, with 59,000 candidates competing over 8,619 seats, reflecting great popular participation and support for democracy and decentralization in every village, city, district and governorate in Syria.

In parallel, Syria dealt positively with efforts and initiatives under the political process and, in that regard, we reiterate our support for the meetings held according to the Astana format. We also welcome the results of the summit held in Tehran on 19 July, which reaffirmed the commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity. It also reaffirmed rejection of separatist plans and the total abolishment of terrorist groups. However, all of that will be unfortunately dead letter if Türkiye continues to completely refuse those results, including the provisions of the Astana agreement.

Moreover, Syria is following with interest the work being done by the Constitutional Committee, which was established through the national dialogue held in Sochi, Russian Federation, in 2018. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria must play his role as a facilitator for intra-Syrian dialogue in that process, which must be Syrian-owned and Syrian-led, in accordance with his mandate.

All Assembly members are aware that, before the terrorist war was launched against us in 2011, Syria was one of the safest, most prosperous and most stable countries in the world. We were self-sufficient and able to meet the basic needs of our people in an exceptional manner in the region, whether in education, health or public services sectors. However, the impacts of that unjust war changed the situation.

We have witnessed an unbearable humanitarian crisis, but what is the reason for it? The answer is quite clear: the primary cause is terrorism, and then the unilateral coercive measures imposed by Western States and the plundering of the wealth of the Syrian people. One such example is that, according to estimates, direct and indirect losses in the oil, gas and mineral sectors in Syria from 2011 to 2022 have reached \$107 billion. We are seeking compensation for those losses. Today we need a world of peace, security and stability, not a world of monsters.

The Syrian State is doing everything it can to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground and to rebuild what terrorism has destroyed, including by facilitating the return of Syrian refugees. We are keen to provide the United Nations with all necessary facilities to improve and promote delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need and to implement early recovery projects pursuant to resolution 2642 (2022).

Despite all of our reservations about it, we believe that the resolution may constitute an additional step towards improving the humanitarian situation in Syria and bolstering access to basic services. However, that will depend on the implementation by Western States of the provisions of the resolution, in particular the need to step up humanitarian aid and implement early recovery projects for providing water, electricity, sanitation, health care, education and housing. Resolution 2585 (2021) has proved that those projects can be implemented only if Western States cease to insist on politicizing the humanitarian and development work in Syria and stop placing obstacles and limitations to their implementation, particularly through imposing unilateral coercive measures or so-called economic sanctions.

My country, Syria, reiterates its position on the Russian special military operation in Ukraine and on the Russian Federation's right to defend itself and secure its national security as a response to the aggressive western policies. We are confident that the Russian Federation is defending not only itself, but also the world, the principles of justice, humanity and the rights of all of us in the world who reject hegemony and unipolarism.

Syria reiterates once again its full support to the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the return to the nuclear agreement, from which the United States withdrew illegally and unilaterally. We also

commend the constructive and responsible approach adopted by Iran on the matter, and we call upon the United States and its western allies to comply with the legitimate Iranian demands.

Syria continues to support the principle of a unified China and the People's Republic of China's position with regard to addressing foreign interference in its domestic affairs in Taiwan, Hong Kong or Xinjiang. We insist on China's inalienable right to take the necessary measures to defend its sovereignty, in particular with regard to the unprecedented escalation and the United States of America's policy of provocation against China.

Syria condemns the embargo that has been imposed on Cuba for decades, including the extension of the United States Administration of the so-called Trading with the Enemy Act. Who is the enemy? Is it the Cuban people, the Syrian people or the Russian people? They create imaginary enemies.

Syria also calls for an end to the military movements and exercises by the United States on the Korean peninsula leading to the escalation of tensions in the region.

Syria calls for the lifting of all unilateral coercive measures imposed by the Western countries on Russia, Iran, Venezuela, Belarus, Nicaragua, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Zimbabwe, Eritrea and all other countries suffering under such measures in the world, including my own country, Syria. Those measures constitute economic terrorism and are no less, in their brutal and dangerous nature, than armed terrorism, both in legal terms and in terms of the inhumane consequences for the peoples targeted. Syria also stresses the need to cease all attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of those countries and to respect their sovereignty in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In conclusion, the world has witnessed circumstances that were exceptional by any standard in the past few years. It was subjected to serious challenges in terms of politics, security, economics, health, nutrition and climate change. We are currently facing unprecedented tensions and escalation at the international level that threaten to bring about further risks. Consequently, our world is headed into the unknown if we do not swiftly and immediately address those challenges collectively, thus meeting the aspirations of our peoples and achieving security, stability, prosperity and sustainable development.

The slogan of "no one left behind" should not be an empty one. We are utterly convinced that, in order to realize all of that, we must ensure that some Western States understand that the great Powers are not great only because of their might and military strength, but because they respect the Charter and international law; because they uphold humanitarian principles; and because they abandon self-interests and colonization. Once those States have truly understood that we are living in the same world, they will not prioritize their interests and security over the interests and security of other States.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Claude Gakosso, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Congolese Abroad of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gakosso (Congo) (*spoke in French*): The universal premise of multilateralism, enshrined in our Organization since its very creation, has never been so seriously undermined as it is today, before our very eyes.

We are witnessing an unprecedented intensification of crises throughout the world. We are witnessing the proliferation of conflicts and an increase in their complexity. We are witnessing unprecedented food insecurity and dangerous threats to biodiversity. We are even witnessing attempts to call into question the commitments made collectively and ratified here, in this very Hall, on environmental protection and the preservation of the planet, our shared home.

As though that were not enough, we are witnessing an exacerbation of dissent and enmity between the permanent members of the Security Council, whose main task is to maintain international peace and security by working together.

Faced with such a situation, whereby our common fragilities are aggravated and our collective vulnerabilities highlighted, only a consensus-based, supportive, calm and coordinated approach can help us to find the true answers to those problems. I believe that the theme under which our general debate is being held provides us with a real opportunity to do just that. Indeed, by calling for transformative solutions, this year's theme appeals to our collective conscience with regard to the increasing number of challenges that besiege us on a daily basis and that can sometimes take a dramatic turn.

Indeed, one has only to think of the current war in Ukraine and the apocalyptic projections — which are not baseless — that strategists and other military experts are now making about a possible tragic downturn in those terrible events.

Given the enormous risk of nuclear disaster that such events pose to the entire planet, it is the responsibility not just of the conflict's participants, but also the foreign Powers that can influence the course of events towards peace, if they seek to temper their passions, stop fanning the flames and turn their backs on the vanity of the powerful that has hitherto kept the door to dialogue closed.

Under the auspices of the United Nations, we must all commit ourselves, without delay, to peace negotiations that are just, sincere and equitable. Ever since the Congress of Vienna, after the battle of Waterloo, it has been clear that wars must always end around the negotiating table. The world urgently needs negotiations to prevent the current conflicts, which are already so devastating, from reaching a crescendo and tipping humankind into what could be a cataclysm without remedy, namely, a generalized nuclear war beyond the control of the great Powers themselves. Albert Einstein, the great theoretician of the atom, said gravely that such a war, if it were to take place, would be the last battle to ever be fought on Earth.

Nelson Mandela, a man of eternal forgiveness, said that peace is a long road, but it has no alternative. It has no price. Indeed, Russians and Ukrainians have no other choice but to take that path — the path of peace. Moreover, we should accompany them, throughout the world, in great numbers, working together in solidarity, tenaciously and fully capable of imposing unconditional peace on the war lobby.

(spoke in Russian)

I want to be direct and address my dear Russian and Ukrainian friends, in particular. Too much blood has been spilled — the sacred blood of their sweet children. It is time to stop this mass destruction. It is time to stop the war. The entire world is watching. The time has come to fight for life, just as they courageously and selflessly fought together against the Nazis during the Second World War, in particular in Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kursk and Berlin. It is important to consider the young people of both countries and the fate of future generations. It is time to fight for peace. It is time to fight for them. It is important to give peace a

real chance now, before it is too late for us all. I humbly ask that of them.

(spoke in French)

What I just said, in my basic Russian, about the events in Ukraine can allow us to draw a parallel, although perhaps at a completely different level, with the tragic situation Libya has been facing since 2011. It is a situation to which, for many years, the President of the Republic of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, has been fully committed to resolving on behalf of the African Union. He continued his peace efforts on the controversial issue on 14 and 15 July in Brazzaville, during consultations that brought together several stakeholders who represent the core of Libyan social and political views. The objective was to encourage the stakeholders to talk to each other and bridge the gaps between their views on the challenges their country has faced since the failed elections of 24 December 2021.

The inter-Libyan reconciliation conference, which is the goal of the African mediation efforts, will make sense only if it is inclusive, constructive and consensus-based. It must enable our Libyan brothers and sisters to stop eyeing each other with mistrust, forgive each other, resume dialogue and prioritize justice, which is the foundation of a new Libya, from which they are to rewrite history. I would like to commend the appointment of Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya. I can already assure him of the unconditional support of President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who chairs the African Union Ad Hoc High-level Committee on Libya.

The forests of the Congo basin are the second largest environmental reservoir on the planet, and we have preserved those forests for years, as they are dear to our hearts. We still await strong support that is commensurate with the existential challenges that those forests represent.

We should always remember the promises that were made, from Copenhagen to Glasgow and under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Those promises were made with enthusiasm but, to date, they remain unfulfilled by the rich countries — the same countries responsible for 80 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. However, in spite of that, as we prepare for the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which Africa will host next November, we hope that this time, at least, instead of the statements

of commiseration to which we are accustomed and the usual formulas and hollow promises, considerable resources will finally be mobilized for poor countries that have become even more vulnerable owing to climate disruptions.

In any event, with the lowest deforestation rate in the world — only 0.06 per cent — my country, the Republic of the Congo, is playing its full role and will continue to do so to protect the environment and ensure the survival of humankind. The establishment of the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin is part of the regional plan for that commitment. Together with the Government of the United Kingdom, the host of COP 26, my country's Government plans to launch, over the next few weeks, a political forum entitled "Forests and climate leaders' partnership".

I cannot conclude my statement and leave this rostrum without mentioning two situations, which should unceasingly appeal to our conscience. Morally, we cannot give up on those two situations.

The first concerns Security Council reform, which has become a hackneyed topic. It is a reform that everyone glosses over at will and the outcome of which seems to every day draw farther away from its noble goals, although the need for Africa's inclusion in the management of world affairs is self-evident. Africa must indeed assume its rightful role in the community of nations. To believe otherwise is simply a show of selfishness, and goes against the current of history. Similarly, continuing to prevaricate over the idea of admitting two African countries as full permanent members of the Security Council is nothing more than willingly choosing to discredit our prestigious Organization. We, the representatives of allied countries meeting here at the United Nations, must make the honourable choice, here and now, and go down in history by ridding ourselves, once and for all, of the medieval and obscure prejudices against Africa, which, for too long, have humiliated that part of the world.

The second situation concerns the never-ending embargo on Cuba, which has been in place since the middle of the last century and continues to cause indescribable suffering to the people of that country. The embargo, which is totally anachronistic and obsolete, should have been abolished long ago. On behalf of my country, I again call on the wisdom of the American people and its leaders, who, as we know, for

the most part, have nothing to do with that outdated embodiment of the Cold War.

On that subject, and I wish to conclude here, I would very respectfully like to address President Biden, who has long promoted the ideal of peace, as he did in this very Hall last week (see A/77.PV.6). I urge him to be bold and to close, without further delay, the dark chapter of relations with Cuba, which belongs in the past. By doing so, he will undeniably create new possibilities in the glorious history of his beautiful country, and I am convinced that posterity will thank him.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Osman Saleh Mohammed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea.

Mr. Mohammed (Eritrea): First, allow me to express our congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventh-seventh session. I also want to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Shahid on his successful stewardship of the Assembly during his presidency of hope at the seventh-sixth session.

The annual session of the General Assembly, held under the fitting theme, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges", takes place at an exceedingly preoccupying time of profound, intertwined and multiple crises of epic proportions. Those calamities have already had an adverse impact on all coordinates of our global village.

In the past two and a half years, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacted a considerable human toll across the globe. It has also introduced chronic economic difficulties and structural setbacks, through domestic economic downturns and the disruption of international supply chains. While the scourge persists, we are confronted these days with the equally perilous fallout of climate change and global warming, which exacerbates the already precarious situation. Furthermore, cyclical conflicts, which have assumed exceptionally dangerous and almost apocalyptic dimensions with the war in Ukraine, have ratcheted up the impending crisis to unprecedented levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic aside, the other interlocking variables and dimensions of the crisis constitute the cumulative consequences and tell-tale symptoms of a tenuous and highly flawed global governance architecture. They are by-products and

manifestations of the systemic failure of the unipolar world order that has prevailed for more than 30 years. In reality, the much-vaunted rules-based international order represents a skewed set of duplicitous, asymmetric and non-consensus-based norms and regulations. The fact is that it was essentially designed to advance and safeguard the privileges of its principal architects to the exclusion of the majority of other nations and peoples. Its rather monolithic and condescending ideological perspective leaves no room or space to historical context, distinct realities and cultures or, above all, to the independent policy choices of other sovereign peoples and nations. Indeed, all other sovereign peoples and nations are expected to fully adhere and kowtow, in their international relations and domestic policies alike, to the gold standards stipulated in the flimsy rules-based international order.

In the final analysis, the costly wars of intervention, especially in Africa and the Middle East, in the past 30 years, the heavy-handed meddling in domestic affairs, the imposition of illicit and unilateral sanctions, the distortion and weaponization of human rights — in brief, all those episodes of international and regional instability — emanate from and are the direct derivatives of the faulty global governance architecture. The negative ramifications of this dysfunctional system are not confined to the sovereign nations and peoples of the global South. The extreme and ridiculous inequalities, whereby less than 1 per cent of the population owns 99 per cent of national wealth; unbridled consumerism, which has bred and continues to aggravate climate change; and the atomization of societies that has literally decimated social compassion and community care by fostering exclusive and unnatural individualism are dangerous trends that will ultimately undermine the social fabric and stability of individual countries and our global village at large.

My rather extensive views on the flaws of the global governance structure do not stem solely from a general and abstract desire by my Government to seek timely and urgent remedies, as underlined in the theme of the current session of the General Assembly. Eritrea has indeed borne the brunt of this unfair international order through illicit sanctions, the use of surrogate forces to create a situation of permanent conflict and instability, as well as the weaponization of human rights to isolate and ostracize the young nation.

Mr. Hikmat (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As we all agree, the gravity of the interlocking problems with which our global village must grapple is so immense that it warrants urgent and comprehensive remedial action. We are truly living on borrowed time. The prevailing global governance architecture has lost legitimacy and corroded the vital global equilibrium that is crucial for continuity and sustainability. In this respect, it behoves us to rise to the occasion to summon the requisite political will in order to roll back and rectify this dangerous trend. We must recognize that the resources and technological know-how at the disposal of humankind are more than what is required if we set our minds to an inclusive and compassionate world order.

In that respect and in our modest view, first, our global village and the United Nations system must devise a new international order that is anchored on consensus, with the full and equal participation of its constituents.

Secondly, the sacrosanct principles of the equality of all Member States and respect for the sovereignty and political independence of nations and peoples must be upheld.

Thirdly, the equitable representation of all Member States in all decision-making international bodies must be guaranteed through viable and sustainable modalities and mechanisms.

Lastly, selective and partial parameters that impede our collective well-being and the fostering of a compassionate social system will require thorough review.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Francisco Bustillo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Bustillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Exactly two years ago, during the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we were in the first year of the pandemic. It was a year replete with uncertainty and fear, owing to the unexpected outbreak of a virus, the historic aftermath of which, even today, continues to affect us in terms of loss of life, serious health ramifications for our populations and damage to our economies. Since then, the international situation has not only failed to improve, but new sources of tension have emerged that have made it difficult to make progress in economic

recovery and in addressing the significant social costs of the pandemic.

The military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is unjustifiable. Our country has condemned it in the strongest terms as a clear violation of the principles on which we have built the Organization and that must be respected by all its members. It is imperative that the Russian Federation cease hostilities and withdraw from Ukraine as soon as possible. The parties to the conflict must work towards returning to the negotiating table to resolve their differences peacefully, as set out under the Charter of the United Nations.

In the meantime, the negative effects of the armed conflict are being felt in many spheres at the international level and are increasingly weighing on the daily lives of millions of people. The impact on international trade is fuelling recessionary trends in many countries. The shortage of agricultural products is seriously affecting least-developed importer countries, and the lack of access to world markets is leading to food insecurity in several regions of the world. Other countries are experiencing energy shortages or higher energy prices, which is having an impact on the living conditions of millions of people. At the same time, it has also created a new environmental threat.

Although its outcome did not meet everyone's expectations, the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), held in Glasgow, in November 2021, saw the achievement of several promising results. Furthermore, it was clear that countries have not given up on the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The discussions at COP26, in Glasgow, will allow for further debate in other contexts in the near future. We hope that the high level of ambition will be maintained by all countries and that the promise to muster the financial resources necessary to support adaptation and mitigation measures against climate change will be kept. Otherwise, the international community will have missed another opportunity — perhaps its last — to address one of the greatest threats facing it. If we fail in that work, future generations will be justified in saying that we, who governed during this century, did not live up to shouldering our political responsibilities.

In that regard, I would like to renew Uruguay's support for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and our firm commitment to achieving its objectives and its

concrete targets. That is the shared goal that we have set for ourselves, and we must make a greater effort to achieve it. In that context, as we face such significant challenges, "multilateralism" is not a hollow or meaningless word. It is therefore essential to strengthen the multilateral system, to which we all belong and which constitutes a common asset. International and regional mechanisms must be strengthened and improved to make them more effective and preventive.

The international community is today facing three major challenges: international peace and security; the environment; and global health. The multilateral system is essential to addressing those challenges, not only as an inspirational principle, but also as a key tool for making our work effective. In that regard, I would like to reaffirm once again our commitment to multilateralism.

Despite the interconnected shocks of 2022, this year should also be seen as a milestone for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are already living in the decade of action, and it remains imperative that we translate words into the realization of the Goals. To that end, Uruguay submitted its fifth voluntary national review on the achievements and targets met by our country in 2021. The reviews clearly reaffirm my country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving the SDGs.

Uruguay is sparing no effort to create proactive public policies and improve the relevant indicators. Within the international system, there are persistent shortcomings that affect and weaken the work that has been done in pursuit of our countries' economic and social development. Many times, the need to establish certain criteria in order to ensure international cooperation results in adverse, undesired and extremely negative outcomes. Many countries, including Uruguay, have been adversely affected by the archaic concept of development based on per capita income and resulting in a graduation process that, in practice, constitutes a punishment for countries on the path to development that have achieved a better redistribution of income.

States shoulder the primary responsibility to protect the human rights of their populations. We are deeply shocked to see that, in many parts of the world, the basic rights of millions of men, women and children are being flagrantly violated, which is made

even worse when the perpetrators of such atrocities are their people's own rulers, who misuse repressive mechanisms and violate their international obligations in this domain. That reality is all the more difficult to bear and disturbing, as we have such examples in our own region of Latin America and the Caribbean. There is no more appropriate forum than the General Assembly in which to reaffirm Uruguay's humanist and humanitarian vocation and reiterate its continued and permanent commitment to the human rights agenda, while demanding that the international commitments undertaken by the members of the Organization be fully respected by all actors of the international community.

Similarly, we must ensure that efforts to address such sensitive issues in the relevant multilateral forums are carried out in an objective and non-politicized manner. In that regard, I would like to underscore Uruguay's firm commitment to strengthening mechanisms dedicated to the protection of the rights of women, children, adolescents, the elderly, migrants, persons with disabilities and the members of the LGBTI community.

Migratory waves resulting from wars, internal conflicts and political and economic crises of various magnitudes have increased in recent years. Hotspots of regional instability, such as those resulting from the conflict in Ukraine, the civil war in Syria and events in Libya, Myanmar and Venezuela — in our own region — have caused an increase in the flow of people and families fleeing their homes and countries in search of security and relief. I would like to highlight the role of the International Criminal Court as a central mechanism of the international justice system and its relevance as a deterrent and means of punishment for the perpetrators of acts of genocide, mass atrocities and crimes against humanity.

With regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, and as it does every year, Uruguay renews its support for United Nations peacekeeping missions and operations. Our country has a long history of contributing to those missions, which began in the late 1940s, and has continuously deployed troops in various missions for more than 70 years. Uruguay was among the first 15 troop contributors to the United Nations system, and our main troop deployments are currently in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights. Uruguay is unwavering in

its commitment to peace, international security and the protection of civilians. In line with the spirit and provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Uruguay officially submitted its national action plan on women and peace and security on 21 July.

Uruguay is one of the founding countries of the Organization and throughout its history has worked collaboratively to meet its goal of maintaining international peace and security. Uruguay does not believe that peace is possible in the world without the firm and serious commitment of the international community in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The impasse and paralysis recently experienced in the framework of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must make us reflect upon this particular moment in the history of the United Nations. Uruguay has supported and will continue to support the United Nations disarmament agenda. It will therefore continue to tirelessly seek agreements to enable the disarmament architecture to function effectively and reliably.

Among the current factors responsible for insecurity at the international level, we must recall the growing influence of international organized crime, drug trafficking and international terrorism. As my country's Government has made combating crime and drug trafficking one of its priorities in order to provide its citizens with a greater level of security, I reiterate Uruguay's firm commitment to and cooperation in the fight against organized crime and terrorist activities at the regional and international levels.

Uruguay is committed to the cybersecurity agenda and combating cybercrime. The Organization shoulders a major responsibility in that area, and Uruguay actively participates in the relevant activities under way. In addition, Uruguay has formalized its request to the Council of Europe to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, also known as the Budapest Convention, and thereby is ready to embrace the most modern legislation available to deal with cybercrime.

As we all know, the various activities of the Organization are numerous, timely and necessary, but as Secretary-General António Guterres has rightly said, we must combat the dysfunctionality that paralyzes us. As leaders, we have an obligation to ensure that the Organization represents all citizens, including the

voiceless and faceless, and is not perceived as an annual display of rhetoric for representatives and diplomats.

Democracy is not a perfect model and does not resolve all the world's problems, but it is clearly the system of Government that best safeguards people's greatest aspiration — their freedom. Democracy is the form of Government that uniquely represents and reflects the human condition itself, our expectations of spiritual and material betterment and the enjoyment of the right to choose. Democracy and the rule of law are necessarily interdependent elements and essential for ensuring that the social and political order of a country represents the genuine will of its citizens.

However, democracy and its principles and values are systematically under attack in many parts of the world. For Uruguay, the democratic system is part of its history and its best traditions. It is an identifying feature of our society. We are proud to be considered as a full-fledged democracy, but we are also aware of our responsibility as leaders to strengthen it every day and protect it from the many challenges it faces.

