



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

7th plenary meeting
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New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Address by Ms. Katalin Novák, President of Hungary

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

Ms. Katalin Novák, President of Hungary, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Katalin Novák, President of Hungary, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Novák: “It has perhaps always been the case that the waging of peace is the hardest form of leadership of all. I know of no single formula for success, but over the years I have observed that some attributes of leadership are universal and are often about finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights, their enthusiasm and their inspiration to work together.” (A/64/PV.105, p. 3)

That is a quote from the address delivered by Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II to the General Assembly in 2010. Today, on the International Day of Peace, I stand here to urge the world’s leaders to be faithful to the legacy of Queen Elizabeth II so that we can live in peace.

I am particularly pleased and honoured to greet my fellow Hungarian, the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi. With his presidency, after 40 years Hungary is again serving as President of the

General Assembly for one year. It is a great honour for Hungary, especially in the current challenging situation. I wish you, Sir, every success in your work.

I stand before the Assembly today as the President of Hungary — the first woman President of my country, a wife and the mother of three children. As a President and as a mother, I feel responsible for preserving the environment for the generations to come, in which they can enjoy security and comfort.

Today, on the International Day of Peace, I stand before the General Assembly to reaffirm our commitment, under Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations,

“[t]o maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”.

Let us remind ourselves of the main reason that the United Nations was brought to life: peace. We peoples and leaders of the Western world often pretend that we have lived in an age of permanent peace and prosperity since the end of the Second World War. In many ways, that might be true — indeed, we live in a more peaceful and prosperous age than before. Let us not forget, though, the wars and armed conflicts raging in many

In accordance with decision 77/506, and without setting a precedent for future general debates and mandated high-level meetings planned for future high-level weeks, the official record of this plenary meeting of the General Assembly will be supplemented by an annex containing the pre-recorded statement by the Head of State of Ukraine, submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall



regions of the globe, which kill innocent people, tear apart families, destroy infrastructure and economies, turn well-kept agriculture fields into wasteland and add to the destruction of the world around us.

According to the Council on Foreign Relations' Global Conflict Tracker, there are currently 27 ongoing conflicts worldwide. The tracker categorizes conflict into three groups: "worsening," "unchanging" and "improving." Right now, not a single one of those conflicts is described as "improving". Globally, conflict and violence are on the rise, according to the United Nations, which has warned that peace is under greater threat around the world now than it has ever been since the Second World War. The number of wars and armed conflicts around the world has been rising steadily since then. The scholarly optimism that the decline in the number of casualties might lead to a process whereby armed conflicts become irrelevant was quickly overshadowed by recent developments in Europe and other parts of the world.

I come from Hungary, from the heart of Europe. Everyone would assume that, since the Second World War, peace has been a regional characteristic. Let us not forget that, just 11 years after the end of Second World War, Soviet tanks were rolling along the streets of Budapest. We had 45 years of communist dictatorship, and it did not take long after the peaceful change of regime in 1989 for war to break out in our immediate southern neighbourhood. The killing lasted for a decade.

Now, after hardly more than 20 years, war is once again raging on the European continent, in one of Hungary's neighbouring countries. It fills us with particular concern, especially because ethnic Hungarians living across the borders have also shed their blood. Russia's war against Ukraine is a constant threat and security risk, not only for the Ukrainian citizens living in the war zone but for all of us. The threat of escalation is a reason for worry and action.

Hungary firmly condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which has destroyed peace in Europe and caused dramatic human suffering and destruction, with serious repercussions for the world order. Since the beginning of the conflict, Hungarians have stood with the victims. We have provided economic, social and humanitarian aid to Ukraine and to the Ukrainian people fleeing the war. Hungary is currently implementing the largest humanitarian operation in

its recent history. Hungarian people, churches, civil organizations, local authorities and the Government have provided shelter to nearly 1 million refugees since the outbreak of the conflict.

We have learned that war is evil and leads nowhere. A war has only victims, and those with the greatest losses are families: mothers and fathers who lose their children on the battlefield; wives who lose their husbands in the fighting; and children who lose their brothers and sisters in the hell of war. It is in the strongest possible terms that we call for the investigation of war crimes committed against innocent civilians. Those crimes must be documented, investigated and prosecuted by the relevant international institutions. No crimes committed can go unpunished.

What do we want from the United Nations? To win the war? We should not stand for winning any war. We need to stand for the restoration of peace. If there is a will, there is a way.

Hungary is a member of several federal systems, including above all the United Nations, NATO, the European Union and the Council of Europe, among others. Those organizations were created by their founding fathers to pursue peace as their fundamental goal. I could say that they were created by the desire for peace, and I am convinced that the service of peace is the foundation of their identity.