That democratic edifice, together with its values and guiding principles — our democracy and our rule of law — have enabled Uruguay's voice to be not only heard but also respected in the international community. Those were, are and will remain the fundamental pillars on which my country's contribution to the international order rests. On that basis, Uruguay renews its commitment to the international system of nations.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Mauritians Abroad of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Mr. Merzoug (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to deliver the statement of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for this session on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I would like to convey to the General Assembly his sincere appreciation and wishes for its success.

I am also pleased to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and to wish him every success in leading this session, which has adopted the theme "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges".

I commend His Excellency Mr Abdullah Shahid on his highly competent leadership of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. My country would like to express our appreciation and respect to Secretary-General António Guterres for his diligent efforts to promote and advance the goals of the United Nations.

The current session is being held in a very challenging global environment, including the war in Ukraine, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, diverse terrorist threats and the threats of natural disasters caused by climate change. Indeed, the range of crises in the world today and their economic, social and humanitarian repercussions are unprecedented. They represent a major challenge at all levels, particularly in terms of global food insecurity. It is therefore only natural that such difficult conditions have more severe and dangerous consequences for developing countries, owing to their vulnerability and lack of resilience.

The war in Ukraine rages at a time when the world has not yet recovered from the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has resulted in disruptions to both fuel and food supply chains, leading to a staggering increase of commodity prices in general. Without the commendable efforts of the United Nations, Türkiye and other concerned parties, which led to an important agreement on resuming grain and fertilizer exports through safe corridors, the world would have faced an even greater catastrophe.

However, we are of the view that the measures taken by the international community are insufficient. We therefore call today for increased efforts to find solutions that will ensure peace, security and a dignified life for all the peoples of the world, which as the Assembly knows are the very purposes for which the United Nations was established.

From this rostrum, my country, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, calls on the international community to assume its responsibilities towards developing and poor countries and to help them quickly confront the challenges that threaten their food security and contain the damage caused by those challenges. In that context, we reiterate our call for the cancellation of the external debt of countries in the African continent.

The gap is widening day by day between two worlds — one of which has entered the fourth industrial revolution while the other is still suffering

from ignorance, poverty and terrorism under the yoke of backwardness. That calls on us to think carefully, and in a collective way, about finding appropriate ways to address the challenges of our times and maintain the spirit of humanity. Therefore, it is worth recalling that paradox and reflecting on it in this major international meeting, which is being held under the slogan of “solidarity, sustainability and science”. It also constitutes an opportunity to assess the efficacy of the adopted approaches and plans to meet common challenges.

Allow me in this regard to briefly mention my country's efforts to establish the foundations of the rule of law and good governance, consolidate social cohesion, rehabilitate people and preserve their dignity and health as a way of creating the conditions for national renaissance and of overcoming obstacles to progress and prosperity.

Our country has taken important steps on the path to perpetuating the values of equality and justice; promoting democracy and individual and collective freedoms, including freedom of the press; adopting dialogue and consultation as a method for managing public affairs; and actively involving civil society in development strategies. It has also enshrined the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, and enabled Parliament to fully exercise its oversight and accountability role. Transparency has been adopted in the conduct of public affairs, the exploitation of national wealth and the development of legal and regulatory mechanisms that guarantee the eradication of corruption and bribery. Our country has also strengthened efforts to protect and promote human rights by combating new forms of slavery and human trafficking.

With regard to strengthening social cohesion, my country's Government, guided by His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr. Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, has implemented important programmes to consolidate national unity and support and do justice to poor and vulnerable groups. These include exercising control over the prices of basic materials, ensuring their ongoing supply to the market and preventing speculation, in addition to covering medical insurance for 15 per cent of the population as a first step towards covering all of them.

Moreover, our country is providing the necessary assistance to more than 85,000 refugees from the sister

Republic of Mali in the Ambra camp in south-eastern Mauritania, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations representations accredited in Mauritania.

Within the framework of investing in human capital, extensive programmes have been prepared to train and rehabilitate young people, enable them to enter the labour market and protect them from extremism. The empowerment of women and their strong participation in political life and the conduct of public affairs have also been enhanced. In the same context, our country has embarked on a promising reform process for our educational system, based on an accurate diagnosis of its deficiencies. All components of the educational community and stakeholders in the country have participated in its preparation, along with specialists.

In the field of health care, our country has redoubled its efforts to care for the citizens' health by expanding and improving the supply of health services and ensuring access to high-quality medicines, all at a time when serious efforts are being made to strengthen and diversify the national economy and make it more resilient and able to withstand shocks and emergency crises.

Our country, Mauritania, has been keen to develop a comprehensive approach to combating terrorism and various forms of extremism that takes the security, ideological, economic and social dimensions into account. In that context, we have worked with our regional and international partners to intensify consultation and coordination in its implementation, with all due respect for human rights. As an embodiment of this vision, we consider the Group of Five for the Sahel to be an indispensable framework for confronting terrorism and achieving balanced and comprehensive development in the region. Therefore, we call for it to be supported in its efforts to overcome the obstacles currently in its path.

In the field of the environment and sustainable development, our country is focused on renewable energies. The percentage of clean energy has reached 40 per cent of the total energy we consume, and efforts are continuing to raise that percentage to achieve the set goals. In this field, Mauritania is working hard to benefit from its enormous natural capacities, represented by an abundance of wind and sunlight, to produce green hydrogen in a way that supports local industries and serves the country's economic and social development.

We have also achieved important results in our efforts to stop desertification and rehabilitate the areas damaged by it, as well as to rationalize the exploitation of our marine resources and restore the biodiversity of our ecosystem. In that context, my country has high hopes for the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh in the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt in November, and looks forward to the industrialized countries honouring their commitments to reducing emissions and the pledges they made at the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

My country, Mauritania, reiterates its ongoing support for just causes throughout in the world. We stress from this rostrum our adherence to the right of the Palestinian people to dignity and sovereignty within the framework of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant resolutions. We reiterate our condemnation of the continuing Israeli violations of human rights in Palestine and the other Arab territories.

We reaffirm our resolve to strive seriously to reach a political solution that preserves the unity and independence of the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic, the dignity of its people and their right to live in security and peace.

We reiterate our support for legitimacy in brotherly Yemen and call for the pursuit of a peaceful solution, in accordance with Arab initiatives and relevant international resolutions.

We reiterate our firm position on the conflict in Western Sahara and our support for the efforts of the United Nations and all relevant Security Council resolutions aimed at finding a solution sustainable and acceptable to all.

We call for a solution that preserves the unity and sovereignty of the sisterly State of Libya, and support international efforts in this regard.

We reiterate our support for efforts to restore the constitutional status in the sisterly Republic of Mali.

We express our concern over the continuation of the war in Ukraine, and we call on the relevant parties to come to the negotiating table in order to find a solution that will end the war and spare the region and the world further tragedies and destruction.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mrs. Marsudi (Indonesia): Many leaders have spoken here over the past few days. We share the same concerns. The current state of our world is very worrying. The pandemic persists and the global economy remains sluggish. War among nations is no longer a mere possibility but has become a reality. The violation of international law has become a norm in pursuit of narrow self-interest. Crisis after crisis is unfolding around the world, including climate change, rising inflation food and energy shortages.

History teaches us that these phenomena might lead to a huge war. Let us look at the period leading up to the Second World War. The Great Depression, the rise of ultranationalism competition over resources and rivalry between major Powers — these are very similar to what we are facing today.

Clearly, we have been handling these challenges the wrong way. We have been divided instead of united. We have been working individually instead of collectively. We have been focusing on words instead of deeds. The question now is: What are we going to do about it? Are we going to continue along the same path or are we going to choose a different path? If we continue on the same path, we will be heading towards a disaster, but if we choose a different path, we might stand a chance.

So, today I would like to offer a world order based on a new paradigm — a paradigm of win-win, not of zero sum; a paradigm of engagement, not of containment; a paradigm of collaboration, not of competition. This is the transformative solution that we need. Allow me to share why we need this new paradigm.

First, we must reignite the spirit of peace. A deficit of trust breeds hatred and fear and may lead to conflict. We have witnessed these phenomena in many parts of the world. We must turn the trust deficit into strategic trust, and that starts with upholding respect for international law. The fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable. I repeat — the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable. Those principles must always be upheld.

Meanwhile, the peaceful solution is the only option for settling any conflict. A habit of dialogue and cooperation would nurture strategic trust. These

are the rules of the game that we must maintain if we truly want peace. It is our responsibility to apply them consistently, not selectively or only when we see fit. My President conveyed these messages of peace in his visits to Kyiv and Moscow in June.

We must also apply this new paradigm to make a breakthrough in Palestine and Afghanistan. For far too long, the people of Palestine have suffered and longed for peace. Until Palestine can truly become an independent State, Indonesia will stand firm in solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters. The people of Afghanistan also deserve a peaceful and prosperous life where the rights of all, including women, are equally respected and where women's and girls' access to education is granted. Without that new paradigm, peace will remain an elusive dream.

Secondly, we must revive our responsibility for global recovery. We are concerned that global solidarity is fading away, whereas injustice and selfishness abound, the weak stand small and the mighty take all. We are seeing the symptoms every day. Trade discrimination is running rampant. The monopoly in the global supply chain persists. Global economic governance is used to justify the rules of the strong.

The pandemic teaches us the valuable lesson that no one is safe until everyone is. That lesson shapes the priorities of Indonesia's presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20). The whole world is pinning its hope on G-20 as a catalyst of global economic recovery, especially for developing countries. The G-20 must not fail. We cannot let global recovery fall to the mercy of geopolitics. We must act urgently to address food and energy crises and prevent a fertilizer crisis from happening. Otherwise, billions more people will be at risk particularly in developing countries.

We also need a new paradigm as we move beyond the recovery. A new paradigm would instil a collective responsibility to attain the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and fight climate change. Without that new paradigm, there will not be a strong recovery for all and many of us will be left behind.

Thirdly, we must bolster regional partnership. In many places, the post-war regional architecture was built as a tool for containment and alienation. That phenomenon continues today with mini-lateral groupings. Many become part of a proxy war between major Powers. That is not what regional architecture

should be. It must serve as the building block for peace and stability, rather than undermine them.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was built exactly for this purpose. We refuse to be a pawn in a new Cold War. Instead, we actively promote the paradigm of collaboration with all countries.

That paradigm will also guide Indonesia's chairmanship of ASEAN next year. It is the commitment of Indonesia to forge ASEAN's centrality in shaping regional order in the Indo-Pacific, to reinforce ASEAN's unity as a locomotive for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region, and to ensure that ASEAN matters to our peoples, to the region and to the world.

ASEAN will also continue to address seriously the situation in Myanmar. Indonesia is deeply concerned by the military junta's lack of commitment to implementing the five-point consensus. ASEAN must move forward and not be taken hostage by the situation in Myanmar. The support of the international community, in particular the neighbouring countries of Myanmar, is very important to restoring democracy in Myanmar.

On the Pacific, Indonesia will continue to strengthen our cooperation with the Pacific countries. We will work together to address our shared challenges, including on climate change. As a Pacific nation ourselves, we want to see the Pacific as an integral part of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

The new paradigm of collaboration must be the spirit of the United Nations. Inclusive and meaningful engagement must trump the take-it-or-leave-it approach, and the voices of all countries big and small, developed and developing, matter equally. That is the very foundation of multilateralism. That is why we need a strong and reformed United Nations. It is why we need a renewed multilateralism that is fit for purpose and fit for its time. That is why we need a multilateralism that delivers. I repeat — we need a multilateralism that delivers.

I believe that by working together and adopting a new paradigm, we can create a better world for all. It is no longer the time to talk the talk; now is the time to walk the talk.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Minister for Foreign Affairs

and National Community Abroad of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to extend to Mr. Csaba Kőrösi my warmest congratulations on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session, and to wish him every success in performing his tasks. I also thank Mr. Abdulla Shahid for his distinguished presidency of the seventy-sixth session.

I also cannot but to reiterate to Secretary-General António Guterres our full support for his efforts and endeavours aimed at improving the performance of our Organization and strengthening its role in accordance with the three pillars of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, security, development and human rights.

Our session is taking place as the world is witnessing escalating tensions that threaten to have serious repercussions on the system of international relations, especially in light of the resurgence of the phenomenon of polarization, as is the case with the Ukraine crisis and its negative repercussions, which will significantly exacerbate existential challenges in vital areas. That situation, with its complexities and dilemmas, which are difficult to anticipate in all their aspects in the current circumstances, highlights more than ever the structural imbalances that characterize global governance mechanisms and the urgent need to address them through an approach that ensures parity and equality among all countries and puts an end to the long-standing marginalization of developing countries.

The profound transformations we are witnessing today, despite the difficulties they entail, give us opportunities to correct the path we are on and to work to uphold the principles and purposes upon which our Organization was founded. We therefore fully agree with the theme of the current session and believe that we are truly at a watershed moment in advancing multilateral action in the face of common challenges that prove day after day that our collective security is closely linked to the stability and prosperity of all our peoples, without exception.

My country, which this year celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the restoration of its national independence and while resolutely pursuing the process of building a new Algeria under the leadership of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, stresses its commitment to those values and principles and its

determination to make its contribution to maintaining international peace and security and achieving comprehensive, just and sustainable development.

In that spirit, Algeria is preparing to host an important summit of Arab countries on 1 and 2 November, and looks forward to making that event a milestone in the process of joint Arab action towards a more effective contribution by the Group of Arab States to addressing current regional and international challenges. In that context, and in preparation for that important event, Algeria is pursuing its efforts to strengthen national unity among our Palestinian brothers in the light of the initiative launched by the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, in line with the efforts of many sisterly Arab countries in this regard.

From this rostrum, I reaffirm that addressing the Palestinian question remains key to restoring security and stability in the Middle East region by consecrating the right of the brotherly Palestinian people to establish their independent State on the borders of 4 June 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital, and ending the occupation of the Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. In that regard, Algeria affirms its support for the request submitted by the State of Palestine for full membership of the United Nations, and looks forward to welcoming it soon as the 194th State Member of the United Nations.

With the same determination, Algeria reiterates once again its support for the right of the brotherly people of Western Sahara to end the occupation of their lands and to exercise their inalienable and imprescriptible right to self-determination and independence. We call on the United Nations to redouble its efforts, through the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, to help the two parties to the conflict — two States members of the African Union, namely, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic — to resume the course of direct negotiations with a view to reaching a political solution acceptable to both parties within the framework of international legitimacy.

Proceeding from its principled positions and adherence to the principles of non-alignment and by virtue of its rich history and experience in the field of international mediation, Algeria stresses the need for the international community to go beyond the logic of

crisis management and focus instead on the search for solutions. Whether the issue is related to cross-border threats or local conflicts, Algeria believes that the only way to sustainably break the vicious cycle of such crises is by addressing their root causes.

In that context, and in view of its leadership of the international mediation process and chairmanship of the Monitoring Committee on the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Republic of Mali, emanating from the Algiers process, my country calls on the international community to support the Malian parties with a view to accelerating the implementation of all their commitments in light of the current delicate transitional phase in that brotherly country.

On neighbouring Libya, we stress once again the need to address the core of the crisis by ending foreign interference in all its forms in the affairs of that brotherly country, and to accompany the Libyan parties towards formulating the necessary agreements to move towards achieving the goals of national reconciliation and organizing free and fair elections that respond to the aspirations of the brotherly Libyan people to build their democratic and modern State.

At the regional level, the Sahel-Sahara region remains vulnerable to the challenges posed by the spread of terrorist threats and cross-border crimes against the background of the expansion of institutional instability, the exacerbation of development problems and the effects of climate change. Faced with those crisis situations, and by virtue of its responsibilities as the African Union coordinator for efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, as well as its policy of good-neighbourliness and solidarity, Algeria intends to intensify its efforts, in coordination with the concerned countries, to establish a new dynamic for the mechanisms of joint regional action so as to ensure joint and effective responses commensurate with the challenges posed by the threat of terrorism to all the peoples of the region.

Algeria is also working with its brothers from neighbouring countries to promote economic integration and sustainable development with a view to achieving shared prosperity that will enable the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthen peace and security in the region.

In that regard, I stress that Algeria, which is proud of its African affiliation, remains an active party in

the project of integration, prosperity and political and economic independence of the African continent. That can be achieved by eliminating the consequences of external interventions and moving to develop African solutions to African problems. We therefore call on the international community to accompany the positive dynamic of the African continent by meeting its commitments and supporting the African Union Agenda 2063, which reflects a common vision for the future of the continent, while encouraging the establishment of balanced partnerships that respect the sovereign decisions taken by the countries of the African continent within the framework of the African Union.

We also firmly believe that recent developments have proven beyond any doubt that our African continent, the cradle of humankind and in no way resembling the stereotyped image promoted about it, is capable of presenting a new model of human civilization that places human beings and their environment at centre stage and paves the way for establishing friendly relations among States on the basis of justice and equality.

In the midst of these developments and aware of the magnitude of the unprecedented challenges at the international and regional levels, Algeria has submitted its candidacy for non-permanent membership of the Security Council for the period 2024-2025. Its candidacy has been endorsed by the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Algeria, which looks forward to enjoying the support of Member States in the elections scheduled for June next year, is committed to upholding the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and will work with the other members of the Council to give greater effectiveness to international efforts to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and resolve them through peaceful means. We will also support the role of active regional organizations, encourage the prominent participation of women and young people in resolving crises and ensure the necessary protection for all vulnerable groups.

Undoubtedly, the international community is today at a critical juncture and required to take bold decisions to preserve its collective security and explore prospects for a promising future for all humankind. From that perspective, Algeria recognizes the need to avoid the mistakes of the past and their consequences and calls

for the consolidation of all our efforts to ensure the success of the reform path, leading to the establishment of a global system of equity, equality in sovereignty, mutual interests and constructive cooperation.

We need, now more than ever, to work together and be guided by the principle of our common destiny so as to avoid dangerous mistakes that threaten the return of the darkest chapters of contemporary human history.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mr. Moncada Colindres (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We come to this seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly in moments of extreme vulnerability and danger, which have put and continue to put life in all its aspects at risk, in a world where we should unite to continue facing the great social, economic, climatic, cultural and security challenges to which the human family is exposed on a daily basis.

We come to speak on behalf of a heroic, dignified, sovereign, free people who, together with so many other heroic, dignified, sovereign and free peoples of the planet, have been demonstrating and exercising our national dignity and sovereignty, faced over centuries with the avarice and colonial and imperial greed that have raged, from Europe and the north of this wounded continent, attacking, intervening in, invading and occupying our sacred lands.

The invaders have been expelled from Nicaragua and defeated by the bravery of Nicaraguan patriotism. Our own courage has also been inspired by the great revolutionary and evolutionary liberation struggles of the admirable peoples of this world.

In these times of brazen and violent greedy, ambitious, avaricious practices, of absurd political pretence, and their notorious, spiteful media farces, as they seek to seize our freedoms, our natural and cultural heritage, so as to impose — although they will not succeed in doing so — a global society governed and administered by those who have committed and flaunted their criminality with horrifying and stunning shamelessness amid the most tremendous looting of the riches of our common home.

The assault, the robbery, the disgraceful, abominable depredation, the looting and the genocides unleashed by the colonialists and imperialists of the Earth are real crimes, and their perpetrators are the

true criminals against humanity. We denounce them in those terms.

In speaking on this final day of the general debate of the seventy-seventh session, we do so with our heads held high and our hearts full of freedom-loving, fraternal solidarity, espousing lasting justice and peace, and sovereignty and independence that must be respected, as well as the character — a great deal of character, a great deal of mettle, a great deal of heart — to defend what is ours. We speak the language of a human community that demands recognition of our particularities, our models and ways of life, our creeds and beliefs, in accordance with our own history, tradition and aspirations, which we must make victorious, because life is made up of effort, anxieties, searching and demands, of respect from each to all, and from all to everyone.

It is time to do more to make a reality the right of the peoples to a United Nations that represents us all and does not submit to the designs of any imperialist Power.

It is time to assert a world of dialogue and peace, of justice and solidarity, of brotherhood and sisterhood and genuine, true goodwill, coming together despite our differences and enriching our consensus.

It is time to assert our multiple voices, our demands, our causes, which can no longer be ignored or buried under piles and mountains of idolatry and indifference.

It is time to transcend the selfishness that kills millions of human beings through the world, subjecting them to the cruelty of poverty and extreme poverty out of the barbaric, animal-like instincts of the great Powers, which seek to sustain and even perpetuate their domination at the cost of hunger, ill health, climatic destruction, ignorance, war and all the darkness derived from hatred.

It is time to continue rejecting criminal blockades, all the illegal, arbitrary, illicit aggressions called sanctions, which highlight the prevailing perversion of an imperialist and capitalist system and model that seeks to continue imposing punishments, bleeding the world dry, in full view and with the patient complacency of the organisms that should defend it.

It is time to say, “enough” to the lack of common sense, compassion and spirituality, to the appalling and utter disregard of the human condition and soul. It is time to say “enough is enough”, to rebel and continue to rebel against the innate evil of capitalism, which

suffocates the majority while brutally enriching the few. Enough is enough.

It is time to say “enough” to the hypocritical imperialism that politicizes, falsifies and denigrates the very human rights that they themselves violate and deny on a daily basis, imperialism and its coercive actions against life in all its spheres, which are contrary to international law in and of themselves.

It is time to stop, with the help of everyone, the invasions, aggressions and occupations affecting so many territories made for the glory of God, in the name of the right to a safe, harmonious life, with rights, with decent work, with food and sustainable and viable means to be able to affirm the well-being and happiness that we deserve.

It is time to denounce and put an end to the capital sins used to justify intervention and interference in the internal domestic affairs of each country. And it is time to assert the freedom to be ourselves and not what others — who demand, who wage war, seeking to displace us and continue to occupy us so as to plunder our cultural and natural riches — want us to be.

It is time to enforce the principle of the sovereign equality of States in all international organizations and forums, so that this multipolar, non-aligned world that we have worked so hard to bring about becomes a reality, strengthens and grows while taking all of us into account.

It is time to ensure that the Charter of the United Nations and so many organizations that should serve to bring us together are valid for everyone and respect the rights of everyone. Now is and should be the time of the peoples.

All our countries that have lived through all the fires of greed, avarice, selfishness, the vainglory of vanities and the search for absolute dominion by others over a world that does not belong to them must strengthen and consolidate our identities and consensus, together defending culture and justice based on respect and peace in all relevant spaces.

We support and embrace with commitment dignified and brave Venezuela, with heroic Cuba, with the historic and noble battles of the Palestinian people, with the Islamic revolution of the Iranian families; the continuing great battle of the Russian Federation against fascism and for security, integrity and peace, which will continue, we have no doubt, to gather victories.

We embrace with solidarity the admirable resistance and just development of the People’s Republic of China, which generates so much discomfort, concern and envy among the enemies of the common good.

It is time to remain united with Syria, with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, with Belarus, with the peoples of Asia, of Africa, of our America and the Caribbean, fighting all the magnificent, momentous struggles that we are sure will result in the most sublime and supreme triumph of all time — a new world that is now indispensable and cannot be postponed!

In Nicaragua, there is a patriotic nation, and because there is a patriotic nation, there is peace. In the name of our generals of free men and women, Augusto Sandino and Benjamin Zeledón, national heroes, heroes of anti-imperialism who fill our hearts with the resolve to fight and continue to overcome; in the name of our infinite father of metaphor, dreams and realities both worldly and heavenly, our magical teacher, the great Rubén Darío, we greet each and everyone here and call on us all to continue fighting for justice, peace and the inalienable rights of our peoples, life, health, strength, hope and faith in the future. A better world, multipolar, just, ethical, spiritually and materially, is already being born, and we are here to continue its creation and to defend it.

The sovereignty of a people is not a matter for discussion, but to be defended, with love and the sacred flames of celestial hopes.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Othman Jerandi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of the Republic of Tunisia.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*) At the outset, I wish to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi and his friendly country Hungary on presiding over the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, and offer him Tunisia’s support for the guidelines he has outlined. “Solidarity, sustainability and science” are indeed basic components of the solutions we are looking for.

I also extend deep appreciation to Mr. Abdulla Shahid for his capable management of the work of the previous session of the General Assembly, against the backdrop of grave challenges whose repercussions are still being felt and unfortunately foretell further difficulties.

Thanks are due to Mr. António Guterres for his ongoing efforts to strengthen the role of our Organization and to ensure an effective response to our challenges and to contain their impacts, especially through the implementation of *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). That Agenda, with all its contents, provides a ray of hope for the international community at a time of concerns about our capacity to overcome the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic at the health, economic and humanitarian levels. We have found in the Agenda and in other United Nations references that we have supported and engaged in — such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — a path towards common solutions within a framework of solidarity and parity so that no one is left behind.

Unfortunately, however, many peoples today are threatened to be left behind as a result of international financial structural imbalances and limited international solidarity amid exacerbated risks and threats of disputes, conflicts, political crises and unprecedented natural disasters due to climate change, in addition to the terrible flows of irregular migration and the increase in the number of refugees, not to mention the millions of people threatened by famine, malnutrition and extreme poverty.

At a time when we were trying to overcome the repercussions of COVID-19 and its devastating effects, which will be felt for many years to come, the Russian-Ukrainian crisis has returned us to a state of uncertainty. Indeed, the world today is facing a severe food and energy crisis as a result of the disruption of production and supply chains, shortages of basic materials, unprecedented high food prices, the deterioration of purchasing power, and high rates of inflation, debt and debt servicing.

Today we are indeed facing a defining moment in our history and common destiny that calls on all of us to find radical and transformative solutions that will allow our peoples to overcome the current circumstances, enhance our resilience and build the sustainability we hope for.

Our peoples are watching us at this session and wondering whether the international community is truly capable of implementing transformative solutions

and whether we have the political will to address the global crises that are escalating and accumulating.

At each session, new issues are added to the old ones, so are we simply postponing today's solutions until they become tomorrow's problems? Are we assuming our responsibility for the future of coming generations? Today's solutions must protect us from tomorrow's crises, and those solutions cannot be formulated within traditional policies and approaches.

In this context, Tunisia stresses once again that circumstantial solutions to certain issues do not fundamentally resolve them, but are merely palliatives. Over the decades, such remedies have proven unable to provide radical and effective solutions to various crises. We need new policies based on solidarity and justice, such as those contained in the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda*. The repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the situation in Ukraine have revealed the need to review those approaches so that we can save the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals before it is too late, as indicated by the Secretary-General. In that context, I would like to emphasize the following.

First, solutions cannot be formulated outside the framework of multilateral action and human solidarity, and in cooperation and coordination with the United Nations, while preserving the other frameworks and mechanisms as tributaries for that cooperation. They complement and complete such coordination, without competing with it or weakening its ability to provide solutions. That is what Tunisia emphasized recently on the occasion of our country's hosting, on 27 and 28 August, the eighth Tokyo International Symposium on Development in Africa, where we discussed many items on our agenda, including how to achieve sustainable development through approaches in which economic, security and humanitarian dimensions are integrated.

Secondly, we need to adopt an economic approach that focuses on the quality of economic growth and not its speed, especially by investing more in knowledge, science, innovation and modern technologies. In Tunisia, we look forward to the Francophonie Summit, which will be hosted on the island of Djerba on 19 and 20 November, under the theme "Connectivity in diversity: Digital as a vector of development and solidarity in the Francophonie space". The recommendations of the Summit should promote

ways to achieve our common goals in the digital, technological and development fields.

Thirdly, we must take a qualitative leap in debt management through new development approaches and in how the global financial system can provide financial support without unfair conditions or dicta that do not take into account the specificities and circumstances of developing and least developed countries, especially in the African region, where the global financial system has not offered the support they expected in their efforts to overcome the existing challenges and in their quest for recovery and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. That was confirmed by the Secretary-General recently when he spoke of a disruptive global financial system that disappoints developing countries. In that context, Tunisia calls for a restructuring of debt into investment projects to generate wealth. It also stresses the importance of enabling peoples to recover their looted funds that were smuggled abroad.

Fourthly, the international community must today renew its commitment to the African continent on the basis of solidarity, equality and equal partnership, while listening to its development and security concerns.

Fifthly, the challenges facing the world today cannot be addressed without consolidating the elements of international peace and security, based on the rule of international law and international legitimacy. In that context, it is necessary to work on settling conflicts peacefully without selectivity, putting an end to absurd conflicts, refraining from fabricating crises and finding solutions to just causes, foremost of which is the Palestinian question, which requires an end of the occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Sixthly, we must realize that every country, without exception, has its own challenges, problems and peculiarities. There is no one-size-fits-all mode or model. Let us agree that there are principles, values and common denominators that unite us and that we are all obligated to respect, but the details of choices and directions remain within the sovereign purviews of States. There is no democracy, but there are democracies.

Democracy in Tunisia represents an unshakable national option, which we are working to strengthen and preserve through a corrective path whose phases will be completed by the legislative elections of 17 December.

Tunisia's democratic choice arises from the will of the Tunisian people, who are determined to make their democratic experience a success and complete their political path under the auspices of a State that preserves their constitutional rights, freedoms, security and dignity, in which the law is supreme and the people are sovereign.

Tunisia has demonstrated in various regional and international forums its adherence to human rights and freedoms with further support and development. It has contributed to enriching the United Nations system in that regard with several initiatives and contributions that are recognized for their credibility and sustained, firm alignment with common universal principles.

The stakes before us today can be addressed only with a true common resolve to go beyond the diagnosis stage to the action and response stage through the optimal utilization of our capabilities and capabilities and by activating multilateral action. Our peoples are tired of unfulfilled promises, so let us all rise to that defining moment and rebuild trust in our national and international institutions so as to move towards achieving our common goals of building a better world for us and for future generations, a world that is worthy of human beings wherever they are, while preserving their security and dignity and realizing their well-being and sustainability.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Tandi Dorji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Mr. Dorji (Bhutan): I bring the warm greetings of His Majesty the King and from the people of Bhutan.

Allow me to convey our congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. He may rest assured of Bhutan's full support as he steers us through the session. I also take this opportunity to convey our gratitude and admiration to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, for the exceptional manner in which he guided our work this past tumultuous year.

Our appreciation is also due to Secretary-General António Guterres, who, in a most challenging year for our Organization, coinciding with the first year of his second term, has continued to serve as a compelling and valiant advocate for peace, people and planet.

I arrived in New York last week with a vastly different prepared text for delivery today. In recent days, however, I received a heartfelt appeal from Chimi, a bright seven-year-old girl in class two at Lunana Primary School, in Bhutan, which has compelled me to rethink my statement.

Lunana is a place in one of our northernmost districts, remote and perched at an altitude of 3,400 metres. It is home to a community of 810 people, comprising 185 households of highland nomadic herders, spread across 13 scattered villages. Today Lunana is embraced in the astounding beauty of the rugged snow-capped peaks of the mighty Himalayas, which Lunaps, or the people of Lunana, both revere and depend upon for their livelihood and sustenance. Each time that Chimi and members of her community glance at these majestic peaks, the foremost question on their mind is: How long before they become barren and brown?

I would like to share young Chimi's letter with the Assembly today: It reads:

"My village is in great danger because of global warming. The glaciers and snow on our mountains are melting, the glacial lakes above our village are getting bigger every day.

"I am sure it may cause a big flood in our village at any time. And we have to be in constant fear every day and night.

"Our innocent people are suffering because of others' evil actions. In the near future, we may not see glaciers and snow on the mountains, beautiful glacial lakes or Lunaps in this place.

"Therefore, I would request Your Excellency to kindly convey this small message to the world leaders and big and rich nations to help and save our tiny village from global warming.

"I am sure that if we all come together, we can not only save our tiny village but also make our Earth safe for all living beings.

"I think we are not too late to fight against global warming now."

Chimi's poignant letter evokes the plain truths of communities standing on the front lines of the climate crisis. But this is not limited to Bhutan. We are reminded with far too much frequency that across the world today, lives and livelihoods are in peril due to

the impacts of human-induced climate change, rising sea levels and natural disasters. The negative impacts of climate change are disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable and marginalized communities around the world, and doing so at a faster pace. The future of our youth and successive generations is under immediate threat, and the great irony is that it is through no fault of their own.

But it is not too late. There is still time to undertake course correction, but that window of opportunity is fast closing. This calls for a demonstration of greater ambition from developed and large emitters, consistent with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must see deeper emission reductions in keeping with a fair share of global efforts, consistent with the 1.5°C pathway. At the same time, we must see greater solidarity and cooperation from all States to support the efforts of the most vulnerable to adapt to the changing climate and deal with its consequences.

We must ensure adequate and predictable finance and technological and capacity support for developing countries, particularly the landlocked developing countries, the least developed countries (LDCs) and the small island developing States, to enable us to achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. We need to forge strong international cooperation in coming up with viable projects and partnerships to scale up investments in alternative renewable energy and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, particularly in the manufacturing and transport sectors. Bhutan hopes that the urgency to move beyond business as usual will be heeded at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November.

In Bhutan, our visionary Monarchs have long recognized the importance of conserving our natural environment and living in harmony with nature. Although small, we have made bold commitments to safeguarding nature and protecting our environment, most significant of which is the constitutional requirement of maintaining 60 per cent of our total area under forest cover, whereas in reality more than 70 per cent of our territory is forested. Our forests are net carbon sinks, absorbing two-thirds more carbon than we emit. Bhutan is not just carbon neutral, but carbon negative.

In a world heading towards a water, food and energy crisis, investing in sustainable mountain development should be a global priority. We need to build the resilience of our communities and offer mountain communities practical and sustainable alternatives to enable them to continue living in harmony with nature and their surroundings. We must continue to foster sustainable mountain development, with special emphasis on mountain agriculture, sustainable mountain tourism and opportunities to tap the renewable energy that the mountains provide.

The proclamation last year of 2022 as the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development put the spotlight on sustainable mountain development, its conservation and sustainable use as integral means of protecting the common heritage of our planet. To maintain focus and raise awareness, we are organizing an annual ultra-marathon event, known as the Snowman Race, that will invite elite athletes from around the world to run across the Himalayas at elevations of 5,000 metres above sea level. We hope that this will generate more action and enhance greater partnerships.

We are at a watershed moment in history. The world today faces an unprecedented series of interlinked and cascading crises. The human race continues on a collision course with nature, battling against the climate, biodiversity and pollution. At the same time, the pandemic that surfaced in March 2020 is still with us, and rather than abate, continues to morph and reinvent itself in new and more virulent strains. Outbreaks of other viral infections continue to occur at alarmingly frequent intervals, threatening the world with another possible pandemic. It is certain that these biological threats will continue and that we need to be better prepared.

Like many other parts of the world, Bhutan was not spared the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or its induced disruptions. We are fortunate that with our beloved Monarch leading from the front, with Government policies and measures firmly grounded in science, and most importantly of all, with the full solidarity and confidence of our people behind us, Bhutan was fortunate to fare better than many others. As a result of stringent measures, determination, and grit, we were able to minimize the immediate public health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging with minimum loss of life. Our campaign to vaccinate our population has been recognized as an unlikely

success story, and today more than 90 per cent of our entire population stand fully vaccinated. This was made possible due in no small measure by the heart-warming goodwill of friends and partners, including India, whose Vaccine Maitri initiative enabled the full first round of vaccinations for our adult population. We are also grateful to the United States, Denmark, Bulgaria, Croatia and China, whose generosity with vaccines came at a most critical time. We also thank all the other bilateral partners and multilateral agencies that supported logistics and provided financial support, medicines and equipment for our response to the pandemic. Our success would not have been possible without all of their support. We remain ever grateful.

Just when we are embarking on rebuilding and recovering from the pandemic and its associated impacts, conflict, supply disruptions, a surge in food, energy and fertilizer crises are driving millions more into extreme poverty, magnifying hunger and malnutrition. Predictably, it is the poorest and most vulnerable amongst us that suffer the brunt. The Secretary-General has rightly described this as either a breakdown or breakthrough moment for humankind and for the planet.

Transformation is what we called for in declaration on the on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1). We thank the Secretary-General for his groundbreaking report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), responding to this call. Bhutan has followed closely the discussions around the report and its recommendations, and we are pleased with the momentum that has been generated. As we continue our deliberations, Bhutan will engage constructively, including in preparations for the Summit of the Future, and work towards elaboration of a global digital compact.

Our Common Agenda must provide the road map to turbocharge and accelerate our actions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bhutan welcomes the report's recognition of the need to look beyond the gross domestic product (GDP). That finds strong resonance with Bhutan's own approach to balanced and human-centred development, which we call Gross National Happiness. It is now widely accepted that this cannot be achieved by tracking GDP alone. Bhutan has always believed that the pursuit of development and progress must respond to a higher calling. We need measures that take into

account the full spectrum of human development, as well as the multifaceted factors that provide the enabling environment within which individuals can pursue and achieve that common yet elusive human aspiration to happiness and well-being. This discussion assumes greater urgency as we approach the midpoint towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, in full realization that today, the conflict in Europe and the looming climate emergency have thrown efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDGs off course. We need to refocus our priorities by shifting gears and turning our commitments into action, and doing so by working together in the spirit of genuine solidarity.

Bhutan welcomed the convening of the Transforming Education Summit on 19 September. His Majesty the King has always accorded the highest importance to the education sector, recognizing that a nation's fate begins in its classrooms and schools. Education is a critical pillar of a country's development and holds the key to unlocking many of our shared global challenges. As His Majesty The King remarked as early as 2014,

“Education is empowering — it is a social equalizer and it facilitates self-discovery, which leads to realizing one's full potential. Good education gives you confidence, good judgment, virtuous disposition and the tools to achieve happiness successfully. A good school gives a child a fair shot at success and ensures that a person's achievement in life will not be predetermined by his or her race, parentage and social connections.”

Bhutan may have been one of the most recent countries to finally reopen its borders since the emergence of the pandemic. As difficult and painful as these past two and half years have been, they have allowed for deep reflection at the national level and permitted time for an honest assessment of gaps and challenges. Weaknesses were bared and, in some instances, fault lines deepened. We came to the harsh realization that drastic recalibration of our systems were needed if Bhutan is to position itself as a country that is prosperous, resilient and future-ready. With one year remaining before our exit date from the LDC category, those measures will buttress our efforts to ensure that Bhutan's graduation is smooth, sustainable and irreversible.

As I speak, major transformational initiatives are underway in Bhutan to strengthen public service delivery. The entire public sector will be streamlined,

strengthened in terms of capacity and performance, and held to more rigorous standards of professionalism and accountability. Our public servants must serve the citizens with the better and faster public services that they deserve.

While universal health care is a guarantee enshrined in our Constitution, reforms in the health sector focus on the importance of preparedness for future outbreaks and pandemics, strengthening the quality of health care, leveraging technology, and a renewed focus on mental health. The health sector is being reformed to provide not only primary, but secondary and tertiary health care to all people within half a day's travel. Specialist services are expanding across the country including, sending mobile teams to screen and treat high-burden diseases.

Bhutan's revamped tourism policy was launched with much anticipation on 23 September, coinciding with the opening of our international border. Since 1974, when Bhutan opened its doors for tourism, we have always followed the policy of high value-low volume tourism, as envisioned by His Majesty the fourth King of Bhutan. However the minimum daily tariffs that were instituted were found to be too low, resulting in our becoming a budget destination, leading to mass tourism and its associated problems of increasing waste, a decreasing quality of service standards, the underemployment of our youth engaged in the sector, never-before-seen traffic jams and overcrowding of our most religious sites. We have always prioritized the well-being of the people, preserving our environment, tradition and culture over unsustainable and mindless development. Therefore, in keeping with our development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, the sector has been restructured and reformed so that it benefits Bhutan not only economically, but socially and environmentally as well. In the long run, we want to create high-value, authentic and unique experiences for visitors and well-paying professional jobs and businesses for our citizens.

The increasing fragmentation, polarization and growing inequality we witness in the world today only serve as an urgent cry for strengthening multilateralism, greater political resolve, solidarity and compassion. It is apparent that no individual, community or country can overcome contemporary challenges on their own. Interdependence is at the core of our existence, and we must come together through stronger, more effective multilateralism.

Bhutan's commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, remains unwavering. As a small, landlocked and peaceful country, we remain fully committed to the noble objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Coinciding with the fiftieth year of our membership in the Organization, which we marked last year, Bhutan responded to the call to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security — a key pillar and objective of the United Nations. Since then, Bhutan has prepared for the deployment of its first uniformed military unit, a light quick reaction force, to a United Nations peace mission. This process was set in motion in 2014, when we first joined the ranks of United Nations troop-contributing countries. Our well-trained troops will arrive to serve the cause of peace in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic in the weeks ahead. I am confident that they will serve the international community with distinction and honour. It is a matter of great pride that, although Bhutan is amongst the smallest Members of the United Nations, with this initial deployment we will rise into the ranks of the top 60 troop-contributing countries, from our current position at 81.

Of particular note, and consistent with Bhutan's deep commitment to the promotion and protection of the environment, Bhutan considers the pursuit of environmentally responsible practices in operations to be a moral imperative. We feel strongly that at the minimum, the do-no-harm ethic must drive all aspects of field operations and conduct, and that wherever possible, field presences should, on their departure, be remembered by local communities for the positive legacies they have left for host countries.

Bhutan has therefore pledged that when Bhutan's uniformed contingent deploys, we will do so in an environmentally sustainable manner with renewable energy, waste management and the provision of assistance to the local communities that we will serve. The centrepiece of our pledge is the use of solar panels for lighting purposes in barracks and the camp area. We will carry out the planting trees around the company location, in accordance with the existing policies of the host country. While those pledges are modest, our hope is that they will contribute to the overall environmental efforts of United Nations peacekeeping and demonstrate that such practices can be emulated and scaled.

Our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping is a significant milestone in the progression of Bhutan's

engagement with the Organization. We are sincerely thankful to the international community for the trust and confidence reposed in our ability to meaningfully contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In its seventy-seventh year of existence, our Organization too needs a reboot to be able to meet the challenges of the present day and the future and to keep pace with and reflect contemporary realities. It must be reformed to respond more effectively to changed global realities and to the new and emerging threats that confront us today. Nowhere is this more evident or urgent than in the growing call for comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Yet we note that, 43 years since inclusion of the subject in the General Assembly's agenda and nearly three decades since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, we have fallen far short. Lack of progress on Security Council reform throws into question the relevance and legitimacy of the current global architecture, fragilizes international peace and security, and impinges on the Council's ability to deliver on the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Bhutan has always maintained that reform must accommodate the interests and concerns of all Member States, particularly those unrepresented and underrepresented. The expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, along with reform of its working methods, constitute essential components of this process. In our view from Asia, India and Japan must be included as permanent members of a reformed Council.

The current challenges facing the world today remind us of our interdependence and the imperatives of collaboration and solidarity. While there have been shining examples of international cooperation, we continue to be distrustful with each other, less understanding and driven more by self-interest. As the Buddha revealed 2,000 years ago, if we are to end suffering we must rid ourselves of its three root causes, also known as the three poisons: ignorance of the nature of impermanence, greed and hatred. It is these that are the main causes of the global problems today. The antidote and traits we can all draw inspiration from

are said to be wisdom, sharing and compassion. Those enduring values find consonance in the essence of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Mélanie Joly, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Ms. Joly (Canada): I am speaking here for the first time as Canada's Foreign Minister as we gather in the Assembly Hall on the traditional territory of the Lenape people.

The Secretary-General has said that we are in rough seas; that a winter of global discontent is on the horizon; that we have a duty to act. I agree with him. From Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the impacts around the world, to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, to climate change, to severe the conflicts and hardships that now affect billions of people, the challenges we are facing are immense. These crises and the way we choose to respond to them are testing our shared commitment to the United Nations.

That is why our decisions matter more than ever. We have a choice — either we respect and defend the rules that we, collectively, have developed for generations and that have given us the longest period of peace in modern history, or we accept that rules can be broken by the powerful, bringing us back to darker times of constant tensions and conflicts, with massive displacements, suffering and losses of human lives.

For Canada, the choice is clear. We are convinced that we need more multilateralism, not less. We need more of the United Nations, not less. We need a United Nations that is effective, efficient, relevant and accountable. Throughout its history, Canada has strived to act as an honest broker, ready to build bridges between nations and differing points of view. We have worked tirelessly over the years to conceive, develop and strengthen the international system that we now know. We will continue to do so, and we will do it with all United Nations Members.

Last week, the Canadian delegation, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, met with leaders and civil society members from around the world. Canada has been listening, and we hear them. Many described and condemned Russia's further invasion of Ukraine as brutal, illegal and unjustified — as a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. We agree with them. Many described the uneven recovery from the global

COVID-19 pandemic not only as incompatible with simple fairness, but also as a danger to public health. Again, we agree with them. They shared profound concern that the that achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is at risk. And we agree we must address that head on. People from all corners of the globe clearly said that climate change is no longer on the horizon. It is here, and it is hitting the most vulnerable the hardest. That is undeniable.

The hearts of all Canadians go out to those affected by the devastating floods in Pakistan, as well as to our fellow citizens who found themselves in the destructive path of Hurricane Fiona.