Let me recall once again the words of the late Queen Elizabeth II,

"The aims and values which inspired the United Nations Charter endure: to promote international peace, security and justice; to relieve and remove the blight of hunger, poverty and disease; and to protect the rights and liberties of every citizen." (ibid., p.2)

Hungary urges fellow Member States to declare peace as the major priority in the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

It is by no means self-evident that today, at a time of war, energy and food crises, the organizations set up to avoid war and preserve peace are focusing on ideological indoctrination. That is not what is needed today. Instead, we must regain our ability to distinguish between the essential and the irrelevant; the important and the unimportant; reality and fiction. Most of us came to the Assembly from London. We attended the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II together and bowed

our heads before her coffin. We bid farewell to an exceptional monarch, whose life was steeped in service to peace. We owe it to the people and to her memory to make our decisions in the same spirit.

Let me conclude by quoting Winston Churchill, who said in 1953,

“Those who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace, and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war.”

Let us make a good peace.

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

Ms. Katalin Novák, President of Hungary, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire.

Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ouattara (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I wish you every success in fulfilling this great responsibility.

I would also like to sincerely congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, on his outstanding leadership and effective management of our work during the past session. During a challenging time, characterized in particular by the coronavirus disease pandemic, his commendable initiatives enabled us to maintain hope for a better future.

I would like to pay heartfelt tribute to Secretary-General António Guterres and assure him of my country’s full support for his tireless efforts to strengthen the role of the Organization in achieving

the goals we have set ourselves. We encourage the Secretary-General in every regard, including in the implementation of the relevant provisions contained in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

Côte d’Ivoire welcomes the major successes that the United Nations has achieved in many areas since its founding. In that context, my country would like to thank the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which declared the cessation of refugee status for Ivorian refugees on 30 June. I take this opportunity to commend the excellent cooperation between UNHCR and my country. Nevertheless, the multiple and complex challenges involving peace, security, democracy, the protection of human rights and the preservation of the environment remain matters of concern. I welcome the relevance of the theme of this session, which calls on us to consider solutions to overcome the challenges before us.

The exacerbation of geopolitical tensions and the emergence of new international conflicts are endangering international peace and security. The recent war in Ukraine has reminded us that peace is a perennial quest that we must pursue relentlessly. The confrontation, which poses the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, continues to undermine world peace and plunge humankind into multiple crises. It demonstrates to us once again the shortcomings of resorting to the military option in the resolution of conflicts. That is why Côte d’Ivoire, which has always advocated for peaceful coexistence and the use of dialogue in the search for solutions to disputes among nations, renews its call for the immediate and definitive cessation of hostilities in Ukraine.

The war has serious economic, financial and social consequences for African countries. Indeed, the rise in the price of oil and difficulties in supplying markets with cereals and fertilizers have led to widespread inflation, an increase in interest rates in international markets and a slowdown in world growth. For several African countries, the conflict has therefore resulted in difficulties in financing their economies, an increase in the price of basic commodities and even famine-like conditions, owing to their dependence on grain and fertilizer from Ukraine and Russia.

That situation has led the Ivorian Government to subsidize the cost of petroleum products and wheat and temporarily cap the price of several staple foods in order to support households, particularly those in

greatest need. I welcome the signing of the agreement in Istanbul on 22 July on the export of wheat from Ukraine, brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye.

However, we regret that only 17 per cent of the wheat exported from Ukraine since that date has been earmarked for African countries. Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire asks once again that priority be given to Africa in the implementation of the Istanbul agreement. We also call on the international financial institutions and Africa's development partners to urgently raise the necessary resources to support the most vulnerable countries so that they can deal with the multiple effects of the conflict in Ukraine.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are the tangible results of our collective efforts in the service of peace in countries affected by conflict. Côte d'Ivoire, which hosted one of the largest United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, fully appreciates the sacrifices made by troop-contributing countries to enable the restoration of peace and facilitate post-conflict reconstruction.

Based on the success of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and our faith in the values of the Charter of the United Nations, we have actively participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations, as I stated before the Security Council in December 2018 (see S/PV.8413). In that regard, I am pleased that Côte d'Ivoire participates in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. I commend the professionalism of the Ivorian contingents deployed in those peacekeeping operations.