Many conversations this week have focused on the harsh fact that more people are displaced by conflict and violence today than at any point in human history. I heard unmistakable appeals for accountability, including for the victims of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752. Women and girls described their need to have control over their own futures and their own bodies, which is their right. Brave individuals shared deeply personal testimonies of their painful experiences of sexual violence in conflict. We believe them.

Such violence is unacceptable, and it must change. We must empower survivors in leading the path to their recovery and support them in the pursuit of meaningful justice, freedom of speech, disinformation and misinformation, the protection of minorities, the rule of law, and respect for science, facts and evidence. Powerful statements have been made on those issues this week. They speak to an erosion of civic space and democratic dialogue. Canada hears them. We do not come to these discussions with easy fixes. We have come to listen, to engage and to share our commitment to responding to this moment in a positive way, with purpose and in a spirit of global solidarity.

The world has heard horrible stories of Ukrainians losing loved ones to this outrageous, senseless war. The Assembly has spoken clearly and with conviction that Russia's aggression against Ukraine violates the United Nations Charter. It strikes at the heart of the commitments we all made in building the Organization from the ashes of the Second World War. Rather than abide by the Assembly's decisions and a legally binding order from the International Court of Justice, Russia has doubled down, including with a desperate effort to justify the unjustifiable. While the world gathered here in New York to pursue solutions for the greatest

challenges of our time, President Putin informed us that he will conscript more young people into his war of choice. He threatened our collective security with reckless and dangerous nuclear rhetoric. For Putin, this is a war to the death. For Ukraine, this is a war for life.

Russia's war machine has caused enormous civilian suffering and destruction in Ukraine. The mass graves discovered in Izyum are the latest demonstration of Putin's utter disregard for human life. The impacts of this illegal war are profoundly felt around the world. We must address the global food security crisis and other consequences of the illegal invasion with imagination and determination. And those who break the law must be met with the force of the law. A permanent seat on the Security Council is not a license to kill or to silence anyone, and it should never guarantee impunity.

(spoke in French)

We are facing major crises: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict. Crises that were once the exception are now the rule. These crises are putting a strain on our ability to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We need a strong push to change the course of things. An urgent, global rescue effort is needed. We must rally and work together for the common good. The only possible path for Canada and the world is through the implementation of our Sustainable Development Goals.

From an economic point of view, we still have a lot to do to achieve true equality between Member States. We have listened carefully to what our partners and friends in the countries of the South have told us. We hear their message very clearly — the international financial institutions must be reformed. They must be able to adapt to today's crises. Canada has stepped up to the challenge. No country should be left behind. We will work hard with our partners for a fair and equitable reform of the international financial system. Equity is at stake, but so are peace and world stability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed the lives of nearly 6.5 million people around the world. Canada is committed to ending the pandemic and preventing others. Together, we will continue the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Last week, Prime Minister Trudeau pledged \$1.2 billion to support these efforts.

Let us now talk about climate change. We must act with the same sense of urgency demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Science tells us that we need

to do more, faster. Hurricane Fiona, which hit several islands in the West Indies and eastern Canada, is just the latest example. From the Arctic to small island States, climate change poses an existential threat, and we experience its effects every day.

Canada is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 to 45 per cent by 2030, and then to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. We have a credible plan for get there. Canada will be participating in the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Egypt, and we look forward to welcoming the world to my home in Montreal for the fifteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, under the chairmanship of China. Our priority is to ensure the success of the Conference, where we will work together to reverse the alarming loss of animal and plant species. Our own survival is at stake.

There are no simple solutions to the challenges we face, but it is obvious that to isolate oneself, to disregard the rule of law and to silence people is the opposite of progress. And yet some countries restrict civil liberties, violate human rights and massively monitor their populations. That tendency towards authoritarianism is most worrying. That phenomenon is particularly visible in the region of the Xinjiang, China. To that end, the publication of the United Nations report on human rights is an essential step. Its findings reflect credible accounts of abuses constituting crimes against humanity.

Canada is concerned about the repression of human rights that we have witnessed in several countries. The universality of human rights is well known. These human rights are universal in nature. We cannot therefore hide behind pretexts of national sovereignty in order to violate them. There are limits to defending the indefensible. We believe that democracy, although imperfect, remains the best system for protecting human rights and advancing sustainable development. All of our democracies face challenges. At home as elsewhere, we have to deal with apathy, anxiety and distrust of our institutions.

Canada is also committed to combating systemic racism and we continue to take concrete steps to pursue the path of reconciliation with indigenous peoples. In 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau gave a speech to the Assembly and spoke of our own legacy of colonialism in Canada (see A/72/PV.12). We are working tirelessly

to remedy that dark chapter in our history, and we know that the full participation of indigenous peoples is fundamental to building a more just world.

The equality of women and girls in all their diversity is critical to peace, justice and prosperity. Like many countries, Canada is proud to have a feminist foreign policy. Together, we are building a global coalition in support of equality. That is how we will repel the growing attacks on women's rights and freedoms.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban prevents women and girls from going to school. In Myanmar, courageous women who loudly demand the return of the democratic system are imprisoned by the military junta, tortured and subjected to horrific acts of sexual violence.

(spoke in English)

In Iran, women protesting the death of Mahsa Amini are met with arrest and bullets. We salute their courage and join them in sending a strong message that women's rights are human rights. Today our Prime Minister announced that we will sanction those responsible, including Iran's so-called morality police and its leadership.

From the Sudan to Haiti to Canada, women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and activists are being targeted. We must continue to speak up for the rights of women and girls and to support, protect, recognize and include women peacebuilders. We must also relentlessly pursue accountability for sexual violence. We will continue to push for justice for Rohingya women. And we will not rest until those responsible for sexual violence committed in Ukraine are held to account.

The Charter of the United Nations enshrines "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women". Yet we are seeing increasing violence, the widening crackdown on rights and freedoms, and the exclusion of women and girls from the negotiating table, the boardroom and the classroom. The sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls are being rolled back or denied in too many countries. None of that by accident. These are deliberate choices.

To all the women in this Hall and around the world, I say: We hear you and Canada will always stand up for your right to choose. We will fight for your full, equal, and meaningful participation in all walks of life. We will speak up for your rights and dignity. No Government,

no politician, no judge and no one can take that away from you.

I have said that more than ever, the world needs more multilateralism; more of the United Nations, not less. To that end, we must restore trust among Member States. The crises we are facing have shown both the strengths and weaknesses of the structures we built nearly 80 years ago. We have been able to respond to the most serious hardships with compassion and effectiveness, but we can do better.

Political paralysis and the abuse of the veto are undermining the Security Council. We encourage efforts to reduce the power of the veto, to expand membership and to ensure that the voices of all are heard and responded to across the whole United Nations system.

United Nations peace operations also demand our efforts. Today peacekeeping faces immense challenges. Canada has long contributed to United Nations efforts to reduce conflict, and we will continue to do so. Engagement with the United Nations is a core commitment of Canadians. We were there at the United Nations creation, and today we are more engaged than ever. We will always engage with candour and directness, because we do not equate diplomacy with deception or global politics with global platitudes.

The United Nations Charter begins with the words, "We the peoples of the world". We must remember that the fate of billions of people alive today and of those yet to be born is at stake in the work we do. We owe them our best efforts of heart, mind and soul. We can meet the test that time and circumstance have placed before us with hope, with courage and with a commitment to acting for our citizens today and for future generations to follow.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Lejeune Mbella Mbella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon.

Mr. Mbella Mbella (Cameroon) *(spoke in French)*: Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, who has done me the signal honour of representing him at these important meetings, to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, as well as the other members of his Bureau, on his outstanding election as President of this seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. I take this opportunity to assure him of the support of

the Cameroonian delegation in achieving the objectives he has set.

I would also like to commend his predecessor, Minister Abdulla Shahid of Maldives, for the availability and efficiency with which he carried out his mandate throughout the seventy-sixth session.

Finally, allow me to reiterate our appreciation to our Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres who, despite the challenges and difficult times of the hour, has managed to stay the course by engaging with courage, determination and dedication in the defence of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The President has proposed that this general debate be structured around the theme entitled “A watershed moment: transformative solutions in the face of intricate challenges”. That theme comes at the right time, in a particularly difficult context where the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has, for nearly three years, continued to affect the course and management of world affairs, whose complexity at the global, regional, subregional and national levels no longer needs to be demonstrated.

At the political level, rivalries for power, interest and hegemony are growing all over the world. As a corollary, the arms race is intensifying and continuing to entrench itself, especially on the seas and oceans and in outer space. Many hotbeds of tension in various regions of the world are the main theatres of operations where these shocks are felt, the waves and collateral effects of which amplify the threats and suffering that were already weighing heavy on peoples and nations in terms of loss of human life, material loss, migration, the deterioration of the environment, the disruption of financial systems, and food and energy crises, to name but a few.

That is the case in the ongoing conflict in Eastern Europe that we have been witnessing for more than six months. Indeed, the Cameroonian Government is following with the greatest attention the conflict situation between Ukraine and Russia. As members know, the peaceful settlement of disputes between States has always been one of the fundamental principles of my country’s foreign policy. In that respect, Cameroon has, from the start of the crisis, reiterated its position by calling on the two parties to open negotiations with a view to reaching a joint solution so that the ideals

of peace, security and sustainable development that underpin our Organization may prevail.

On the African continent too, hotbeds of tension persist. In our efforts to find solutions, we unfortunately see that some of our partners very often come up with preconceived recipes for everything and everyone. Faced with these trends, which continue year after year, it is important that the voice of Africa be heeded and supported, especially when it is raised by the African Union.

Economically, socially and culturally, the improvement observed before the COVID-19 pandemic is gradually giving way to a slowdown and even a decline in the progress and hope born of the courageous measures taken at the level multilateral and national since the early 2000s. From a legal point of view, international commitments are no longer being met or are being met in dribs and drabs, due to selfishness, insufficient political will and even the crisis in multilateralism. In such a context, it is no exaggeration to affirm that the fate of our species and the destiny of humankind are at stake.

The very first global and urgent challenge of the hour is the climate crisis. No one is ignorant of the fact that the climate is changing, the cycle of the seasons is out of order and fires are increasing, as are unprecedented floods and hurricanes in various parts of the world. Temperatures are reaching worrying levels; bodies of water, like Lake Chad, a source of life and prosperity for local populations, are reduced to their bare minimum.

This is the time to call for compliance with the commitments made within the framework of the various international conferences dedicated to climate change. It is therefore more than urgent that action be taken to finalize the rules for implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, particularly with regard to mobilizing financial resources in favour of developing countries and to raising our ambitions for the global climate.

The twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, scheduled to be held in Egypt late this year, is of crucial importance in that regard. It must provide urgent and decisive answers for the survival of the planet and better address that concern with innovative technologies.

The fight against climate change is a fight we all must wage on behalf of us all and every day. It is a truly universal responsibility. Aware of this major challenge and its responsibilities, Cameroon has made a commitment to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and has set up an appropriate legal and institutional framework to that end.

Thanks to the forest massif of the Congo basin, one of the ecological lungs of the globe, the countries of Central Africa, united in the Central African Forest Commission, are making a major contribution to the search for solutions to climate change throughout the world. They ask in return that sufficient financial and technological resources, regularly promised by developed countries, be granted to them to enable them to keep, maintain and regenerate that important ecological basin. The same is true of the funding needed to implement projects designed as part of the Green Sahel initiative or the restoration of the Lake Chad basin.

Moreover, on the occasion of the revision of its nationally determined contribution, Cameroon has confirmed its commitment to this international momentum by increasing its greenhouse gas reduction commitments from 32 per cent to 35 per cent, 12 per cent of which are unconditional and 23 per cent of which are conditioned on the support of the international community for our efforts to address climate change.

For Cameroon, the fight against climate change is seen as a development opportunity and not as an insurmountable challenge. Each country holds one of the digits of the access code to the new era in which the planet aspires to breathe newly clean air, without carbon but rich in oxygen. The younger generations challenge us and call us to more action and not to wishful thinking.

Like other priority threats, the migration issue is acute. Despite the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and despite the efforts also made by host countries and development partners, millions of people continue to flee their homes and homelands to live in deplorable, inhuman conditions due to conflicts, cataclysms and multiple calamities. Faced with the magnitude of a human tragedy that challenges our collective conscience, we have the historic responsibility to act. And my country does not intend to shy away from it.

Faithful to its centuries-old tradition of tolerance and hospitality, Cameroon has always been a land of welcome, transit and mixing of peoples. Because of its stability, it represents a safe haven for many populations in search of peace. As all know, Cameroon currently hosts more than half a million refugees and asylum-seekers, which ranks it nineteenth among refugee hosting countries in the world.

In addition to the tripartite conventions signed with the UNHCR and the countries concerned to promote the return and resettlement of refugees in their countries of origin, my country last April hosted the Regional Ministerial Conference on Solutions in the Context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African crisis. The Conference was mandated by the Yaoundé Declaration, which proposes common and inclusive solutions in favour of forcibly displaced Central Africans. My country plays an active part in all these initiatives, in accordance with the Global Compact on Refugees.

At a completely different level, we must also deplore the persistence of terrorism and violent extremism, the effects of which continue to weigh on the world order. Many regions are suffering from the resurgence of subversive operations carried out mainly by terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram, which is rampant in the Lake Chad basin. The northern part of Cameroon has been badly affected. Faced with the danger and exponential advance of terrorism in various regions of the globe, my country renews its call for the strengthening of joint combat strategies. Such pooling of efforts is aimed at waging a true fight against that threat in all its forms and in all its manifestations, strengthening the capacities of the sovereign States that are its victims, tracking down its financing sources and neutralizing them, and amending and activating international and regional agreements for the uncompromising repression of ever-evolving terrorism.

The international community must continue to play its part, in strict respect for the sovereignty of States, in rebuilding and strengthening the fragile stability in all of these areas. We thank our bilateral and multilateral partners that are assisting the Joint Multinational Force established by the countries of the Lake Chad basin to combat and eradicate Boko Haram. That assistance deserves to be increased, given not only the proliferation of regional terrorist groups affiliated with the Islamic State, but also the increasingly sophisticated means of these small groups, whose numbers are constantly

growing, owing to the enlistment of ex-combatants from former terrorist hotbeds that have been more or less pacified.

It is imperative that the international community continue to invest in the fight against poverty and inequality. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reinforced by the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), must be actively supported and fully implemented. What is most lacking at the moment for the execution of that programme are financial and technological means, as well as synergy among the partners involved in its execution. Cameroon is very committed to that path, as demonstrated by the recent submission of its voluntary national programme at the High-level Political Forum of the Economic and Social Council.

Because of its commitment to peace, its territorial integrity and its policy of national integration, the Government of my country continues to show openness and dialogue to put an end to the sociopolitical crisis in the regions of North-West and South-West. Thus, after convening the great national dialogue in 2019, we continued the process of accelerating and deepening decentralization. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centres created in those regions and in that of the Far North, host and train in various trades a large number of my young compatriots who have laid down their arms and renounced violence. The State exercises its sovereign prerogatives throughout the national territory. The Government's current challenge is to pursue the implementation of the reconstruction of the affected regions through the humanitarian emergency plan and the development plan, drawn up in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for the socioeconomic restoration of the regions. aforementioned.

At this point, I would like to sincerely salute the dynamic action and contribution of the UNDP in that regard and take this opportunity to thank our bilateral and multilateral partners that contribute to those various mechanisms, which are effective tools in the building of peace in Cameroon. I also make a strong appeal to the international community to mobilize more actively in favour of these plans in order to allow my country to remain the haven of peace that it has always been.

In general, regionalization in my country is under way and helping to strengthen the participation of Cameroonians in the management of the affairs

of their country. These advances demonstrate that Cameroon is committed, irreversibly and resolutely, to the methodical completion of the democratic project it has set itself, and which responds to the legitimate wishes of the Cameroonian people and its project of economic revival by 2035. In this, Cameroon promotes in all circumstances, through structures created to that end, a constructive and regular dialogue between the various sociological components of its population, as well as the members of its diaspora, with a view to their mobilization for the immense and exhilarating national construction process.

Cameroon is firmly committed to and supportive of a reformed and reinvigorated international order and genuine multilateralism based on the ideals, purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations by the founding fathers of our Organization. This is why we support all the reforms currently under way within the United Nations aimed at establishing a more representative, fairer and more effective Security Council. In this regard and within the framework of the democratization of United Nations institutions, Cameroon reiterates its adherence to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration unanimously adopted by African Heads of State.

In conclusion, Cameroon reaffirms its support for all reforms in progress aimed at revitalizing the General Assembly, strengthening the Economic and Social Council and streamlining the Secretariat, following the agenda adopted by the States Members of our Organization in order to consolidate its stature, its dimension and its capacity to better face the global challenges of our era.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal.

Mr. Paudyal (Nepal): I begin by congratulating Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his unanimous election to preside over the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I also express appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for successfully steering the seventy-sixth session.

My deep appreciation goes to Secretary-General António Guterres for his commendable efforts to promote global peace, security, human rights and development.

There could have been no better time to deliberate on “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, the theme of this year’s general debate. We are living indeed in a watershed moment — a moment when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, geopolitical tensions, inequalities and climate crisis threaten our pursuit of peace and prosperity; a moment when the values of solidarity and cooperation are put to test, with trust and confidence in short supply; a moment when humankind is caught between hope and despair, unity and division, and harmony and dissension; and a moment, when the world is striving to forge a new consensus amid competing interests, priorities and challenges.

For the third year in a row, COVID-19 continues to add strain to our lives, livelihoods and economies. But there is hope. The production and availability of COVID-19 vaccines have minimized the risk and severity of the disease and enhanced our ability to save lives. In Nepal, we have been able to fully vaccinate 96 per cent of the target population, with almost everyone receiving at least one dose. We thank our immediate neighbours, India and China, our development partners and the United Nations system for their valuable support.

But that is not the case everywhere. Poor and vulnerable people in many parts of the world have still been kept away from the “dose of hope”. The pandemic will not end unless it ends for all people in all countries. We must ensure vaccine equity so that no one is left behind.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are at risk. The pandemic has hit our march into the decade of action hard. This has been followed by cascading crises marked by geopolitical divides, the disruption of supply chain and the climate emergency. The resulting high food and fuel price, massive inflation and debt burden have severely hit the limited fiscal capacity of the poorer countries, especially the least developed ones. All these crises have a cumulative negative impact on the financing of the SDGs. It is more acute in the countries in special situations, such as the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries (LDCs) and the small island developing States.

As per the pre-pandemic estimate, Nepal would require an average annual investment of \$19 billion to achieve the SDGs. With the shortfall of financing,

our hard-earned development gains are at risk at a time when we are preparing to graduate from LDC status by 2026. However, graduation is our long-held aspiration, and we remain committed to using this opportunity to bring a structural transformation to the national economy. We will do everything possible to make our graduation process smooth, sustainable and irreversible. For that, we need additional international support in the form of investment, technology transfer, aid for trade and technical assistance. That is critical for us to recover from the pandemic, rescue the SDGs and turn global partnership into a reality.

No country can thrive without integration into the global market. The rising tide of protectionism and stalled trade negotiations are delaying the much-needed reform in the international trading system, which is tipped in favour of some. The poorer countries are yet to benefit from it. We must ensure open, fair and transparent trade rules so that all countries can benefit from it. Similarly, the current global financial system has seriously failed the developing world. It is unfair to continue this undemocratic and unresponsive system. We call for the much-needed reform of international financial architecture and for making it inclusive, fair and equally beneficial to all. The countries under debt stress need urgent debt relief, restructuring and cancellation. The international community must swiftly help them emerge from their debt crises.

In Nepal, we are bearing the disproportionate burden of climate change and facing such climate shocks as frequent landslides, storms, floods and wildfires. The melting of glaciers and the drying-up of snow-fed rivers have been adversely affecting the lives and livelihoods of people downstream and rendering us one of the most vulnerable countries. Our region recently experienced the heartbreaking loss of lives and properties due to unusually heavy downpours, the melting of the glaciers and resulting floods.

To combat the climate crisis and address vulnerabilities, we have localized adaptation plans. While remaining fully committed to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we have set the ambitious target of reaching a net-zero scenario by 2045, as announced by the Prime Minister of Nepal, The Right Honourable Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

However, climate change is a global problem, and it needs global action. To that end, the large emitters, which account for over 80 per cent of all global emissions, must take bold steps to keep the 1.5°C climate goal alive. The commitment of \$100 billion in climate financing must turn into a reality. The twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change needs to move from pledges into action.

Geopolitics and polarization have pushed global peace and security into peril. The world is becoming more complex with rising transnational challenges such as terrorism, radicalism, extremism and mass migration. Today the world faces the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, within and between countries, divided by the fault lines of race, religion, ethnicity and origin.

The question that keeps haunting us today is whether enough is being done to protect the people from the scourge of wars by preventing them from happening in the first place. Investment in the prevention of conflicts is more effective than addressing their consequences. Technological advances today have the capacity to inflict devastating physical action instantly, and yet it is appalling to see how our world body gets crippled when it comes to the interplay of the interests of the major Powers in the Security Council.

As our dependence on new technology deepens, the issue of cybersecurity has emerged as one of the greatest challenges that demands our collective resolve to setting norms and building capacity to prevent the threat it poses. We must also put in place the necessary safeguards to curb the malicious use of new technologies. In 2021, global military spending surpassed \$2 trillion. Countries are chasing an elusive notion of security by leaving billions of people hungry, sick and destitute. Genuine security depends on the ability to address the underlying causes of conflict: poverty, hunger and unemployment. The stockpiles of nuclear arsenals constitute perpetual threat to humankind. Therefore, their elimination is the only guarantee of the non-use of these weapons in the future.

Nepal reiterates its call for the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons, in a time-bound manner. Nepal opposes the arms race in outer space and emphasizes the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of humankind. As

the host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal continues to support regional disarmament initiatives as building blocks of global disarmament. We remain committed to reviving the Kathmandu process, which we believe complements global arms control and disarmament efforts.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and calls for an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

We are deeply concerned about the deaths and suffering of civilians in the war in Ukraine. We call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and violence, and urge all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint and return to the path of dialogue. Nepal opposes any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty of a country under any pretext and circumstance.

Afghanistan has remained on the precipice of uncertainties and violence. The Afghan people are exposed to a shocking level of poverty and humanitarian suffering. We call for unhindered humanitarian aid and public services, including health and education for all sections of Afghan society, to be ensured.

We urge all parties concerned in Myanmar to respect the will of the people to elect their representatives, paving the way to restoring the democratic process.

The people of Libya, Syria and Yemen have been facing hardships and sufferings for too long. The concerned parties need to resort to peaceful means of conflict resolution to end the violence and return to peace.

Protracted violence and conflict continue to inflict pain and suffering on Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Nepal reiterates its long-standing view for a two-State solution, whereby Palestine and Israel will live side by side in peace and security within the recognized international borders.