I pay tribute to the memory of the Ivorian soldiers who died in the service of peace in the brotherly country of Mali, which requires the resolute commitment of all those at its side in its fight against armed terrorist groups. Unfortunately, in the context of the fight against terrorism, 46 Ivorian soldiers, who are part of the eighth rotation of the national support element within MINUSMA, have been unjustly detained there since 10 July. I once again call for their immediate release. My country encourages the Malian authorities to focus their efforts on combating terrorism and resolutely implementing the various stages of the transition timetable and the political and institutional reforms, in view of the presidential elections scheduled

for February 2024, for the sake of the welfare of the Malian people.

Terrorism continues to pose a major threat to international peace and security and to represent an immense challenge that no country has succeeded in overcoming alone. We therefore must strengthen our pooled resources to combat that scourge and demonstrate solidarity and determination.

In that regard, my country commends the decisive action taken by France and its European partners in the Sahel and reiterates its call for the greater involvement of the other major Powers in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea by supporting national armies, the Economic Community of West African States and the Accra initiative. In order to contribute to that collective effort, Côte d'Ivoire has opened to African countries the International Counter-Terrorism Academy, which is based in the coastal town of Jacqueville and provides training in all civilian and military sectors involved in the fight against terrorism.

The current session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when the energy crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine has tended to compromise the progress made in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, particularly as a consequence of some industrialized countries' return to the use of coal. Unfortunately, time is running out, and we must act quickly and implement all of the commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to meet the goal of maintaining global warming below 1.5°C. In order to meet that goal, developed countries must drastically reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions and uphold their commitment to contributing \$100 billion dollars a year to developing countries.

I am convinced that the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt, will provide a new opportunity to renew the political commitment of all stakeholders to contribute to financing the fight against global warming. I would like to point out once again that my country will uphold its commitments under the Paris Agreement and is committed to protecting its forest heritage and rich biodiversity.

That is the *raison d'être* of the Abidjan initiative—the Abidjan Legacy Programme—launched at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which

Côte d'Ivoire had the honour to host from 9 to 20 May. I was delighted by the exceptional commitment and financial support of development partners for the Abidjan initiative, which very quickly garnered the resources necessary for its implementation, in the amount of more than \$2.5 billion.

Today more than ever, humankind is at a turning point with regard to its future. The threats facing our countries compel us to show greater solidarity, collaboration, justice and equity — the principles that underpin the multilateralism to which my country remains committed. In the same spirit, Côte d'Ivoire calls for a thorough reform of the Security Council, in which Africa will be able to take its rightful place.

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

Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bio: Let me commend the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for his sustained efforts in returning the General Assembly to its pre-pandemic work pace and for his message of hope. Let me also extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Kőrösi, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. I am gratefully optimistic about your leadership in these unprecedented times. I also commend Secretary-General António Guterres for galvanizing the necessary multilateral support in search of solutions to meet the scale and urgency of current global challenges. His timely submission of his report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which

speaks to strengthening global governance with a focus on a future agenda driven by multilateral solidarity and collective action, is also commendable. As our world wrestles with an unprecedented and volatile economic outlook resulting from the lingering effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other crises, the theme of this session, “A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, is most appropriate and timely.

Our progress towards achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 has been complicated by the repurposing of global development and investment finance, disruptions in production and supply chains, growing food and energy insecurity, general slowdowns in the economies of nations and the perennial adverse effects of climate change. I call on the global family to be intentional and fair about developing innovative development financing products that are free from the stringent restrictions and high transaction costs associated with concessionary loans. Multilateral financial institutions can de-risk investments that are critical to sustainable development. Aid must also be aligned with domestic development priorities.

The adverse effects of climate change know no borders. Global warming, unpredictable weather patterns, rising sea levels and land degradation are taking a profound toll on global food and water security. There are associated governance and stability costs. We are informed that Africa faces disproportionate risks and costs from climate change. We must therefore be consistent in meeting our commitments to all existing international frameworks for addressing climate change. Beyond the usual declarations, we must collaborate on and coordinate mitigation efforts, improve infrastructure for early-warning systems, invest more in improving the management of water resources, promote disaster-risk management and enhance the conservation and protection of natural habitats. There are also opportunities, especially in Africa, and Sierra Leone in particular, for just energy and rural agricultural transitions.

Fair and accessible multilateral climate financing can catalyse the global and country-specific measures and innovation necessary to build and support sustainable climate resilience. Green investing can support sustainable development. In such efforts, the roles and interests of women and young people must be central to climate investments. Sierra Leone is fully

committed to concluding a treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Among other things, such a treaty must prioritize conservation measures, the fair and equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits, meaningful capacity development and the transfer of marine technology.