Nepal pursues the path of a democratic system, with the people's welfare at the centre. Our democratic process is characterized by the people's struggle, sacrifice, dialogue and resilience. In May, we successfully held democratic elections to local Governments in a peaceful, free and fair manner. We are now set to hold periodic elections for the federal Parliament and provincial assemblies in November.

For a democracy like Nepal, these are much more than just periodic elections. They are a testament to our ability to ensure the peaceful transfer of power. They are the means to enhance people's trust in democracy, promote legitimacy and accountability, and strengthen the rule of law. The principles of inclusion and participation constitute the core of Nepal's governance system. The Constitution of Nepal guarantees the proportional representation and participation of all sections of our society in national life. It guarantees at least 33 per cent representation of women in federal and provincial parliaments and 40 per cent at the local Government level. As a result, the participation of women, youth and disadvantaged groups has increased significantly in politics and other spheres of national life. It has not only ensured their rightful place, but also injected dynamism, justice and fairness into society.

Nepal's commitment to human rights is unequivocal. The Constitution of Nepal incorporates universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a member of the Human Rights Council for a second consecutive term, Nepal continues to add value to the work of the Council. Our approach to human rights is firmly grounded in the principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity and non-selectivity.

We are committed to concluding the transitional justice process by addressing the concerns of the victims, complying with the directives of the Supreme Court and abiding by the spirit of Comprehensive Peace Accord and our relevant international commitments. Taking this in earnest, the Government of Nepal has presented an amendment bill to Parliament to reform the related laws.

We uphold the rights of the child as the most sacred obligation of the State, with their protection, well-being, health, education and development at the centre. We attach high importance to the safety, security, dignity and well-being of migrant workers and emphasize the effective implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. We also attach high importance to quality education, skills, entrepreneurship and employment for young people in order to unleash the potential for sustained economic development, peace and prosperity in society. We recognize the significant role that the diaspora can play to bring capital, technology and skills to the country of origin.

Though we are not a party to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its Protocol, we have been hosting thousands of refugees on humanitarian grounds. We believe that the forced eviction of citizens, anywhere and under any circumstances, is a grave crime. Refugees' right to return to their homeland in safety, honour and dignity must always be ensured.

The cardinal principle of seeing the world as one family shapes our worldview in external relations. Our foreign policy dwells on the notions of peace, non-violence and non-aggression, which find their eloquent expression in the teachings of Gautam Buddha, the enlightened son of Nepal. Nepal enjoys cordial relations with all countries around the world. That is a result of both my country's historical evolution and the friendly nature of our people. Given the good will Nepal receives from our friends, we feel the need to contribute more to international peace, progress and social justice. We engage with our neighbours and friends in the international community based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace. We play active roles in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue to promote regional cooperation.

Our partnership with the United Nations has been built on the foundation of trust and cooperation. We firmly believe in multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre. With its unmatched coverage, legitimacy and convening power, the United Nations is the most appropriate forum for promoting global cooperation based on sovereign equality and mutual respect. Currently the second-largest troop- and police-contributing country, Nepal has been a consistent contributor to United Nations peacekeeping for the past six and a half decades. We have deployed our peacekeepers at every call and without caveat, even in difficult situations.

Nepal supports all major initiatives aimed at reforming UN peace operations. We have endorsed the Kigali Principles and the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) and A4P+ initiatives, among others. We have a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations. We condemn targeted attacks against Blue Helmets. The perpetrators of such crimes should be brought to justice. We believe that countries should have fair share of leadership positions at Headquarters

and in the field, according to the level and history of their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping.

Mr. Wallace (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Nepal supports United Nations reform initiatives, including revitalizing the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council to make it more representative, inclusive and transparent. We also support reform initiatives based on the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). Those endeavours will not produce results unless the Member States take bold and transformative steps to make our Organization fit for the future. We must enable the United Nations to deliver on the needs of the furthest behind first.

To conclude, the decisions we make today will determine what our future will look like. Our choice to act or not to act will have a huge impact on generations to come. Let us look at what opportunities lie ahead of us. Let us give solidarity and cooperation a chance. As a peace-loving country, Nepal remains committed to contributing to our collective efforts of making this world peaceful, prosperous and equitable.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Marc Hermanne Gninadoou Araba, Chair of the delegation of the Republic of Benin.

Mr. Araba (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I have the privilege and signal honour, on behalf of Mr. Patrice Talon, President of the Republic of Benin, who is unable to be here today, to deliver this statement, as follows:

“At the beginning of my remarks, I would like to extend to Mr. Csaba Kőrösi my warm congratulations on his outstanding election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

“I would also like to extend my congratulations to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, and his team for their remarkable work, carried out with competence and dedication, during their mandate, which deserves to be commended.

“Finally, I pay a warm tribute to Secretary-General António Guterres, with all my appreciation for the commendable efforts that he continues to deploy, alongside the Members, for the achievement of the noble objectives of our common Organization.

“The theme around which we gather this year, ‘A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges’, is a pressing call to action. Indeed, this session is being held in a difficult international context, marked by the combined consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the war in Ukraine, with their economic, political and social impacts on the whole world.

“In terms of peace and security, the first pillar of United Nations action and at the global level, action on our part, in the opinion of my delegation and in accordance with the position clearly expressed by the African Union, calls for imperative respect for international law and the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine. We therefore urge the parties to the conflict to establish an immediate ceasefire and to open political negotiations without delay in order to save the world from the consequences of a planetary conflict.

“At the regional level, in this case in the area of West Africa to which Benin belongs, peace and security are threatened by the combined effects of the terrorist threat, on the one hand, and of maritime piracy, on the other, which constitute major obstacles to the free movement of persons and goods, as well as to the development of the nations concerned. Those obstacles, far from being purely regional issues, constitute a global threat and call for an immediate, coherent and integrated response from the community of nations.

“In terms of development, the second pillar of United Nations action, the time for diagnosis is long past, since we have already adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose articulations offer us a real plan of action for humankind and the planet in the immediate future and for posterity, in a more forward-looking approach.

“Aware of its own responsibilities, Africa, through the formulation and launch of a transformative vision for the continent, ‘The Africa We Want’, embodied by the African Union Agenda 2063, is resolutely committed to its economic integration and the acceleration of its industrialization, with added value and increased integration into global value chains. This means that the issue of Africa's development, as one of the eight major priorities of the United Nations, must continue to be the subject of fruitful reflection, as

was the case in July at the High-level Dialogue on Africa, organized jointly by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

“However, in this decade of action, it is urgent that concrete and bold actions accompany the reflections so that solutions can be found to the concerns of the African continent. Benin, for its part, is resolutely committed to ensuring a common social minimum for all by tirelessly investing in the satisfaction of the vital needs of all its citizens, which are to dress decently, to eat properly, to be housed with dignity, to enjoy proper health care and to be educated in an appropriate way.

“To that end, and in addition to courageous reforms in terms of good governance and optimal mobilization of internal financial resources, the Government of Benin is investing in finding innovative sources for mobilizing the funds necessary for its development, through the successful issuance of special Sustainable Development Goals Euro bonds, for example. It is urgent that robust and appropriate support be provided to our countries, in support of their efforts, in order to consolidate and sustain the gains made, on the one hand, and to effectively meet the pending challenges, on the other.

“Development, if it is to be sustainable, requires, in addition to its economic and social components, an environmental component without which it cannot exist. That is why it is more than ever time to pursue our joint efforts to deal appropriately with the problem of climate change, which poses a real existential threat for Benin, due to the combined effects of desertification in the north, coastal erosion and the ongoing salinization of fresh water in the south, and the increasingly accentuated disruption of the cycle of the seasons throughout the national territory. In that context, Benin has great hopes for the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will take place in November in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, and calls on the entire community of nations to hold fruitful discussions and achieve results that are commensurate with the stakes before and the restoration of hope.

“With regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, Benin, at the international level

and thanks to the start this year of its mandate as a member of the Human Rights Council, contributes and will continue to contribute to actively promote and facilitate all initiatives contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is the most concrete way to guarantee respect for the rights of the human person.

“At the national level, Benin, among other actions, is investing in the mobilization, through various strategies, of resources to give the most vulnerable populations access to an adequate food system, high-quality education, health care that protects everyone, including the poorest, drinking water, electricity and clean energy.

“Faced with the multiple challenges that challenge us, the time is more than ever ripe for the need to preserve and even strengthen multilateralism and make it truly inclusive and based on rules that are fair and valid for all, as a crucible for reflection and action to provide viable and comprehensive solutions. In this context, Benin fully supports ongoing diplomatic initiatives within the United Nations to find peaceful, lasting and equitable solutions to the question of the creation of a viable Palestinian State endowed with the attributes of full international sovereignty and living in peaceful coexistence with the State of Israel; to efforts to find a definitive solution to the question of Western Sahara, capitalizing on the achievements of the political process, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, which is aimed at reaching a compromise solution, in the framework of the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions; and to the question of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba, concerning which Benin associates itself with the declarations of the relevant summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, on the one hand, and with the resolution adopted at the thirty-fifth ordinary session of the African Union, held in February in Addis Ababa, on the other, to appeal to the need to end the said blockade in the name of the promotion of peace and development. Better still, we call for the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States of America, which are two partners dear to Benin.

“As the Secretary-General underlines in his report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982),

the history of humankind, ancient and recent, demonstrates that it is capable of great things when it acts united and that we are now more than ever called upon to make a fateful choice between remaining passive and promoting the continuation of the ongoing disintegration, or acting resolutely to build a better, greener and safer future. I remain convinced that we will hear the voice of reason in favour of action for a better world.

“The theme of this session is fully relevant at a time rightly described as “decisive”, it invites us to find transformative solutions, in the face of interlocking challenges. That will be possible only through the engagement of multidimensional partnerships involving Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society, with the common goal, in a spirit of shared responsibility, of taking bold action for the diligent implementation of existing agreements, in particular the effective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

“It is therefore with this call to responsible action, and with faith in our ability to work together to meet the challenges before us, that I wish full success to the work of the seventy-seventh session of General Assembly, pledging the readiness of my delegation to spare no effort to follow up, jointly with other members, on the commitments made in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

“Long live more solid, more inclusive and more coherent multilateral cooperation in the service of sustainable development!”

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kim Song, Chair of the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I am confident that, under his able stewardship, this session will be crowned with success.

I also expect that the current debate will serve as a meaningful occasion for all United Nations Member States to find common solutions through exchanges of useful experiences in overcoming the existing

challenges and crises and building a sustainable world for ourselves and future generations.

Over the three years since the outbreak of a once-in-a-century pandemic, this malignant virus has taken the precious lives of more than 6.53 million people and still poses a threat to the existence of humankind with the emergence of subvariants that are strong in transmission and immunity evasion. To make matters worse, the global health crisis is compounded by newly emerging infectious diseases, such as monkeypox.

This year has seen immense human and material losses in all regions of the world, including South Asia, Western Europe and North America, due to the destructive effects of the disastrous abnormal weather resulting from the climate change. That has created yet another difficult problem for the international community. Moreover, the global security environment is plunging into its worst state since the Second World War, owing to the high-handedness and arbitrariness of some countries attempting to replace the current international order centred on the United Nations system with a “rules-based international order” governed by unilateral and exclusive Western values.

The United Nations was founded in reflection of the expectations and desire of humankind, which wanted to see no repetition of the scourge of the world wars that had inflicted indescribable misfortune upon them. More than ever before, the present reality urgently calls for the United Nations to promote cooperation, reconciliation, unity and solidarity among its Member States, and to discharge its righteous missions and role.

The world has been faced with challenges and difficulties of all sorts during the past year. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was no exception. Nevertheless, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has had valuable successes in protecting the life and safety of the people from the threat of a malignant pandemic and in achieving overall development of the country, while persistently overcoming the difficulties and obstacles on its own. I hope that the successes and experiences gained by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea will make a positive contribution to the deliberation of the theme before the current session of the General Assembly on the international community’s overcoming interlocking challenges and finding transformative solutions.

The unprecedented crisis caused by the malignant virus spread throughout our State beginning late last

April. It created a very critical ordeal and served as an occasion to test the national crisis-preparedness capacity of the country. But the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Government made a correct analysis of the features of the malignant virus and the circumstances of its outbreak, together with the state of the public health of the country. On that basis, it lost no time in putting forward an anti-epidemic policy in a scientific, transparent and speedy manner so as to take the strategic initiative in preventing the infectious disease, and proceeded with its implementation with due care, thereby achieving a decisive victory in exterminating the malignant virus in a very short period of 100-odd days.

A high sense of organization and voluntary unity of action, along with a social ethos of helping and caring about each other, reflect the superiority of the political system peculiar to our country. That served as a fundamental guarantee for the successful implementation of the scientific anti-epidemic policy.

In terms of anti-epidemic and public health foundations, our country has been in a weaker condition than other countries, but it took the contagious disease under control in the shortest period of time. All in all, that brilliant result was achieved by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Government's correct anti-epidemic policy and superior socialist system. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea Government is closely following the anti-epidemic situation in neighbouring countries and the world. At the same time, it is stepping up its work to build the national anti-epidemic capacity to actively cope with any public health crisis in the present and the future and to fully secure the life and safety of the people.

Upon authorization, I take this opportunity to express thanks to those countries and international organizations that have shown their deep interest and willingness to render assistance to the anti-epidemic work of our country.

Despite the inevitable difficulties and obstacles caused by the global health crisis and abnormal weather conditions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Government achieved new successes and progress by tirelessly propelling the efforts for national development and stabilization and the improvement of the people's livelihood. Industry, agriculture and all other sectors of the economy are following a trend of steady and stable growth, while the efforts to supply

the people with modern apartments free of charge and provide the children and students all across the country with nutritious food, new school uniforms and stationery materials at the State's expense are being carried forward as planned.

The subjective and objective conditions and environment are still unfavourable, but visible and substantial progress and advances are being made in our country in a social atmosphere that is full of vim and vigour. That reality in our country substantiates the fact that we can successfully overcome any difficulty and challenge if we rely on the strength of the people to implement policies that suit the reality on the ground.

The successes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its national and social development were by no means achieved in a peaceful and quiet environment. The security environment on the Korean peninsula is now caught up in a vicious cycle of tension and confrontation due to the increasing hostility of the United States and its following forces against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Recently, it has been heading towards a much more dangerous phase.

One of the foremost excuses of the United States and its servile forces to justify their hostile policy and military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is none other than the possession of our self-defensive nuclear weapons. A few days ago, the United States President attacked us from this very rostrum, saying that despite his country's "efforts to begin serious and sustained diplomacy", the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to blatantly violate United Nations "sanctions" (*A/77/PV.6, p. 23*). To put it clearly, we have never recognized such United Nations resolutions that seek to pressure us because we do not abide by the rules made by the United States unilaterally. We will not accept them in the future, either.

In addition to our country, there is a number of countries in the world that possess nuclear weapons, but only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been subjected to the most brigandish and brutal sanctions resolutions. That is because the United Nations connived at and allowed the high-handedness and arbitrariness of the United States in antagonizing the independent Democratic People's Republic of Korea under an absurd rationale that it differs in its ideas and systems and opposes its unjust policy. The United States is even now planning to conduct joint

military exercises, which arose serious concern in the surroundings of the Korean peninsula. Obviously, this is an extremely dangerous act of igniting the fuse to drive the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has found another correct way to defend its sovereignty and fundamental interests from the persistent hostile policy and military threat of the United States and its following forces and to ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region. At the recent seventh session of the fourteenth Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a law on the policy of the nation's nuclear forces was adopted with unanimous approval, in reflection of the general will of all Korean people. In direct proportion to the increase of the hostile policy and military blackmail of the United States against us, our strength is bound to grow continuously to contain them.

The United States compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to adopt the law on the policy of nuclear forces in defiance of the United States hostility. The United States should clearly understand that its heinous, hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the past 30 years is responsible for creating today's reality, and ask and answer itself and ponder over how far it is prepared to take this situation in the future.

In his policy speech delivered at the seventh session of the fourteenth Supreme People's Assembly, Comrade Kim Jong Un, President of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that the current international situation shows that the contradictions between justice and injustice and between the progressive and the reactionary, especially the power structure surrounding the Korean peninsula, have become obvious and that the change from a unipolar world advocated by the United States into a multipolar world is accelerating significantly.

Today the world is faced with not a few severe crises and challenges, but the most fundamental danger is the high-handedness and arbitrariness of the United States and its followers, which are destroying the foundation of international peace and stability in order to maintain the hegemonic unipolar world. The "rules-based international order" advocated by the United States is no less than the United States-centred international order, permeated with unilateral and

hegemonic American values. It is also an imperialistic power structure that gives precedence to the interests of the United States over the common interests of humankind and international law, demanding other countries' obedience. The United States, having divided the world into "democratic" and "authoritarian" States, is now forcing other countries to choose between the two and seeking bloc confrontation. It attempts to maintain world hegemony by expanding the bilateral and multilateral military alliance system that is a legacy of the Cold War.

The prevailing reality urgently calls on the United Nations, entrusted with maintaining global peace and security and safeguarding international justice, to fully discharge its missions and role enshrined in the Charter, strictly adhering to the principles of impartiality and objectivity. The United Nations is the most universal international organization, bringing together all sovereign countries. As such, an individual country or a minority group can never represent the United Nations. All the United Nations activities should be duly oriented to realizing the common interests and prosperity of the Member States. To that end, the basic formula for solving problems should be decision-making that reflects not the individual interests of a few countries, but the legitimate and just demands and opinions of all the Member States.

The Security Council is the very organ where impartiality and objectivity are not ensured in United Nations activities. The mere fact that the Security Council makes an issue of the exercise of the legitimate right to self-defence of a sovereign State is a contradictory act, as it denies the basic spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly stipulates sovereign equality and non-interference, as well as the recognized rules governing international relations.

The Security Council is not fully discharging its missions and responsibilities to safeguard international peace and security. The main reason for that lies precisely in the unjust and double-dealing acts of the United States and some United Nations Member States following in the footsteps of the United States. The Security Council does not say even one word about the high-handedness and arbitrariness, reckless arms build-up and war crimes of the United States, but only picks a quarrel with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at every opportunity in its righteous efforts to bolster national self-defence capabilities. All of that reveals that the Security Council has lost its competency

and authority to act on behalf of the United Nations Member States when it performs its duty to maintain international peace and security.

As long as the double standards, unfairness, high-handedness and arbitrariness of the United States are not removed, any decisions or resolutions adopted by the Security Council can neither have reasonable binding force nor contribute to ensuring global peace and security. In order to put an end to the high-handedness and arbitrariness of specific countries, including the United States and restore the confidence of the international community in the Security Council, urgent priority should be given to the expansion and strengthening of representation of developing countries, which account for the absolute majority of the United Nations membership. If the United Nations is to ensure impartiality and objectivity in its activities, it should adhere to the cardinal principles of respect for sovereign equality and peoples' rights to self-determination.

The United States and some other United Nations Member States are trying to unilaterally impose Western values and the "rules-based international order" on sovereign States, behind the slogans of "safeguarding democracy" and "protecting human rights". Such interventionist attempt constitutes a flagrant breach of the United Nations Charter, which gives precedence to the principle of sovereign equality. The partial acts and double standards favouring the unfair positions of some individual countries and specific forces should be thoroughly eliminated, and the core principles of the United Nations Charter — the sovereign equality and equal rights and self-determination of the peoples — should be strictly observed.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation takes this opportunity to extend firm support and solidarity to the Government and the people of Cuba in their struggle to safeguard the sovereignty and right to development of their country in the face of the high-handedness and arbitrariness of the United States in a move to interfere in its internal affairs. We also strongly demand that all the economic and financial embargoes imposed on Cuba by the United States be lifted immediately, as required by relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

We also stand in firm support and solidarity with the peoples of the Syrian Arab Republic, Palestine and other independent countries that are struggling to repel

the interference of foreign forces and safeguard their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is the unwavering foreign policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Government to maintain independence, peace and friendship. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will broadly cooperate with all countries and nations that oppose and reject aggression and interference, domination and subordination, and aspire to independence and justice, transcending differences in ideologies and systems. It will also develop multifaceted exchanges and cooperation even with capitalist countries that respect our country and take a friendly attitude to it.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea sets great store by sovereign equality and international justice. Moreover, in the future it will actively join the international community in its efforts to maintain world peace and security and establish a fair and just international order. It will also fulfil its responsibilities and role in ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Aksoltan Ataeva, Chair of the delegation of Turkmenistan.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I have the honour to convey the greetings and wishes of peace and prosperity to the peoples of all countries from the President of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr. Serdar Berdimuhamedov.

I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, and wish him success in that important and responsible post.

I express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, for his effective work in this position.

Turkmenistan sees the current session of the General Assembly from the point of view of the need to urgently leverage the potential of the world community and the United Nations constructive influence on global processes, the search for channels of dialogue as the only acceptable way to resolve conflicts and contradictions, lay down the foundations for developing responsible joint approaches to the problems of post-pandemic development, and restore economic and humanitarian ties.

For Turkmenistan, the new political year marks an important date — the thirtieth anniversary of its membership of the United Nations. Based on the solid foundation of engagement with this world Organization that we built over the years, and reaffirming our commitment to a strategic partnership with the United Nations and our conviction that there is no alternative to the only world structure with universal legitimacy, Turkmenistan will pursue its efforts to enhance and strengthen its role in the world and reaffirm internationally recognized legal norms and the Charter of the United Nations as the political and ideological bases of intergovernmental relations.

The global security architecture created within the framework of our Organization is now being seriously tested. We are witnessing complex processes that hinder multilateral cooperation, including in such important areas as security and stability. In order to overcome the current difficulties in international relations, Turkmenistan considers it necessary to strengthen existing platforms for dialogue and to consider establishing new ones for intergovernmental contact and negotiations on pressing issues on the global agenda.

Restoring trust and a culture of respectful dialogue is gaining universal significance as one of the key conditions for a responsible, non-confrontational approach, seeking opportunities for mutual understanding and maintaining a balance of interests when considering problematic issues. In order to further promote the philosophy of trust-based dialogue in international relations, Turkmenistan intends to propose a draft resolution on dialogue as a guarantor of peace for the General Assembly's consideration. We are convinced that the adoption of such a document would confirm the principled and unequivocal commitment of all United Nations Member States to a peaceful, negotiation-based method of resolving conflict situations, no matter how difficult they might seem. Building further on our efforts in that direction, we invite the international community to declare 2025 the year of peace and trust, based on the provisions of resolution 73/338, adopted at the initiative of Turkmenistan.