Human capital development is a critical driver of inclusive and sustainable economic development. Sierra Leone has increased domestic financing for education, provided teaching and learning materials and improved education policies and governance. More children and more girls, including pregnant girls, poorer and rural learners and learners with disabilities are now in school. But we can go beyond those access deficits. As co-Chair of the High-level Steering Committee on SDG 4 and a champion of the Transforming Education Summit, which just took place at the beginning of this seventy-seventh session of the Assembly, I urge for concerted global efforts to address the learning crisis. We can mobilize innovative financing models, underwrite universal access, especially for girls and learners with disabilities, promote technology in education, make greater investments in foundational literacy and numeracy, address water, sanitation, hygiene and other infrastructure deficits, support school feeding programmes, fund technical and vocational training and finance other needs across the full spectrum of the education sector. With close cooperation among States, we are confident that we can address the learning crisis in our time.

In order to address the global food crisis, which is disproportionately affecting the least developed countries, Sierra Leone joins the urgent call for action to escalate financing to support agriculture and irrigation and enhance food systems and nutrition for vulnerable populations and social protection for at-risk populations. Sierra Leone also associates itself with calls to ease global supply constraints, especially on fertilizers, rice and other agricultural commodities. Multilateral support for establishing agricultural development banks that will support private agricultural investments and agricultural added value chains will promote self-sufficiency and greater resilience in that sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that equity, multilateral cooperation and a comprehensive global response are what we need to address health emergencies that have a potential to undermine global peace, security and development. Sierra Leone affirms

its commitment to global efforts aimed at exploring innovative and effective ways to enhance health security and pandemic preparedness, build capacities to respond to health emergencies and enhance greater resilience in health-care delivery.

Sierra Leone believes that multilateral support is urgently needed to complement national efforts aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality, preventing epidemics, tackling tropical and communicable diseases, building health-care infrastructure and the capacity of health-care personnel and strengthening primary health care. Efforts to increase the domestic financing of health care should be supported with increased multilateral financing and enhanced cooperation.

Sierra Leone remains wholly committed to the global agenda that puts women and girls at the centre of inclusive and sustainable development. We believe that we cannot deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. We must therefore garner multilateral support to achieve and sustain gender equality and the empowerment of women in our lifetime.

Sexual violence is a grave threat to justice and the fundamental rights of men, women and children throughout the world. In every corner of the globe, survivors of sexual assault are inhibited in holding perpetrators accountable and accessing empowering health, legal and economic remedies. In Sierra Leone, we have taken extensive legislative and administrative actions to address sexual and gender-based violence since my declaration of rape as a national emergency in 2019.

Last year, before this Assembly, I announced that I had directed the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations to sponsor at the General Assembly a stand-alone draft resolution on access to justice for survivors of sexual violence (see A/76/PV.6). I called for global solidarity on the issue and for the United Nations to give all survivors of sexual violence the remedies that they deserve.

On 2 September, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the landmark resolution 76/304, entitled "International cooperation for access to justice, remedies and assistance for survivors of sexual violence". I thank the Assembly. The General Assembly therefore affirmed the sincere and shared belief of the global community that sexual violence is condemnable,

and that Member States must take effective action to address it, as well as to provide access to timely and unimpeded justice through national legislation for victims and survivors.

As the global community, we signalled our resolve to address that scourge. We must now do all that we can to implement access to justice and other remedies to ensure dignity for all survivors of sexual violence.

Small States make up the majority of the States Members of the United Nations, and they are the strongest advocates for the rules-based international system that underpins the work of the United Nations. Indeed, small States have served as key drafters, negotiators and thought leaders on a variety of international issues. They have diligently done that through transparency of purpose and coalition-building across the board.

In that connection, Sierra Leone proposes further pursuing such values in the Security Council. I count on the invaluable and resounding support of this organ for Sierra Leone's bid for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term from 2024 to 2025, with elections to be held in June 2023.

My Government reaffirms its commitment to the relevant provision of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as contained in resolution 1514 (XV). We join the call on all parties engaged in the dialogue on decolonization to continue to demonstrate good faith and a firm commitment to the conclusive and durable resolution of all sovereignty disputes.

As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on reform of the Security Council, I am pleased to note the commendable progress that has been achieved in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. We believe that the progress made during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly is underpinned by the Assembly's acknowledgement of the wider recognition and broader support by Member States for the legitimate aspiration of African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage.

As Africa continues to advocate and canvass support for the African Common Position, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, I urge Member States to continue to demonstrate their renewed commitment and political will to correct

the historical injustice done to Africa by supporting the reform of the Security Council so as to make it a more inclusive, democratic, transparent, accountable, legitimate and efficient global organ, which properly reflects and adequately addresses the geopolitical realities of our present and future world. Sierra Leone is committed to engaging constructively within the multilateral rules-based order of the United Nations. Only through global cooperation can we engender and implement transformative solutions to global challenges.