Today the role of peacekeeping instruments in the international community's toolkit is objectively increasing. That includes in particular using the potential of neutrality and its conceptual foundations to strengthen overall stability and security. Based on the recognition

by the General Assembly of neutrality as a factor in strengthening comp peace and security and resolution 71/275, proclaiming 12 December International Day of Neutrality, Turkmenistan will continue to work actively with partners to expand the membership of the United Nations Group of Friends of Neutrality for Peace, Security and Sustainable Development.

The logic of the development of global processes in the field of security dictates the need for a radical strengthening of the mechanisms of regional interaction. On 28 July, the General Assembly adopted resolution 76/299, proclaiming Central Asia a zone of peace, trust and cooperation. We are grateful to the international community for that decision, which creates the necessary conditions in a strategically important part of the political map of the world for carrying out active efforts to strengthen international security, prevent and resolve conflicts, and build strong and effective regional institutions to that end.

As the host country of the headquarters of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, Turkmenistan urges the provision of all possible assistance to its work, which has proven its effectiveness. Given that December 2022 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the Regional Centre, we intend to submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on the role of the Centre, reflecting the significant events of recent years and consolidating the mechanisms of regional interaction built on its basis.

We are particularly concerned about the currently rise in threats to global food security, which are rapidly beginning to affect an increasing number of countries and entire regions. In these conditions, urgent efforts and effective measures are required of the entire world community to overcome the current situation. In order to maintain the stability of the global food market, to jointly search for solutions to the complex problems of providing food to the most vulnerable countries, and to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to that end, we propose to hold an international forum on food security in Turkmenistan.

In the current context, it is especially important to fully deliver on the agreements reached on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) . In that regard, in support of the multilateral tools for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs, Turkmenistan will submit its second voluntary national

review on the implementation of the SDGs during the High-level Political Forum in 2023.

At present, meeting the challenge of sustainable development will largely depend on the level of international cooperation in such critical areas as transport and energy. Pursuing its efforts to promote multilateral transport cooperation, at the current session Turkmenistan intends to summarize the results of the 2016 and 2021 United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conferences and other high-level transport forums held in recent years, including the Ministerial Transportation Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries, held in Turkmenistan on 15 and 16 August, and to prepare proposals for the development of a draft concept for a special interregional United Nations programme for transport development.

At the current session, Turkmenistan also counts on the logical continuation of a broad dialogue on the problem of energy security. In that context, we consider it necessary, based on the provisions of General Assembly resolutions on the reliability and stability of energy resource supplies to world markets, adopted at the initiative of our country, to continue working on the implementation of Turkmenistan's earlier proposals on the establishment of an international open-ended expert group to develop a modern international legal United Nations toolkit to regulate sustainable and reliable energy transit.

In Central Asia, due to objective reasons, climate change and water issues are of critical importance and, in some cases, determining factors in the development of regional processes, with a significant impact on the general situation, the implementation of socioeconomic development plans and efforts to address serious environmental issues.

Based on the positions of Turkmenistan on climate change adaptation and mitigation, presented in November 2021 at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow, as well as those practically considered in multilateral consultations within the framework of the Bonn Climate Change Conference in Bonn in June, Turkmenistan is conducting preparatory work for the establishment in Ashgabat of a regional centre for climate technology for the countries of Central Asia.

At the same time, noting the nationally determined contribution of Turkmenistan, adopted in May 2022 in

the context of fulfilling its obligations under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Turkmenistan intends to step up its efforts to achieve the goals outlined in that document, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the promotion of the Global Methane Pledge initiative.

We will make persistent and determined efforts to single out the Aral Sea problem a dedicated area of work within the United Nations. To that end, in May 2023 we intend to resume negotiations on a draft resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on the establishment of a special United Nations programme for the Aral Sea basin, which will be based on the provisions of resolutions 72/273 and 73/297, on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, adopted in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

The impact of the pandemic requires us to pursue our coordinated efforts to address identified vulnerabilities in global and national health systems. Turkmenistan will continue to support the joint activities of the international community to combat the novel coronavirus infection and create tools for medical diplomacy. Emphasizing the key role of the World Health Organization in developing consolidated responses to common challenges, we support the global One Health concept and will promote it as part of the Roadmap for Health and Well-Being in Central Asia 2022-2025.

Despite the diversity of the challenges facing each of our countries, we are united by common hopes, anxieties and threats. Turkmenistan is ready, together with its partners, to seek new approaches and ways to overcome the challenges faced by humanity. Based on strategic cooperation with the United Nations, our country will make every effort to achieve these goals.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Maria de Jesus dos Reis Ferreira, Chair of the delegation of the Republic of Angola.

Ms. Ferreira (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour to take the floor in this majestic Hall of multilateral diplomacy on behalf of His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, who wished to be here in person to address the Assembly but was unable to do so, owing to the general elections of 24 August and to his swearing-in ceremony. However, His Excellency the

President has entrusted me to greet all those present, especially His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, and to congratulate him on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and assure him of the support of the Republic of Angola during his presidency.

This session, held under the theme “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, is taking place at a unique and sensitive international moment in our modern history, where we face complex challenges that call for joint solutions. The world faces persistent and cyclical challenges, which have been exacerbated in recent years by the international health situation brought about by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the emergence of growing threats to the economy, peace and global security, and the impacts of climate change.

The Republic of Angola has championed at international forums the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation, which are mutually advantageous and beneficial to relations between States, be they large or small, developed or developing, because in our understanding that is how we can effectively contribute to the search for consensus solutions in resolving political, economic, social and cultural crises. World peace, which we all aim to achieve, will come about only through peacebuilding efforts in every country. In that regard, the Republic of Angola continues to make important efforts to contribute to peace and stability on the African continent and in its subregion in particular.

In its role presiding over the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Republic of Angola has spared no effort to contribute to peace and stability in the region, especially with respect to the conflict in the Central African Republic, but also with regard to the border dispute between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as between Uganda and Rwanda, where we have modestly tried to do our best, since, as we know, the solution always and above all depends on the political will of the parties directly involved, as His Excellency the President of the Republic of Angola, Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, recently reminded us.

Angola’s peacebuilding efforts on the African continent have earned it the special recognition of the African Union, which designated the President of the Republic of Angola, Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves

Lourenço, an African Union Champion for Peace and Reconciliation at the Extraordinary Session of the African Union Assembly on terrorism and unconstitutional changes of Governments in Africa, which demonstrates our country’s commitment to mediation and consensus in resolving political crises in Africa and around the world.

Those efforts have been galvanized by the support we have received from Secretary-General António Guterres. Angola will continue to work closely with the United Nations and the African Union in peacebuilding and consensus-building efforts in order to resolve conflicts, with a view to achieving a culture of peace, security and stability, in the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as in the Gulf of Guinea Commission and other regional organizations.

The Republic of Angola continues to uphold the inalienable rights of all States to strengthen their own defence capabilities against external threats, equipping their armed forces with personnel, weapons and equipment that meet national needs. In that regard, we reiterate here our call for the lifting of the arms embargo imposed on the Central African Republic.

History has taught us that we must discourage the use of force to resolve conflicts between sovereign nations, as the consequences for humankind are immeasurable. Based on the principle of non-alignment enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, our country advocates for conflict resolution through dialogue and respect for international law.

The political-military conflicts and the existing and persistent disparities in the economic and technological development spheres among world regions and geographic blocs represent a permanent threat and, at the same time, an opportunity for all humankind to join forces for their peaceful resolution. Angola once again urges the end of the economic embargo against Cuba and the removal of unilateral measures and sanctions against the Cuban people, which impede their country’s harmonious economic, social and technical-scientific development.

In general, Angola favours the lifting of all unilateral sanctions or coercive measures imposed against the peoples of Zimbabwe and Venezuela, among others, without a mandate from the Security Council. Such politically motivated measures have

proven to be counterproductive to efforts to eradicate poverty and to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, and violate the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international public and humanitarian law.

Negotiations for reforming the Security Council still have not produced the results that the overwhelming majority of Member States expects. The Republic of Angola joins other voices in championing such reform towards an equitable representation that reflects the current configuration of the United Nations. The Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration represent a viable option for restoring the rights and legitimate aspirations of the African continent and correcting the historical injustices that the region is experiencing with its absence from the decision-making centre of one of the main statutory bodies in matters of international peace and security created by the Charter of the United Nations.

Angola held its fifth general elections on 24 August characterized by an environment of peace, harmony and transparency, thereby consolidating the construction of a democratic State and the rule of law with a view towards the country's socioeconomic development. The newly elected Government intends to continue to work on ongoing reforms as one of the priorities of its mandate.

The Republic of Angola is aligned with the international consensus on sustainable development, including the African Union's Agenda 2063 on the environment. It has approved a national strategy on climate change and environmental education and plans to achieve the target of 70 per cent energy from non-polluting sources by 2025, favouring clean hydroelectric and solar energy.

To that end, many substantial investments have been made in economic and social infrastructure in order to mitigate the effects of the prolonged drought that has affected the southern region of Angola, with special emphasis on the inauguration in 2022 of an aqueduct in the province of Cunene, which will provide access to water for 350,000 citizens over a span of 160 kilometres, ensuring a water supply for people, cattle and irrigation.

In conclusion, I would like to announce that the Republic of Angola will host the tenth summit of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) in Luanda from 6 to 10 December 2022,

at a time when the challenges that the international community faces are increasingly complex and require the engagement and solidarity of everyone in order to overcome them. Our purpose in convening the summit is to spare no effort to ensure that the OACPS, which is now a full-fledged international organization, can play its role in the concert of nations. Therefore, we hope we can count on the attendance and participation of all OACPS member States.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Al Hassan, Chair of the delegation of Oman.

Mr. Al Hassan (Oman) (spoke in Arabic): We would like to extend to the President of the General Assembly and his friendly country the Republic of Hungary our congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. We express our solidarity with him and all Member States to ensure the successful work of the Assembly during this session. We also appreciate the efforts of the former President at the previous session.

We would be remiss not to thank and commend His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for his tireless efforts in leading this Organization and advancing its noble missions while developing its working methods to enhance its effectiveness and adapt to the current needs. We assure him that the Sultanate of Oman will continue to support his efforts in achieving justice and peace all over the world.

The Sultanate of Oman pursues a well-established policy based on a deep and steadfast vision, as well as a legacy drawn from its cultural heritage and human history. Therefore, it affirms the fundamentals of its foreign policy in siding with truth and justice, strengthening constructive cooperation and the bonds of friendship, and contributing to the consolidation of international peace and security.

The Sultanate of Oman is confident that establishing and maintaining peace in the world is necessary for the interests of its peoples. That can only be preserved on the basis of sound principles of justice and firm foundations of cooperation and harmony among all nations. We call on the international community to be guided by those principles and to build partnerships among countries in accordance with international law and customary practices that are unanimously accepted in order to achieve peaceful coexistence, enhanced cooperation and economic prosperity.

My country continues to spare no effort to achieve peace in brotherly Yemen through constructive cooperation with all parties. While the Sultanate of Oman welcomes the continued truce, it appeals to all Yemeni actors to come to terms with their painful past and focus on formulating an optimistic and happy future for their country that will preserve its unity, security and stability, based on the agreed terms of reference, including the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcome of the intra-Yemeni dialogue and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In that context, the Sultanate of Oman will continue to support the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the United States Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Tim Lenderking. We appreciate their endeavours to achieve a lasting peace in Yemen through dialogue. We also call on all Yemeni parties to engage in a meaningful and serious manner in order to implement the road map agreed upon by our Yemeni brothers and to establish a political process that will safeguard the sovereignty, independence, security and stability of Yemen. My country affirms that it will continue to provide all possible facilities and humanitarian assistance to the various Yemeni regions and governorates without exception, in the hope that sustained international action will bring an end to the suffering of the brotherly people of Yemen.

Resolving the Palestinian question remains an essential pillar of ensuring stability in the Middle East. That conflict has generated many crises, tensions and acts of violence. Therefore, we believe that a two-State solution, in accordance with international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, is an urgent need and a strategic necessity for achieving lasting peace, mutual trust and positive cooperation among all parties in the region.

We also note the unfolding developments in Libya, Syria and the Sudan. We hope that differences will be resolved by consensus among the political parties and that the concept of a shared destiny will be consolidated in order to achieve security and stability for those sisterly countries.

We call on the international community to redouble its diplomatic efforts to support peace and stability in order to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian crisis through dialogue and negotiation, which are the most successful means of resolving differences, in accordance with

the principles of international law and common human values.

My country looks forward to participating actively in the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), which will be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November. We wish the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt success in hosting that conference.

Climate change is one of the most prominent issues of our time, and we are now at a decisive moment. The world is facing a real and difficult challenge with wide-ranging effects, whether rising temperatures or catastrophic floods, all of which are threats to countries' food security. Adapting to those issues will be more difficult and costly unless the world unites to address them in a radical and integrated way. In that regard, Oman has developed a national strategy for protecting the environment and addressing climate change to be managed in partnership with local communities, civil-society institutions and the private sector. We have established a national committee for climate change and the protection of the ozone layer, consisting of 31 governmental agencies through which adaptation plans are implemented to mitigate the effects of climate fluctuations and to contribute to reducing carbon emissions by 7 per cent by 2030, in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We are thereby moving towards achieving zero greenhouse-gas emissions.

My country is focused on accelerating the procedures for regulating the green hydrogen sector and encouraging investment in it, in response to global transformations aimed at reducing carbon emissions and fulfilling the world's desire for new and multiple-use energy sources. In view of the importance of strengthening that sector, my country has established a national alliance for hydrogen by relying on our national capabilities, including an abundance of solar and wind energy, in addition to suitable lands for establishing such projects. And thanks to Oman's favourable geographic location on the world map, we also have a port system and logistical support for developing and producing clean energy.

My country bases its principles of equality, justice and non-discrimination among society's various segments on our nation's State statute. Omani women, with their diverse political, social, economic and cultural views, are therefore able to contribute

alongside men to building our modern State and promoting cooperation and harmony among all. Women are key partners in development and a true component of our society. We are proud of what we have achieved in the advancement of women and their valuable national contribution in the areas of action and social responsibility. Young people play an equally great role in embodying promising hopes and a bright future for comprehensive development. My country has provided various incentives and opportunities that are characterized by fairness, transparency and equal opportunities for all.

The successive crises and existing conflicts that we are seeing have unquestionably all created challenges for the United Nations system. We therefore call on the international community to use genuine and realistic partnerships to rebuild, by uniting ranks and forgiving obstructive lapses while moving forward with a positive vision for a more promising future for all humankind.

In conclusion, we want to wish for peace for all. We also wish the Assembly every success in this session with a view to enabling us to achieve the hopes and aspirations of our world. And we hope that members will enjoy the remarkable and memorable FIFA World Cup competition to be held in our sister State of Qatar in November.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Siad Doualeh, Chair of the delegation of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): We meet at a time when the world is going through a period of uncertainty, marked by multiple crises on the security, economic, health and climate fronts. The theme of the general debate of the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session — “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges” — may seem abstract, even obscure, but it encompasses a concrete, painful reality that calls for the international community to commit firmly to reconsidering its approach in order to urgently respond to the multiple threats weighing on the world. The United Nations was created not only to prevent war but also to resolve economic problems through international cooperation. Paragraph 3 of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations tells us to achieve international cooperation for solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

The prospect of recovery following the coronavirus disease was overshadowed by the conflict in Ukraine, which led to a rapid downturn in the world economy with skyrocketing food and fuel prices and supply-chain disruptions. We share the Secretary-General’s position that despite the deteriorating outlook, we can still have hope if there is a collective response and if we commit to working together again in order to respond to the interconnected challenges we face. We also support the Secretary-General’s proposed plan to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts should prioritize less developed countries, whose collective population totals 1.1 billion and who continue to face major obstacles exacerbated by the global economic situation. We are particularly alarmed by the potential risks for these countries created by severe difficulties in paying external debt, persistent marginalization by international trade, inadequate access to electricity and, of course, the catastrophic impact of climate change. We are deeply grateful to Qatar for hosting the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. We hope that will be an opportunity for the international community to mobilize in order to help least-developed countries overcome the structural obstacles they are facing.

My country, Djibouti, is dealing with the consequences of many external shocks, including the rise in world food prices resulting from the war in Ukraine. While these factors have helped to slow growth, they have not put a stop to our determination to do our utmost to ensure that Djibouti can become a stable, peaceful, clean, prosperous and secure country with a good environment for private initiative. In order to do that, we drew up a 2020-2024 national development plan, Djibouti ICI — I for inclusion, C for connectivity and I for institutions. While we had an opportunity to explain the content of the plan during our voluntary national review in July in New York, here I would like to briefly describe the plan’s three areas of focus. The inclusion focus aims to reorganize and operationalize an inclusive sustainable development model with a role for private initiatives as an essential lever for production and exchange, and to ensure better distribution of the results of growth to our citizens.

The connectivity focus aims to position Djibouti as a hub for the regional and continental economy and to ensure better national integration for accelerated urban and rural development, as well as improved socioeconomic services. Through the implementation

of the third strategic area of focus, institutions, the national development plan will make it possible to strengthen Djibouti's human and institutional capacity to expand our achievement of rights and freedoms, democracy, stability and transparent institutions and social cohesion. Under the leadership of President Guelleh, Djibouti is determined to work to fully realize all of these objectives, and of course we are counting on the traditional support of partners and friendly countries.

Climate change is an existential threat to humankind. For those who still need convincing, we need only look at the extreme weather events that are happening all over the world. We also urge States to read the sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2022*, whose findings and predictions should motivate the international community to mobilize massively. We cannot postpone our implementation of our commitments any longer. We cannot passively allow each Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP) to note that we have not done enough. We therefore welcome the fact that the Egyptian presidency of COP27, at a pivotal juncture, has made the theme of the upcoming Conference the effective implementation of commitments, particularly regarding support for fair transitions and the mobilization of financial resources and viable investments to respond to climate change. Djibouti reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Although we are a low greenhouse-gas emitter, my country is committed to a large-scale environmental policy and the goal of 100 per cent nationally produced energy by 2035. Although it may have escaped the notice of some, including here at the United Nations, Djibouti is also negatively affected by the same climate risks as the other countries of the Horn of Africa, especially drought, drastic reductions in water resources, sea-level rise, flooding and water-resource salinization.

We welcome the unprecedented result of the seventh replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, held under the leadership of President Biden. The resources mobilized will be vital to defeating those three epidemics by 2030, and they also strengthen resilience and health systems' capacities by giving them better ways of tracking and preparing for future threats. We have been followed with interest the discussions on an international treaty on pandemics,

which would be a significant step towards finding a more appropriate global response and giving the world the tools for improved preparation. The fact is that the best way to perpetuate a pandemic is by refusing to learn from the failures and the efforts made to fight pandemics in the past.

Djibouti was honoured to host a high-level parallel event during the general debate in partnership with the African Union Commission and the Mastercard Foundation on the topic of the new public health order for Africa at the national, regional and international levels. In 2021 the African Union launched a new public health order for Africa that puts the continent's priorities at its centre and is built on five pillars — strengthening public health institutions; improving the capacity of public health personnel; developing vaccines and diagnostic and therapeutic products; creating respectful and action-oriented partnerships; and increasing national resources. A call to action was adopted at the conclusion of the discussion.

Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter tells us that all members must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. In defence of that vital principle, Djibouti, together with 141 Member States of the United Nations, voted for resolution ES-11/1, condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We are deeply concerned about the stalemate in the conflict more than seven months after its outbreak. We know that this is not a pretend fight with wooden swords. The conflict has led to immeasurable loss of life and destruction of infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. The intensified war efforts, the risk of a stalemate and threats of the use of nuclear weapons are undermining the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. We echo the call of the President of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, Mr. Macky Sall, for de-escalation and negotiations. A fair and lasting peace should be a priority for all of us. Even if the path to peace is sometimes difficult and winding, it should remain the priority.

We reaffirm our support for the African position demanding improvement in our continent's representation in international bodies, particularly the Security Council, in a way that reflects the realities of the twenty-first century. Africa participates in good faith in the discussions on Security Council reform and

we believe that if we are to leave the current stalemate behind we have to show more openness and flexibility. Our peoples expect tangible results that can dispel the growing feeling that these reforms are a vain effort with no end in sight and whose result would simply echo the old refrain — that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

While reaffirming Africa's position based on the Ezulwini Consensus, Djibouti would like to contribute some suggestions to our collective consideration of the right to the veto. We propose that the Member States request that the International Court of Justice, the primary judicial organ of the United Nations responsible for interpreting the Charter of the United Nations, provide clarification on the following. We would ask it to elucidate whether the right of veto is in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations as contained in the Charter itself, particularly in its Preamble and Articles 1 and 2. The Court might also specify whether such a right, which in reality and in practice is a right to block decisions, accords with the relevant provisions of Articles 24 and 25 of the Charter. Without prejudice to the response that the International Court of Justice, whose power is discretionary, might give, in our view its clarification would be useful.

Djibouti is a peace-loving country. We affirm our deep attachment to the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is why we have repeatedly urged our neighbour Eritrea to speed up the normalization of relations between our two countries. Despite our openness and availability, in a letter dated 30 July 2021 addressed to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General once again deplored the notable lack of progress on the ongoing issues, which are the border dispute and the fate of 13 Djiboutian prisoners of war. I am taking this opportunity to once again call on Eritrea to finally agree to resolve these pending issues through bilateral dialogue, mediation or binding arbitration. We also urge our neighbours to dismantle the Anda'ali camp, a step that would help to restore a climate of trust between our two countries.

With regard to Somalia, we welcome the recent political developments, including the election of a new President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and the establishment of a new Government. We hail the President's determination, as expressed here from this very rostrum (see A/77/PV.8), to fight Al-Shabaab extremists, whose methods and motives he strongly denounced. Djibouti will continue to assist Somalia

alongside the troop-contributing countries of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia in the efforts to stabilize the country. Our commitment to Somalia is complete, unwavering and there for the duration.

Turning to Yemen, Djibouti is encouraged by the truce announced in the confrontations following negotiations. We call for intensified talks aimed at reaching a lasting ceasefire. We are also closely following the ongoing efforts to counter the catastrophic ecological, maritime and humanitarian risks posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker.

We remain concerned about Israel's political behaviour, which is characterized by the obstruction and violation of peace agreements and numerous Security Council resolutions. Djibouti reaffirms its consistent position in support of the establishment of a fully sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace side by side with Israel.

In conclusion, let us work together to build a stronger, better-equipped Organization that is better able to respond effectively to global challenges.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Josie-Ann Dongobir, Chair of the delegation of Nauru.

Mrs. Dongobir (Nauru): It is an honour to represent His Excellency Mr. Lionel Rouwen Aingimea and deliver this statement for the Republic of Nauru at the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Nauru, allow me to congratulate Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly for the seventy-seventh session. Let me assure him of my delegation's full cooperation and support as he leads this body in seeking transformative solutions to our shared interlocking challenges.