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

Mr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alar Karis, President of the Republic of Estonia

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

Mr. Alar Karis, President of the Republic of Estonia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alar Karis, President of the Republic of Estonia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Karis: It is my honour to be here today, although I wish that the circumstances surrounding my first address were different. A year ago, the Secretary-General presented his inspiring report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which outlines his vision for the next 25 years of global cooperation, and initiated discussions on how to reinvigorate multilateralism and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

I support the goals of the report, and yet it is a Herculean task because the world is torn apart. We are witnessing the constant brutal violation of the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations on every continent. The United Nations itself has become a battlefield, where some States try to convince the world that the common values to which we all are obliged to adhere do not exist.

The only standard that we must follow is the United Nations Charter — our unique common promise of peace for all nations, large and small, and a promise to

advance fundamental human rights and the equal rights of men and women. It is not a choice; it is a collective responsibility to ensure that peace, justice and human rights prevail.

On 24 February, the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, attacked democratic and peaceful sovereign Ukraine. Russia started a war of aggression with the goal of ending the sovereignty of its neighbour, overthrowing its legitimate Government, exterminating the Ukrainian nation and implementing its abusive order, steeped in imperialism, self-interest and dominance.

The Russian invasion, including the illegal occupation of Crimea and Russia's prior land grabs in Georgia and Moldova, demonstrate Russia's total disrespect for international law and the rules-based international order and are an assault on the United Nations Charter and every value and principle for which the United Nations stands.

That brutal and unjustified aggression is the most serious threat to global peace and security since the end of the Second World War and challenges the very foundation of the United Nations system, undermining the security of all members of the international community.

Some colleagues are hesitant to take sides regarding the Russian aggression. Some argue that the war is between Russia and Ukraine. I see the aggressor and the victim. Legally, as well as morally, there is only one right side to take. Standing in a grey zone encourages the aggressor, undermines this Organization and fuels human suffering.

In recent years, we have witnessed devastating human suffering in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen, Syria, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, to name just a few places. Russia's war of aggression makes finding solutions to those conflicts only more difficult, as it has increased food insecurity, adds pressure on the global humanitarian relief system and exacerbates the economic crisis.

I visited Ukraine two months after the invasion began. The site was horrific. I lack words to describe the brutality of that scene. The face of war is the same everywhere. Its cruelty will never leave the people who must live through it. Wars and conflicts bring only horror and misery to humankind.

As of 22 August, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded over 13,000 civilian casualties in Ukraine, with approximately 6,000 people killed and nearly 8,000 injured. The actual numbers are significantly higher. Each murder is further proof of the grave violations of international law by the aggressor.

We condemn in the strongest terms the war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights reported to the Security Council regarding credible allegations of forced transfers of unaccompanied children to Russian-occupied territory or to the Russian Federation (see S/PV.9126). We saw mass graves of tortured civilians. I wonder if we are living in the twenty-first century.

I want to pay tribute to the immeasurable resilience of the people of Ukraine. We grieve for the victims of Russia's aggression, and we stand with Ukraine in ensuring a future for its people and nation.

That brave nation is fighting for values set out in the United Nations Charter — the noble cause of freedom, democracy and human rights. In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, helping Ukraine to protect its right to exist is our collective obligation.

At the same time, it is disturbing that the Security Council, the organ that bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, has been paralysed and utterly unable to play its role.

Russia has abused its veto power to block the Security Council from adopting any resolutions regarding the grave violation of the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. The Security Council lies at the heart of the United Nations. It is shameful that, since 24 February, it has adopted only a presidential statement (S/PRST/2022/3) on Ukraine. How many devastating wars will it take to move forward the long-overdue Security Council reform?

I am grateful that, while the Security Council remains paralysed on the issue of Russia's aggression, the soul and the conscience of the United Nations, the General Assembly, has been active and decisive. I recall the overwhelming support for resolution ES-11/1, adopted on 2 March, which condemns Russia's aggression and urges Russia to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

We deplore the Russian Federation's failure to implement that resolution, as well as its failure to comply with the legally binding order of the International Court of Justice of 16 March, requiring Russia to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine.

Estonia has always been a strong proponent of curbing the absolute veto power, and even more so when it was used to cover up war crimes and crimes against humanity.

I am glad that the General Assembly adopted by consensus the landmark resolution 76/262, the so-called veto initiative, which provides the General Assembly an opportunity to step in when the Security Council is unable to act. The question remains: how can we accept that the aggressor has a veto power in the Security Council?

Conflicts and war bring about an enormous humanitarian crisis. Russia's aggression has led to an immense need for resources and aid. Nearly 18 million Ukrainians — 40 per cent of the country's population — are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The international support for Ukraine has been heart-warming.

The United Nations is busy helping Ukrainians who did not need our help before that aggression. To date, Estonia has sent more than €20 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine. We have seen unprecedented, massive support for Ukraine from the Estonian private sector, civil society and citizens. We continue to assist, and work on, the reconstruction of Ukraine; it needs to begin now. We call on others to join us in that.

Conflicts created the immense refugee crisis. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the total number of people worldwide who were forced to flee their homes due to conflicts and human rights violations was 89.3 million in 2021. The displacements were driven, for example, by the brutality of the Bashar Al-Assad regime, conflicts in the Tigray region and the Taliban's takeover of Kabul. In 2022, that number has already exceeded the milestone of 100 million. The increase is caused by Russia's war of aggression.

There are more than 7 million recorded Ukrainian refugees across Europe; another 7 million people were internally displaced. Estonia received nearly 55,000 refugees, which is 4 per cent of our country's population. We ensure social services and basic

education for refugees fleeing from war. Estonia created 1,000 additional places in various education programmes for Ukrainian refugee children by opening a new school — the Freedom School. One day, its students will be the leaders and rebuilders of Ukraine. Estonian education technology companies are donating their solutions to support Ukrainian schools and pupils whose education has been disrupted by war.

Why am I saying all this? I am saying it because our future depends on young people sitting in classrooms and on their education. We are made by history; we cannot let a lack of knowledge define our future. To avoid such brutality repeating itself we must raise awareness of the history of our nations. We need to evade confusion caused by active brainwashing and disinformation. We see how ignorance makes it easy for any aggressor to put forward its false narratives.

War, conflict and a lack of openness bring about extreme violations of human rights. It must be clear that basic human rights are universal, are the same for all United Nations Members and cannot be ignored by any Government. Special attention should be devoted to ensuring gender equality and the right to education. The opportunity to study should not be a wish or a dream in the twenty-first century.

Let me use this rostrum to praise the courageous women who are now at the forefront of the protest against the Taliban in Afghanistan to fight for their right to choose their own path and role in society. It is our profound duty to support their struggle. I call on the de facto leaders of Afghanistan to immediately stop harassing the Afghan female staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Respecting universal human rights is not a choice. Neither culture nor religion can be invoked to justify human rights violations.

In the same vein, we welcome the release of the assessment report on the human rights situation in Xinjiang by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The report underscores the serious human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang, which may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity. That is extremely alarming, and it requires urgent attention by the international community.

There remains little dispute over the existential crisis posed by climate change. We witnessed devastating flooding in Pakistan caused by erratic monsoon rains.

In solidarity with the people of Pakistan, Estonia is providing help to those who are severely affected. Russia's aggression also brings further pain to those already suffering from the impacts of the pandemic, conflicts, famine and climate change.

Let me be very clear: that aggression has brought about high inflation and global food and energy crises. The head of the World Food Programme has warned that Russia's aggression will lead to the worst food crisis since the Second World War. In physics and in life, the cause triggers a reaction. Russia's aggression triggered the global food and inflation crisis. We have witnessed Russia's occupying forces stealing Ukraine's grain supplies, burning down warehouses and destroying grain fields.

Market disruptions are not caused by sanctions. The global food and economic crises are being caused by the war that Russia started, and Russia can end all that by ending the war. Yet Russia has no intention of ending the war. Instead, the Russian regime decided to escalate it. We find its cynical nuclear threat totally unacceptable; it is a threat to the global community.

To alleviate the crisis, the European Union (EU) launched the EU-Ukraine solidarity lanes initiative, which has helped to export more than 6 million tonnes of predominantly agricultural goods from Ukraine. Estonia also welcomes the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which, brokered by the Secretary-General and the President of Türkiye, was signed in Istanbul on 22 July. We must keep up the international pressure on Russia to monitor Russia's adherence to the deal and its extension.

We are following with deep concern the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, one of the world's largest such plants. Russia has occupied the plant and turned it into a combat zone. The risk of a nuclear disaster is very real. The power plant should be demilitarized without delay and full control of the plant returned to Ukraine.