Allow me to also thank His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives for his exceptional stewardship of this body during the seventy-sixth session, and to note the many successful initiatives undertaken during his tenure, including the "presidency of hope" fellowship. Nauru was privileged to have one of its young officials participate in this pioneering fellowship.

We come together at a critical moment created by three interconnected crises: the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its consequences, the war in Ukraine and a tipping point in climate change. These crises are creating unprecedented humanitarian challenges and growing concerns about the global economy. To overcome these challenges, and to fulfil the promises of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must draw upon the strength of multilateralism and the ability of this Organization to bring about the transformative change that builds our people's resilience to face the crises of today and of the future.

This time last year, Nauru was proud to declare its COVID-19-free status. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. Thankfully, however, with the strong support of our partners, Nauru was able to achieve high vaccination rates for both adults and children. Our high vaccination rates have been critical in ensuring minimal casualties from COVID-19 infections. We thank our partners Australia, India, Japan, Switzerland and the United States, including the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility, for their support throughout the pandemic.

We would also like to acknowledge in particular the support and good practices demonstrated by the people of Taiwan in the face of COVID-19. The Republic of China (Taiwan) is an important partner in the global response to the pandemic, as well as a particular partner of Nauru. Taiwan's exemplary response and assistance should not be ignored. Taiwan is ready to share their experience, and we call for their recognition to ensure their right to engage with us all in this global forum.

With the help of our partners and friends, the health effects of COVID-19 on our country have been relatively mild. Despite that achievement, we note with deep concern the growing global resistance to vaccinations, alongside a rise in misinformation and fear-mongering through social media and mainstream media platforms. Vaccine resistance and misinformation puts us all at risk, not only for COVID-19, but for other diseases, as evidenced through the global outbreaks of measles and polio. In our interconnected world, we know that no one, and no country, is safe until everyone is safe. We need practical and collaborative solutions to combat the dangerous trend of misinformation for the sake of global health. As we have seen too many times in Nauru, in our deeply connected world, an outbreak in

one corner can produce a ripple of destruction that can touch us all.

To build our resilience domestically, Nauru prioritizes a preventative strategy for public health. Our strategy is informed by the lessons learned during this pandemic, and we continue to seek support to review, overhaul and revamp our health systems and to thereby develop innovative solutions to our needs. Moreover, to address the challenges of today and tomorrow, our health system needs to be climate resilient, with the capacity for viral risk management through e-medicine, digital technology and more. Meeting our ambition will require partners to provide support and technical expertise.

Beyond communicable diseases, other health challenges plague small island developing States, thus undermining our chances of a sustainable and healthy future where no one is left behind. The battle against non-communicable diseases is one battle we have low odds of winning owing to ongoing challenges with food security and nutrition, as well as weak policies, strategies and capacities to adequately address substance use and abuse. There must be a wholesale transformation of the food system to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition. Incremental measures such as trainings, workshops and kitchen gardens alone cannot meet the needs. We call on the United Nations and our partners to focus their efforts and help us towards securing affordable nutritious food for all.

We also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Cuba for their long-standing commitment to strengthening our health sector through the work of their medical brigades. Despite the assistance they provide to many, the Cuban people continue to suffer from the economic, commercial and financial embargo of the United States. We call on the United States to not forget the friendly people of Cuba, who are also struggling like us under this pandemic.

Education holds the key to unlocking the transformative solutions we so urgently need to address the interlocking challenges of today's world. Education holds the mould for shaping the future we want and need. We must leave this week and the Transforming Education Summit not only inspired and energized by the passion of young people, but with concrete ideas and partnerships to take home and implement. Quality education for all will require both creativity and urgent action, to tackle immediate needs and

build towards long-term transformation. We have the opportunity now to reimagine education and invest in new approaches. We join calls for global efforts to review and revamp our education delivery models, with a view to improving teacher attraction and retention strategies, strengthening partnerships between the home and school and developing inexpensive, alternate models of delivery.

When we speak of transformation and resilience, we must prioritize the climate emergency, in which the Pacific is on the front lines. Climate change continues to ravage our planet, and the global community has once again failed to take the actions required to curb its spread. We can no longer continue to debate the human impact on our planet and when and if we will band together to mount a fight against the climate emergency and its undeniable security implications. The maintenance of international peace and security demands that we unite with a shared understanding of the threats and challenges we face. Nauru continues its call upon the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative on climate and security, and to immediately undertake an assessment of the capacity of the United Nations to respond to climate disasters.

Climate change has infiltrated every aspect of our lives, and our response must therefore be equally diverse and robust. While we are hopeful for the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we are not naive regarding the reality that the work in this arena is far from the urgency and scale required. Major emitters are lacking in both commitment and action to reduce emissions. We need stronger commitments and actions that move past pretty words on paper.

Nauru, like other small island nations, has lived with the realities of climate change for some time now. Climate change undermines and threatens the ability of Governments and institutions to deliver basic services in the short and long term. The Higher Ground Initiative is crucial to our ability to reclaim land that is now unusable, land that presents us with both an urgent need and an expensive financing venture. Hence, we seek both financial and technical assistance for the completion and implementation of the master plan for a pilot plot. If successful, this pilot plot can transform the future of Nauru, ensuring that our homeland can continue for generations to come.

There also remains a serious and pressing need for climate-resilient infrastructure. Nauru faces significant delays in its port redevelopment project, a project that represents both a crucial domestic need and an international example of climate-resilient infrastructure. However, as a consequence of the pandemic, Nauru now faces unprecedented delays and unforeseen added costs beyond its national capacities. We join other vulnerable nations in the call for practical financial solutions to these unforeseen challenges to key adaptation measures.

Global transformation requires a global energy transition, and we welcome the ongoing work from the High-Level Dialogue on Energy and work being undertaken to meet Sustainable Development Goal 7. A just and inclusive energy transition requires that no one, and no country, is left behind, and reaching these goals will require international financial and technical support. Moreover, it will require that we rethink how we get energy and where that energy comes from.

We cannot expect the trajectory of global emissions to drop without access to viable energy alternatives. Deep-sea minerals provide us with a solution. Polymetallic nodules will transform big and small countries' energy systems with an accessible alternative and a pathway to a just energy transition. This is a priority for Nauru at the International Seabed Authority, and we continue to call for more support and investment to ensure the establishment and adherence to robust governance mechanisms in this field. We must not lose focus towards our shared goals of a just and inclusive energy transition as we work to complete the two-year timeline to establish the global regulatory framework for deep seabed minerals.

Nauru is a big ocean State. We are people of the ocean, and our lives are inextricably linked to the Pacific Ocean. The ocean has shaped who we are, as it has similarly shaped the nations and peoples of other small island developing States. But we must transform our relationship with the ocean if it is to continue to sustain us and future generations.

We express our disappointment that the work of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction was not completed. We are committed to overcoming issues of divergence in these negotiations. Issues that are very important to island nations, such as the special circumstances and shared vulnerabilities

of small island developing States (SIDS), must be recognized. This is not new.

We must also come to consensus on benefit sharing on the high seas, especially as it relates to marine genetic resources. This is crucial for the economic diversity of island nations and is an integral part of the blue economy.

Finally, we raise, as we have before, the critical importance of ensuring sustainable fisheries. This includes ensuring that overfishing is not taking place, that fair prices are paid to small islands for fish taken from our waters, and that we eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Nauru remains committed to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. These historic agreements outline our shared optimism for the future, and they provide us with the means and metrics to reach our ambition. However, they are in danger of not being worth the paper they are printed on without adequate and predictable support from the international community, as Nauru and many other island nations will not be able to realize the Sustainable Development Goals or to adapt and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.

The ability to access sustainable financing determines whether we succeed or fail. Nauru, like many SIDS, faces barriers to sustained economic growth due to our geographic remoteness, the small scale of our economy, vulnerabilities to climate change, external economic and financial shocks and the rules that govern development assistance. For years, small island developing States have reiterated the limitations of per capita income as a measure of development. This arbitrary measure does not adequately consider our special circumstances and unique vulnerabilities.

Nauru stresses the importance of the ongoing work on the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States and reiterates the importance of its establishment. Although the process of finalizing and adopting the index has moved at a slower rate than anticipated or desired, we nonetheless thank and commend the High-Level Panel of the development of the index for their ongoing work thus far. Undoubtedly, such crucial work as the index cannot be hurried. In that light, Nauru calls for Member States to universally agree and adopt the index once finalized, thus

contributing to ensuring that efforts are tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable, as required.

As we commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Nauru, as a State party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), encourages those Member States who have yet to ratify the TPNW to do so, so that we are united in the global goal for a peaceful and just world free of nuclear weapons.

We are facing a time of great risk and uncertainty. This can, however, also be a time of opportunity and transformation. To ensure that no one is left behind, our joint post-pandemic recovery efforts must be embedded and upheld in institutions and practices of good governance. We must be careful to not compromise on good governance practices under pressures to build back faster and better.

The President took the Chair.

We reiterate our commitment to the principles of good governance as we undertake our national general elections, and we call on Member States to observe and actively strengthen and promote good governance both domestically and internationally.

In conclusion, allow me to express our hope that this year will allow us to be open to the transformation we seek. As scripture guides us, in Romans 12:2, “do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”. May God bless the Republic of Nauru, and may God bless the United Nations.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

Please allow me to say a few words. For nearly a week, the delegations of the Member States have taken us back home with them, describing the priorities and the challenges that they face and the impact that they have on people in their countries. The sheer number of members who took part in this debate points to the importance that the general debate holds in international affairs.

This year, we heard from 190 speakers, including 76 Heads of State, 50 Heads of Government, 4 Vice-Presidents, 5 Deputy Prime Ministers, 48 Ministers and 7 Heads of Delegation. Of the speakers, 23 were women, a figure that represents around 10 to 11 per cent of leaders who participated this year. But

although their numbers are small, women leaders “pack a punch”, to quote former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who moderated this year’s first General Assembly Platform of Women Leaders. The event, with a refreshingly open discussion, was one of my favourites this week.

I will not try to boil down the 190 statements we heard into a few phrases. It would not capture the nuances. Nor could I replicate the passion and pride that leaders brought to this General Assembly Hall. But there are some commonalities. The first shift I sensed is the growing awareness that humankind has entered a new era. Facing complex challenges and multilayer crises, we have reached a time of paradigm shift. The movements and adjustments that we see around us cannot be called mere modifications any longer. They are significant transformations in the making. We do not even have a name for the new epoch yet. We cannot scientifically describe it yet, but we feel that it has arrived. The basic conditions of our global cooperation have changed. We live now in a different world, a world of new challenges, changing priorities, changing roles and changing ways. Fresh pages of history are being written, with new divisions, new alliances, new grievances and new successes on them.

The second message I heard reverberating through the Hall is that the war in Ukraine should end. Members also pointed out that its effect is being felt around the world. States described the pain of shortages, inflation, the impact of refugees, as far as South America and Africa, concerns about the safety of nuclear plants and fears of a nuclear attack. Member States also highlighted the dangers of misinformation and propaganda. Yet, be it the largest and the most acute, the war in Ukraine is just one of nearly 30 armed conflicts worldwide, and none of them are improving.

The third message is that climate change is gradually destroying us. We heard about countries simultaneously experiencing droughts and flooding. We spoke about unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, eating up the fish and filling our waters with plastics, even as the waves of rising seas drown shorelines. We heard calls to achieve global net zero and appeals to assist the countries most affected by climate change — a situation not of their own making. We clearly heard the calls for climate justice and the honouring of commitments. Yet some of us still do not seem convinced that growing our

economies can be balanced with limiting emissions and preserving biodiversity.

The fourth message we heard this week was a call for the improvement of the state of human rights and to meet the needs of those most vulnerable to exploitation. There is a cost to speaking out about human rights violations, but the freedom of speaking out is strongly supported. We heard echoes of this in the high-level event on minorities marking 30 years since a historic declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Members affirmed that diversity is a strength, not a liability. Members affirmed this.

The fifth key issue, for which there is strong support, is the need to modernize the United Nations, revitalize the General Assembly and reform the Security Council. That is in line with my own conviction that the General Assembly should be ready to respond better to the interlocking crises and that the Security Council must reflect the realities of this century.

We have spent the past six days analysing the crises that surround us. My friends, we are all in agreement on the main challenges. We want a peaceful post-coronavirus disease world with increased trust, in which we can work together to mitigate and adapt to climate change. I believe that my vision statement for solutions through solidarity, sustainability and science may help us. I heard Member States’ support offered for this work, and I thank them for that.

To make progress during the entire session ahead of us, we need to build on what unites us. We also may wish to seek out how to focus on the most burning challenges and frame them in terms of crisis management and transformation. In order to deepen solidarity, we must build trust. Following this week, I plan to launch a series of consultations with many actors, including the scientific community. The aim is to strengthen universally accepted and owned foundations for action. We are also looking ahead to further preparations for the United Nations Water Conference, the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

I hope to meet with delegations throughout this session, to continue hearing their ideas and their concrete proposals on how to meet the many challenges the Assembly faces. When I addressed Member States a week ago (see A/77/PV.4), I said that things get

better when we make them better. Things go wrong when we fail to seize the opportunities before us. Our opportunity is here and now. Let us act.

Before I conclude, I want to express my thanks to everybody who made the high-level week a success. I am grateful to our host country, the United States, as well as the City of New York, the New York Police Department and all the other departments of New York City, for their seamless logistical and security support over the past few weeks. I thank New Yorkers. I hope that they see this year's traffic jams as a sign that after years of pandemic, the nations of the world are eager to come together again and address the most burning issues — together. I want to express my deepest appreciation to our colleagues in the Secretariat. I thank the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management; the Department of Operational Support; the Department of Safety and Security; and the Department of Global Communications. I thank the army of protocol officers, interpreters, conference staff, technicians and security guards, who are essential to the smooth conduct of the general debate, and my own team. It was a baptism of fire, and I am very proud of them. I also want to express my gratitude to the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for their dedication, time and efficiency. I also thank all participants for their kind understanding and support.

The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. I would like to remind members that statements in the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): I take the floor in response to the distortions, misrepresentations and allegations voiced by the representative of Azerbaijan during the general debate last Saturday (see A/77/PV.13). The statement of Azerbaijan, containing a number of fabricated legal, historical and political narratives and blatant disinformation was yet another attempt to distract the attention of the international community from the continued policy of the use of force and threat of force to achieve its expansionist goals in our region.

The latest military offensive unleashed by Azerbaijan earlier this month targeted the eastern and south-eastern regions of Armenia, causing more than 200 deaths, including among the civilian population. At least 20 servicemen were captured, and approximately

8,000 people, mostly women, children and the elderly, are temporarily displaced. In flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law, Azerbaijan has captured, tortured and killed a number of Armenian service personnel, among them several women, who were exposed to the most despicable barbarities, including sexual assault, violent murders and mutilations. The atrocities have been video-recorded, cheered and extensively celebrated in social networks in Azerbaijan. The massive amount of disturbing evidence pointing to the criminal conduct by the Azeri military is undeniable. It is ever more imperative that all acts of atrocities be fully investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

Against the backdrop of the brutal, senseless and completely unjustifiable violence unleashed against Armenia and the Armenian people, hearing Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister flatly misstate, from the General Assembly's rostrum, that his country "took adequate measures to neutralize the threat against its sovereignty" and that "the armed forces of Azerbaijan demonstrated the utmost restraint and professionalism" is nothing short of ludicrous. For all the talk about provocations, threats or any other pretext that country has been trying to fabricate to justify the unjustifiable, the fact remains that there has been no actual armed attack by Armenia against Azerbaijan.

At the emergency meeting of the Security Council convened on 15 September upon Armenia's formal request (see S/PV.9132), we heard the calls of Council members, who have been loud and clear: the strikes inside the territory of Armenia are unacceptable; all military forces must urgently return to their initial positions; and a complete ceasefire must be unconditionally observed and respected. The Council members were unanimous in their appeals: there can be no military or violent solution to the conflict. Twelve days after the Security Council meeting, Azerbaijan has yet to heed the appeals of Council members. The Azeri troops remain inside the territory of Armenia, the prisoners of war are still in captivity, and military build-up continues on Armenia's frontiers. We note with the utmost concern that Azerbaijan's latest attacks have only come to demonstrate that, in the absence of proper accountability measures, policies of aggression are likely to continue and increase. That must be stopped and condemned at all levels.

We heard the Minister of Azerbaijan say that the conflict-resolution efforts under the auspices of the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe yielded no results. While we understand that blaming the mediation format has been and continues to be the convenient modus operandi for Azerbaijan, the truth is that, for many years, Azerbaijan has been consistently rejecting proposals for diplomatic settlement, in blatant disregard of its pre-eminent obligation to strictly adhere to the principles of the non-use of force or threat of force and the pacific settlement of disputes, as prescribed by the United Nations Charter. Instead, it sought to push for a deceptive, victim-blaming narrative as a purported justification for its long-standing objective to resolve the conflict by force and not through peaceful means. It is precisely for that reason that Azerbaijan has been so vehemently opposing any idea leading to the creation of internationally monitored verification mechanisms to identify ceasefire violations. Such measures, if established, would be instrumental to ending the blame game and to ending the shooting and killing of people on both sides.

The claims that Azerbaijan resolved the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by force and the attempts to erase the very name of this Armenian-populated land are a demonstration of something that attests to a profound crisis — a crisis of reason, intellect and humanity — that reveals, instead, nothing short of a policy of ethnic cleansing and clear genocidal intent. I am compelled to recall that it was precisely as a result of such a policy and that type of intent that the conflict erupted in the first place — when the peaceful human rights aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh were met with mass violence and pogroms of the Armenian population in Sumgait in February 1988 and in Baku, Kirovabad and other cities in the early 1990s. Hundreds of Armenians living in Azerbaijan were killed, tortured and maimed, and hundreds of thousands were deported. It is indeed deeply disturbing that, 30 years on, the extermination of the Armenians and the shedding of Armenian blood continues to remain the easiest and fastest way of achieving popular support in the neighbouring country.

We heard the Azerbaijani Minister say that Azerbaijan is resolute in its intention to re-integrate its citizens of Armenian origin residing in conflict-affected territories into its political, social and economic space, guaranteeing them the same rights and freedoms as all the citizens of Azerbaijan. We are well aware of the way in which rights and freedoms are guaranteed in Azerbaijan, whose human rights record is well known

to the world. Let us recall a few rankings related to democracy and human rights in the neighbouring country. According to the World Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders, Azerbaijan is ranked 154th and qualifies as a country in which the entire media sector is under official control. Freedom House qualifies Azerbaijan as “not free” in its global freedom report and its Freedom on the Net report. It is needless to recall the high-level corruption practice in Azerbaijan that has been periodically reported by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project as part of the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium.

We have heard the Minister of Azerbaijan speak in favour of the dispatchment of a UNESCO mission while his country continues to deny UNESCO access to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, in yet another manifestation of the intent to destroy the evidence of the Armenian civilizational presence in the region and in direct violation of the International Court of Justice order on provisional measures. This policy follows Azerbaijan’s well-known pattern of committing cultural genocide, similar to the one perpetrated in the period from 1997 to 2006, when thousands of Christian Armenian monuments were intentionally destroyed and razed to the ground in Nakhijevan.

Azerbaijan has yet to abide by its international humanitarian obligations vis-à-vis the Armenian prisoners of war. Neither has it addressed anti-Armenian rhetoric, including at the level of its public officials and institutions, or committed, in good faith, to preserve the Armenian cultural and religious heritage, in compliance with the decisions of the International Court of Justice through the provisional measures issued against Azerbaijan in December 2021 under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Minister of Azerbaijan accused Armenia of “massive contamination by landmines and continued refusal to provide accurate and complete information on mined areas”. We have heard Azerbaijan’s assertions before, very often used as a pretext to justify armed aggression against our country. We have also seen that such assertions, bereft of actual evidence as they are, have little value in the court of law.

As Armenia explained at the International Court of Justice while addressing a similar accusation last year, for decades Armenia strived to complete a comprehensive demining process. However, Azerbaijan

persistently blocked all such humanitarian efforts. Armenia had a long record of working with the OSCE on demining-related activities, including through the OSCE office in Yerevan. Yet it was Azerbaijan that forced the OSCE in 2016 to terminate those demining-related efforts. Moreover, Azerbaijan, through procedural manipulations, refused to —

The President: May I ask you to wrap up? The 10 minutes of intervention time are over.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): Yes, I am wrapping up, thank you.

Armenia will continue to appeal to the United Nations and its respective bodies, as well as to relevant international actors, to live up to their responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security; resolutely condemn Azerbaijan's criminal attacks against the territorial integrity of Armenia and its people; call for the unconditional withdrawal of troops from the territories of Armenia and the immediate repatriation of all prisoners of war and other detained persons; and uphold the norms of international law and the values of peace and humankind.

Mr. Holovka (Serbia): My delegation takes the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to the statement made by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, His Excellency Mr. Edi Rama, during the general debate last Saturday (see A/77/PV.12).

While fully agreeing, supporting and being in accord with the focus placed on building the future of the Balkans together, particularly through the Open Balkan initiative, we find it regrettable that the Prime Minister of our neighbour Albania once again called for recognition of the unilaterally declared so-called Republic of Kosovo by all countries that have not yet done so, including “first and foremost Serbia”.

We find that call cynical, disturbing and counterproductive to the ongoing dialogue and the process of negotiations. But most of all, we find it contrary from the standpoint of recognized norms of international law. In that vein, let me state that, according to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), Kosovo is an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia. Therefore, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia, including the territory of the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, are in no way in dispute.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

With regard to the ongoing dialogue process between Belgrade and Pristina, the position of Serbia is very clear. We fully support attempts to resolve all pending issues and call upon the authorities in Pristina to invest similar efforts and cooperate fully in the best interests of peace and stability in the region for the benefit of all.

Mrs. Kasymalieva (Kyrgyzstan): My delegation takes the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to the statement made by the delegation of Tajikistan on Saturday, 24 September (see A/77/PV.12), in which he presented his own version of the conflict at the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. It is clear that he presented everything in a way that was beneficial for Tajikistan. Predictably, Tajikistan did not admit its guilt for the armed aggression against our country and shifted all the blame onto us.

The conflict that occurred from 14 to 17 September was a pre-planned military aggression by Tajikistan against Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan violated basic international principles, such as territorial integrity, the inviolability of frontiers, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use or threat of force, and respect for the human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other international documents.

As a result of the unprovoked and unjustified aggression of Tajikistan, including the use of armed forces and heavy military equipment, 62 Kyrgyz citizens were killed and about 200 people were injured, including 13 children, 14 women and 171 men. Another 140,000 people were evacuated from their permanent homes and forced to become internally displaced people.