Moreover, it is essential to grant international experts ongoing and unfettered access to the facilities of the power plant. I regret that last month Russia also shamelessly blocked the consensus on the outcome document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Estonia has been vocal in addressing the issues of cybersecurity at the United Nations. We continue such efforts to elevate cybersecurity as an essential component of the United Nations international peace and security agenda. Russia has demonstrated how State-provided malicious cyber tools are used alongside conventional weapons. Russia's cyberattack against Ukraine's satellite communications on 23 February served to prepare and facilitate Russia's invasion on the ground.

It is our duty to ensure accountability and justice at all levels. Impunity breeds impunity and leads to new crimes being committed. It is of the utmost importance that there be independent and effective investigations into the atrocity crimes and crimes of aggression committed against Ukraine, as well as in Syria, Ethiopia and elsewhere. We must provide justice to victims and bring those responsible for atrocities and genocide to trial.

Estonia fully supports the investigation led by the International Criminal Court. We give the most serious consideration to the establishment of an independent special court for crimes of aggression and a compensation mechanism for the damage caused by the aggression. We support all initiatives that seek to ensure accountability.

In conclusion, the war in Ukraine affects us all. It is our common duty to push back the ugly manifestations of imperialism, colonialism and racism by Russia. Russia must understand that the path that it has taken is disastrous and that the war that it started cannot be won. If we stop caring and if we get tired and fall into indifference, the aggressors and criminals will only be empowered. That is not the world where we want to live nor the world that we want to leave to future generations.

The United Nations is, and remains, the cornerstone of our multilateral rules-based world order. Its relevance is being put to the test; we cannot fail. The United Nations must emerge from this watershed moment stronger, more united and more relevant than ever before.

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

Mr. Alar Karis, President of the Republic of Estonia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo,
President of the Republic of Ghana**

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

Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Akufo-Addo: I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to lead us through this seventy-seventh gathering of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I wish you the best of luck as you take on that onerous task at this most difficult period of the world.

As we would say in Ghana, our world is currently not in a good place. The World Bank observed last Thursday that the global economy was enduring its sharpest slowdown since 1970. Two years ago, our world came to a thundering halt, as we cowered from a health crisis triggered by a malicious unknown virus, leading to a devastating global economic pandemic. High budget deficits were no longer the concerns of developing nations alone. By 2021, coronavirus disease had pushed Africa into the worst recession in half a century. A slump in productivity and revenues, increased pressures on spending and spiralling public debt confronted us without relent.

As we grappled with these economic challenges, Russia's invasion of Ukraine burst upon us, aggravating an already difficult situation. It is not just the dismay that we feel at seeing such deliberate devastation of cities and towns in Europe in the year 2022; we are feeling this war directly in our lives in Africa. Every bullet, every bomb, every shell that hits a target in Ukraine, hits our pockets and our economies in Africa.

The economic turmoil is global, with inflation as the number one enemy this year. It hit a 40-year high in the United States and the United Kingdom in recent months. There is record inflation in the euro zone.

Several African countries have inflation rates surging three to four times higher than what they were just two years ago. In Ghana, we are experiencing the highest inflation in 21 years. The high cost of food is hurting the poor, especially the urban poor, the most.

Moreover, the spillover from central banks raising interest rates to combat inflation has been severe beyond borders, as global investors pull money out of developing economies to invest in bonds in the developed world. This has led to depreciating currencies and increased borrowing costs, meaning that we need to raise and spend more of our own currencies to service our foreign debts in United States dollars.

It has become clear, if ever there was any doubt, that the international financial structure is skewed significantly against developing and emerging economies such as Ghana's. The avenues that are opened to powerful nations to enable them to take measures that would ease pressures on their economies are closed to small nations. To make matters worse, credit-rating agencies have been quick to downgrade economies in Africa, making it harder to service our debts. The tag of Africa as an investment risk is little more than, in substance, a self-fulfilling prophecy created by the prejudice of the international money markets, which denies us access to cheaper borrowing, pushing us deeper into debt.

The financial markets have been set up and operate on rules designed for the benefit of rich and powerful nations, and, during times of crisis, the façade of international cooperation under which they purport to operate disappears. These are the savage lessons that we have had to take in, as the world emerged from the grip of the coronavirus to face energy and food price hikes and a worldwide rise in the cost of living. The necessity for reform of the system is compelling.

I am a modest student of history, yet I would say it is doubtful that any generation of inhabitants of this earth has ever witnessed such a perfect storm of global economic chaos, a war with global consequences and an unwillingness or inability to find a consensus to deal with the catastrophe. It is under such circumstances that we have gathered under the theme: "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges".