In that regard, we consider the groundless accusations of Tajikistan against Kyrgyzstan as an attempt to shift the responsibility and guilt onto Kyrgyzstan. The Tajik side has launched a campaign of misinformation and disinformation in the international community in order to discredit the defensive actions of my country.

Kyrgyzstan has all the evidence, photos and video records from the beginning of the aggression, showing the crimes of the Tajik soldiers perpetrated on the territory of my country. Everyone here can easily find those photos and videos on open sources. The information that our country has arbitrarily

seized land that belongs to Tajikistan is also part of a campaign of unleashing disinformation on the part of our neighbouring country.

Unlike our neighbours, we have never had the gall to seize foreign territories, while never giving a square centimetre of our land to anyone. It is very alarming that, despite the large number of people killed, wounded and evacuated, our neighbours are making populist statements.

At the same time, the representative of Tajikistan mentioned that Kyrgyzstan is hiding its troops and military equipment in populated areas. That information only has the goal of misleading. In that regard, the responsibility for any further tensions at the border will lie exclusively with Tajikistan. Despite the second act of aggression by Tajikistan, my country is convinced that all border and internal issues should be resolved at the negotiating table and is willing and ready to take part in that.

Mr. Bae (Republic of Korea): My delegation takes the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea today with regard to the security situation on the Korean peninsula.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country in the world to have conducted a nuclear test in the twenty-first century, and it is now on the verge of what would be its seventh nuclear test. Moreover, it has conducted launches of 32 ballistic missiles this year alone, including the recent launch of a number of short-range ballistic missiles on 25 September, each of which violated multiple Security Council resolutions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is obligated, under relevant Security Council resolutions, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes are not only unlawful but also pose a serious threat to peace and stability in the region and beyond. So any attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justify its position and potential use of nuclear weapons, including its adoption on 8 September of a new nuclear forces law, will not be recognized by the international community under any circumstances. The Republic of Korea-United States of America combined defence and deterrence posture, including joint exercises, is in response to such military threats from the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea. Those defensive measures are the minimum duty of a responsible Government.

We cannot agree that compliance with Security Council resolutions is a matter of choice. It is a legal obligation. We cannot agree that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of nuclear weapons and missiles is inevitable. It is a choice that cannot be justified. We want to take this opportunity to strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, cease all of its provocations and return to the denuclearization talks.

Ms. Moutchou (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is exercising its right of reply in response to the statement made this morning by the delegation of Algeria. Algeria is once again using the podium of the General Assembly to convey untruths about Moroccan Sahara. My delegation would like to remind the Assembly of the following historical, political and legal facts.

First, the question of Moroccan Sahara is one of recovering the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco and not of decolonization.

Secondly, Morocco recovered its Saharan territory in 1975 through negotiation, in a peaceful manner and in accordance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Thirdly, the Kingdom irrevocably recovered its sovereignty over its southern provinces through the signing of the Madrid Agreement on 14 November 1975, which was deposited with the Secretary-General on 18 November 1975 and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 3458 (XXX) (B) of 10 December 1975.

Fourthly, the question of Moroccan Sahara is on the agenda of the Security Council, under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter on the peaceful settlement of disputes, and as a regional dispute rather than as a question of decolonization. I want to reaffirm here loudly and clearly that our Sahara has always been Moroccan, is still Moroccan and will remain so eternally. The Sahara is seeing unequalled development thanks to the new development model launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, and the people of Moroccan Sahara are living in peace and stability and in full enjoyment of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

Fifthly, the Security Council is the only body responsible for consideration of the question of Moroccan Sahara. It has established once and for all the parameters for the political solution that should lead to the definitive settlement of this regional dispute over Moroccan Sahara. Those parameters are clearly outlined in the 18 consecutive Security Council resolutions adopted since 2007, including Security Council resolution 2602 (2021) adopted on 29 October 2021, as follows.

First is the pre-eminence of the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative, which is the only serious, credible solution to this regional dispute in the context of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Secondly, the settlement of this dispute can only be political in nature, realistic, pragmatic, lasting and based on compromise, which is embodied in the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative.

Thirdly, the round-table process is the only framework that has been put in place by the Security Council to continue the political process. The round tables are clearly affirmed and reaffirmed in all resolutions of the Security Council since they were established in 2018 by former President Horst Köhler, the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General.

Fourthly, the Security Council resolutions define the four participants in the round-table process, which are Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and the Frente POLISARIO. The phantom entity cited in the Algerian delegation's statement this morning is not recognized by the United Nations and is in no way a party to this process. The round-table process should continue with the same participants in the same format until its conclusion, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2602 (2021).

In its statement this morning, the Algerian delegation called on the United Nations and the Personal Envoy to resume the United Nations process. In that regard, Morocco in turn calls on Algeria to resume its place at the round table as it did during the two previous meetings. The round-table process emanates from the Security Council, and therefore neither its format nor its participants can be modified based on circumstance or on what suits certain parties. Morocco would like to recall that the political process is taking place under the exclusive auspices of the Secretary-General and with

the facilitation of his Personal Envoy, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have requested the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to unfounded allegations and fabrications made against the Islamic Republic of Iran during the general debate on Saturday, 24 September by the representative of the Republic of Albania (see A/77/PV.12). The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects such fictitious accusations, which are unfounded and based solely on false and erroneous assumptions. As asserted in our letter dated 10 September 2022 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, published as document S/2022/685, Iran has categorically rejected any kind of attribution for the alleged cyberattack on Albania's infrastructure. The Islamic Republic of Iran has long been a primary target and victim of infrastructure cyberattacks, which in some cases have disrupted the delivery of public services and governmental functions. The Islamic Republic of Iran once again emphasizes its consistent position that cyberspace and the information and communications technology environment must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that States must act cooperatively and in full compliance with the applicable international law.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the illegal actions carried out on 8 September by Albanian police forces against Iran's diplomatic premises in Tirana, where they used force to enter Iran's diplomatic mission without Iran's consent. Such unlawful acts, committed following the unilateral termination of bilateral diplomatic relations by the Albanian Government on 7 September, are a flagrant violation of international law and specifically the principle of the inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises. We would like to remind the Assembly of Albania's international obligation under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, which requires all States to take all appropriate steps to protect diplomatic and consular premises from any intrusion or damage, and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of these missions or impairment of their dignity, as well as any attack on diplomatic premises, agents or consular offices.

While I have the floor, I would also like to refer to the statement by the representative of the United Arab Emirates during the general debate on Saturday, 24 September (see A/77/PV.13), when Iran's territorial

integrity was once again insulted by the repetition of baseless claims about the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. We regard such irresponsible statements and unfounded claims as interference in Iran's internal affairs, which violates fundamental principles of international law, including the principles of good neighbourliness and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States. We strongly reject them. The three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf have been and continue to be an integral part of Iranian territory, and Iran reiterates its sovereignty over them. Any claims to the contrary are therefore categorically rejected. Any decisions and measures taken regarding those islands by Iranian officials have always been based on the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has always pursued a policy of friendship and good neighbourliness towards all its neighbours and would like to express its continued determination to strengthen bilateral relations with the United Arab Emirates. Meanwhile, I would like to re-emphasize that the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its sovereignty over the islands under discussion are not negotiable.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to refer to the unwarranted and unreasonable references that have been made to Iran, as well as to the tragic death of an Iranian woman, in the statements of certain countries during the general debate. While a thorough investigation is under way to determine the circumstances that led to that tragic death, and preliminary findings based on video footage show no evidence of police misconduct, we regret that unsubstantiated and false claims accusing the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have found a way into the public speech of certain countries. We urge Member States to uphold and respect international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other sovereign States.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): The delegation of Armenia has once again attempted to advance false narratives while simultaneously ignoring and denying their country's own decades of violations of international law and apparently disregarding the ongoing diplomatic efforts to normalize the relations between our States. Armenia's hackneyed fabrications, distortions and deceptions are part of its disinformation

campaign directed at the international community as a whole. Indeed, it would be unrealistic to expect any other kind of rhetoric from Armenia, whose leaders, without any remorse, invented the outrageous concept of the ethnic incompatibility of Armenians and Azerbaijanis, unleashed aggression against my country and ordered the killing of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians, the total ethnic cleansing of the territories seized, the destruction of hundreds of cities, towns and villages and the desecration of numerous cultural heritage sites. In similar vein, what can be the weight of Armenia's statements in the United Nations, whose resolutions it has simply refused to implement?

Immediately after the end of the conflict in November 2020, it was Azerbaijan that initiated the process of normalizing inter-State relations with Armenia and pushed for concrete results on three specific tracks forming the agenda of bilateral discussions. They were the delimitation and demarcation of the State borders, the speedy conclusion of a peace treaty based on five basic principles and the opening of transport communications in the region, as provided for in the trilateral statements of 2020 and 2021. However, during this period, despite the strong support from the international community for this initiative and the efforts made to move the normalization agenda forward, Armenia has done everything possible, in words and deeds, to obstruct the process and backtrack from the implementation of the agreements reached. The revanchist objectives behind its destructive position are evident, and the danger associated with its position was manifested in a serious border escalation that Armenia recklessly provoked earlier this month. That escalation was not an isolated episode but another link in a chain of destabilizing actions by Armenia in the past month. Azerbaijan took adequate and proportionate countermeasures to neutralize the threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity and ensure the safety of its military personnel and civilians. These measures were limited and targeted at legitimate military objects.

In the past, we have repeatedly witnessed Armenia's attempts to portray its own thoughts, perceptions and phraseology as allegedly reflecting the position of the international community. The comments by Armenia about the Security Council's meeting on 15 September (see S/PV.9132) are yet another product of that country's factory of falsifications. In short, the Security Council did not say what Armenian officials are trying to put into its mouth. Appeals by Armenia to international

law are equally fallacious, since it continues to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Thus Armenia's territorial claims are set in its national legislation. Furthermore, Armenia refuses to fully withdraw the remnants of its armed forces and illegal armed bands from the territory of Azerbaijan and return to Azerbaijan eight enclave border villages, which have remained under its occupation since the early 1990s.

The fact that Armenia has yet to comply with its international obligations and genuinely engage in efforts to consolidate peace and stability in the region is also evidenced by its continued use of old or fake names for places in Azerbaijan. Its references to such names, which have no historical or legal grounds whatsoever, are testament to Armenia's apparent disregard for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. It is precisely in order to sustain and advance its territorial claims and revanchist objectives that Armenia stubbornly asserts that the so-called Nagorno Karabakh conflict has not been resolved and that there is a need for its comprehensive settlement. Armenia had 30 years to put an end to its aggression and occupation through negotiations. However, in its hopes for endless impunity, Armenia preferred to direct all its efforts at colonizing and annexing the occupied Azerbaijani territories under the cover of the peace process and the ceasefire, in blatant violation of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council. The policy of Armenia failed once and for all, and there is no return to the past, nor will there be. I should emphasize that Armenia has no legal, political or moral grounds for making any statements concerning the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan or matters falling within my country's exclusive sovereign rights, competence and responsibilities.

Armenia's allegations that Azerbaijan is impeding access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and UNESCO to the formerly occupied territories are false. That is actually what Armenia itself is trying to achieve by politicizing the issue and interfering in the functions of international organizations, while passing over in silence the blocking of their visits to these territories when they were under its occupation. Azerbaijan has hosted and continues to welcome site visits from international organizations that are conducted independently and impartially. We are fully committed to transparency to allow the international community to bear witness, for the first time in 30

years, to what has happened in the territories formerly occupied by Armenia.

Furthermore, we resolutely reject Armenia's allegations about so-called anti-Armenian hatred. Their purpose is evidently to distract attention from its own long-standing, deeply rooted and structurally racist policy. Even after the end of the conflict, Armenia continues to allow racist hate groups — formed for the specific purpose of inciting and committing violence against Azerbaijanis — to operate openly and notoriously on its territory, in violation of international law and in apparent disregard for the order on provisional measures adopted by the International Court of Justice on 7 December 2021 in the case on the *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Azerbaijan v. Armenia)*.

Another false assertion is that Azerbaijan is holding Armenian prisoners of war. Azerbaijan returned all detainees to Armenia under the terms of the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020. While putting itself forward as a proponent of human rights and democracy, Armenia continues without any hesitation to deny its responsibility for numerous war crimes committed by its forces, agents, officials and other persons under its direction and control and refuses to prosecute and punish the perpetrators or to offer appropriate remedies or redress for its breaches. It is outrageous that a country in which international terrorists and war criminals are national heroes considers itself democratic.

Instead of attempting to distort reality, mislead the international community, misinterpret international documents and incite enmity and hatred, Armenia must first and foremost abandon hostile narratives, cease and desist from disseminating, promoting or sponsoring hate propaganda, prosecute and punish the numerous war crimes for which it is responsible, redress the harm caused to Azerbaijan and its people, commit to the normalization of inter-State relations based on international law, comply faithfully with international obligations and support efforts to build, strengthen and sustain peace and stability in the region.

Mrs. Breshanaj (Albania): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to what we just heard from the delegations of Serbia and Iran. Our vision for the Western Balkans has been clearly outlined repeatedly here and elsewhere, as Prime Minister Rama did in this Hall just a few days ago (see A/77/PV.12). We

do not see any future other than one based on mutual understanding and close cooperation as sovereign nations, and above all as close partners.

That is true for Albania, and we want to believe it is the same for every other country in the Western Balkans, including Kosovo. We will not be able to achieve much in division. No one has. We know how much we can do jointly through common action and for our shared benefit. That is what we want, and that is what we are looking for and working towards.

With regard to the statement just made by the representative of Iran, it must be hard to find words to excuse the inexcusable and justify the unjustifiable. Iran was caught red-handed in the blatant and unprovoked act of trying to damage core Government infrastructure by disrupting public services in Albania, creating chaos and fomenting tension. It is certainly not the first time that Iran has been engaged in such unlawful activity, but it is the most flagrant one. Despite the damage inflicted, those attempts failed, and will fail in the future. We all need to stand firm against such unlawfulness. Yesterday it was Albania; tomorrow it will be another country. We should condemn such rogue behaviour.

Let me end by reaffirming the remarks made earlier and those made a few days ago by the Prime Minister of Albania.

Mr. Azzam (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to the statement in exercise of the right of reply made by the representative of Islamic Republic of Iran.

The United Arab Emirates stresses that our three islands — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa in the Arabian Gulf — are an integral part of the territories of the United Arab Emirates. We categorically reject the ongoing Iranian occupation of those three Emirati islands.

My country has made repeated calls for a peaceful solution to that dispute. However, Iran refuses to respond to our calls. Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its call to Iran to uphold international law and the Charter of the United Nations in order to find a peaceful settlement to the issue of the three occupied Emirati islands through direct negotiations or by way of the International Court of Justice.

We are currently engaged in working with Iran to build bridges of rapprochement, promote our bilateral relations and optimize the mutual interests of the two countries. Therefore, we hope that we will be able to settle the dispute concerning the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates vis-à-vis the three islands in the context of international law, good-neighbourliness and good intentions.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to the provocative statement made by the representative of South Korea.

First of all, we totally reject the baseless and provocative statement made by the delegation of South Korea. In his statement at the general debate this morning, my peer clearly articulated the rationale behind the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to bolster its national defence capabilities.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now increasing its national defence capabilities due to the persistent pursuit by the United States of a hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was compelled to acquire nuclear defence capabilities in the face of the increasingly hostile policy of the United States against my country.

We would like to emphasize that we are not dealing with South Korea in terms of the Korean peninsula situation. We already made it clear to South Korea that we do not want to deal with them. South Korea is now at the forefront of the hostility of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, the adoption of the nuclear force policy law is utterly a sovereign decision of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Nobody has the right to dispute such a sovereign right and decision.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to call on the international community to pay closer attention to the hostility of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the Korean peninsula, which has plunged the Korean situation into a vicious cycle of tension. We would also like to urge South Korea and the hostile forces of the United States to pay attention to their own provocative behaviour and to act in a very coherent manner.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply for a second time in

response to the statement made by the representative of Azerbaijan. We just heard another outburst of propaganda and distortions from the representative of Azerbaijan in response to the clear-cut facts, which testifies first to the lack of arguments and secondly to the unwillingness of Azerbaijan to refrain from the use of force and engage constructively in dialogue.

In view of the time limitations and bearing in mind that earlier today (see A/77/PV.13) the Permanent Representative of Armenia comprehensively addressed all the distortions voiced by the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan and repeated again here by his representative, I will confine myself to the following points only.

Azerbaijan is responsible for the recent aggression. The massive concentration of troops of Azerbaijan and the intensity of the use of a wide range of heavy weapons, including artillery, multiple-rocket launch systems and unmanned combat aerial vehicles, reveal the premeditated and well-prepared nature of the large-scale aggression of Azerbaijan against my country. The cities of Goris, Kapan, Jermuk, Vardenis and other densely populated areas deep in the territory of Armenia came under heavy fire. That concerns the distortions with regard to the proportionality of the use of force by Azerbaijan.

The Permanent Representative of Armenia referred to the heavy toll of that unprovoked aggression on Armenian servicemen and the civilian population. The Security Council was vocal in its rejection of the use of force, its demands for the conflict to be resolved, its concerns about the shelling inside the territory of Armenia and its demands for forces to be withdrawn to their initial positions. I invite the representative of Azerbaijan to again look through the records of the Security Council.

The top leadership of Azerbaijan does not hide its aggressive expansionist plans. It publicly claims the sovereign territories of Armenia, the province of Syunik, Lake Sevan and even the capital city of Yerevan. That concerns the intentions of Azerbaijan with regard to the so-called normalization of relations.

The notorious historical narratives of false information voiced by State officials at the highest level deny the very existence of the Armenian people in their historic homeland. They deny the millenniums-old civilizational presence of Armenians in the region and their cultural and religious heritage. The representative of Azerbaijan just voiced their propaganda narrative

on the denial of the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh as well. They do that despite the clear-cut position of the international community, which is reflected in a number of international documents. The use of force can never produce results.

Regarding the so-called hatred in Armenia against Azerbaijan, the allegations by Azerbaijan are not reinforced by any international document. On the other hand, there is no shortage of well-documented evidence of the State-led policy of dehumanizing Armenians, which creates fertile ground for the commission of atrocity crimes. The reports of numerous international organizations, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and other organizations, clearly point to the systemic nature of racial profiling, the hateful rhetoric, the prevailing sense of impunity and the glorification of hate crime perpetrators in Azerbaijan.

I am obliged to refute the manipulations of the representative of Azerbaijan with regard to the orders of the International Court of Justice. Against the backdrop of continued State-led policies of anti-Armenian hatred in Azerbaijan, Armenia instituted proceedings before the Court under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. On 7 December 2021, the Court affirmed the well-founded nature of Armenia's request and unanimously ordered that Azerbaijan

“take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred and discrimination, including by its officials and public institutions, targeted at persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin”.

Instead of distorting the Court orders, we encourage Azerbaijan to fully comply with its obligations under them.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply for the second time in response to the statement in exercise of the right of reply made by the representative of the United Arab Emirates, which once again insulted Iran's territorial integrity by repeating a baseless with claim regard to Iran's three islands in the Persian Gulf. I would like to repeat that the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its sovereignty over those islands.

All decisions and measures taken concerning those islands by Iranian officials have always been on the basis of the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We have always rejected that falsehood and reiterated that those islands have been and continue to be part of Iranian territory. No claim, no matter how many times it is repeated, will be able in any way to dent or undermine our resolve to refute such claims. I would like to re-emphasize that the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its sovereignty over those islands are not negotiable. It is obvious that, based on historical facts established years before of the birth of the United Arab Emirates, those islands were Iranian, are Iranian and will remain Iranian.

Also, with regard to the statement made by the representative of Albania, I would like to repeat that the Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects any kind of attribution of alleged cyberattacks on Albanian infrastructure. That delegation will not be able to change the facts by repeating accusations against others.

We would like to highlight that, according to irrefutable information, Albanian police forces illegally and forcibly entered the Iranian diplomatic premises in Tirana without Iran's consent on 8 September. The video footage of that illegal action was published by the Government of Albania. Those measures were taken by Albanian security forces in flagrant violation of the international obligation of the Republic of Albania under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. We deplore those actions by the Albanian Government and would like to recall their responsibility in that regard.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): The representative of Armenia, instead of replying to the specific points in our statement made in exercise of the right of reply, as usual preferred to rely on the standard fabrications and distortions. Armenia's statements at the general debate are illustrative of its attempts to prevent and undermine dialogue and instead advance hostile narratives and disseminate falsehoods. No amount of lies, falsifications and misinterpretations can help Armenia avoid responsibility for the heinous crimes it has committed and the racist ideology and policies it has pursued and continues to implement to this day. While provocatively exploiting the sensitive domain of inter-ethnic relations and cultural heritage, Armenia remains silent about numerous facts that easily expose its insinuations and decades-long anti-Azerbaijani hatred.

The consistent pattern and scale of grave human rights abuses by Armenia against Azerbaijanis demonstrates the clear objective to expel, terrorize and kill them based on ethnic animus and to erase all traces of Azerbaijani heritage. The relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, have more than once expressed their serious concern about the spirit of intolerance prevailing in Armenia and the discriminatory policies and practices pursued in that country.

The post-conflict realities pave the way for Armenia to redress its misdeeds and release itself from mythology and enmity. Hopefully it will not miss that opportunity. Instead of wasting time and energy on lecturing others about the principles, values and norms that it has consistently opposed and violated, Armenia must realize that the goal of a peaceful developing and sustainable region cannot be achieved by endlessly replicating obsolete and false narratives, misinterpreting international law, and pursuing a policy of hatred, animosity and territorial claims.

Azerbaijan is firm in its determination to continue efforts to advance post-conflict peacebuilding, reconciliation, reintegration, peaceful coexistence and development in the region, as well as to ensure justice and prevent and eliminate by all legitimate means any threats to the safety and well-being of its people and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State.

Mr. Azzam (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply for the second time in response to the statement in exercise of the right of reply made by the representative of Iran. The islands Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa are Emirati islands in the Arabian Gulf. The conflict calls for Iran to settle it in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, deal constructively with my country's Government and engage in bilateral negotiations in good faith. Otherwise, we should resort to the International Court of Justice.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 117**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections****(e) Election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees****Note by the Secretary-General (A/77/260)**

The Acting President: I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/77/260, which contains a note by the Secretary-General in which he proposes to the Assembly that the term of office of Mr. Filippo Grandi of Italy as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees be extended

for a period of two and a half years, beginning on 1 July 2023 and ending on 31 December 2025.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to re-elect Mr. Filippo Grandi as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of two and a half years, beginning on 1 July 2023 and ending on 31 December 2025?

It was so decided (decision 77/402).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 117?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.