The problems we face are indeed many and vary in level of importance, depending on where one is in the global order of things. Just last year, the focus was on energy transition. This year, it is about energy

security, as Europe goes back to burning coal to replace Russian gas. Nevertheless, we do not have the luxury of being able to pick and choose which big problem to solve. None of them can wait. The economic turbulence requires urgent and immediate solution. The turmoil and insecurity in many parts of the world require urgent attention, and so does the need to tackle the problems posed by climate change. A watershed moment it is, indeed, and history will judge us harshly if we do not seize the opportunity to make the changes that will enable us to deal with the many problems we face.

A case in point is the destabilizing conflict in the Sahel. It might look to many today as a local conflict that affects only the countries in that region. We, in Ghana, know differently: we have watched in horror as the unrest has inexorably moved from the Sahel to the coastal countries of West Africa. All of Ghana's neighbours have suffered terrorist attacks, and some have lost territorial space to the invading forces. Furthermore, the terrorist pressure has provided a pretext for the unhappy reappearance of military rule in 3 of the 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 2 of which have borne the brunt of the terrorist outrages in the region — Mali and Burkina Faso. It is a development we are determined to reverse, so that the ECOWAS space remains a democratic one.

All of us in the region are being forced to spend huge amounts of money on security. We should be spending this money on educating our young people and giving them skills, and on building much-needed roads, bridges, hospitals and other such infrastructure. Instead, we are spending this money to fight terrorists or to keep them from destabilizing our countries. This is a global problem, deserving the attention of the world community, for a global solution.

I am contributing to this debate on a date that has special significance for us in Ghana. The date of 21 September is the one on which we mark the birth of our first President, Mr. Kwame Nkrumah. He would have been 113 years old today, and it is worth recalling on this day the driving force of his political career, which was to contribute to the birth of a united Africa, that is, a United States of Africa.

We recognize today, more than ever before, the importance of the strength in unity of Africa, and we are working to shed the image of a helpless, hapless continent. There is a renewed commitment towards

inclusive and sustainable industrialization and economic integration, and the intensity of the challenges we face today is only matched, as never before, by the immensity of the opportunity before us. We, the current leaders of Africa, should be determined not to waste the crisis with which we are confronted.

Incidentally, the year 2022 is billed as Africa's year to take action on food and nutrition development goals. We see the current geopolitical crisis as an opportunity to rely less on food imports from outside the continent and use our 60 per cent global share of arable lands better to increase food production. We have seen the devastating impact of relying on Russia and Ukraine for 70 per cent of our wheat consumption. We have enough land, enough water, enough gas and enough manpower to produce enough fertilizer, food and energy for ourselves and others.

But we also recognize that we cannot do it all by ourselves. Our message to the global investor community is therefore this: Africa is ready for business. Africa needs the global investor community, and that community needs Africa. It needs Africa because Africa is busily building the world's largest single market, with 1.3 billion people. Soon we will have a customs union, and we will also soon have a continental payment system that will accelerate and facilitate trade among ourselves. Already, goods and services are flowing more freely across our artificial borders. Africa must be seen for what it is: the new frontier for manufacturing, technology and food production.

That is why six years ago, I launched in Ghana the successful policy of "One District, One Factory", which is a policy that, with Government incentives, has directly seen, so far, some 125 factories being set up in various districts across the country, leveraging on each area's competitive advantage. That is why, six years ago, my Government embarked on an aggressive policy of planting for food and jobs, which has helped our farmers increase their yields many times over. Indeed, we are recognizing that many of the things we import can be found or produced in Ghana or in other African countries.

The African Continental Free Trade Area, whose secretariat is located in Accra, Ghana's capital, is driving intra-African trade and creating an unparalleled momentum for our continent's economic diversity and transformation. We know that industrialization is the way to go and, with the single market as the added

incentive, we have taken policy measures in Ghana to add value to our natural resources. For example, we are processing more of our cocoa and refining more of our gold, and we are determined to exploit the entire value chain of our huge lithium deposits. We are busily building an integrated bauxite and aluminium industry and an integrated iron and steel industry. We are also building new oil refineries and have, so far, attracted six of the world's largest automobile manufacturers to set up assembling plants in Ghana, prior to producing them in the country.

In line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Africa's ambition is, anchored in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, to transform our food systems over the next decade. What we require now is support from the investor community for the rolling out of Africa's lucrative agro-industry and for that community to see agribusiness in Africa as much more an opportunity than the perceived exaggerated risk, which has been the false but dominant narrative.

In conclusion, on 25 July 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/293, proclaiming 2016-2025 as the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization charged with the task of leading it in collaboration with a range of partners. I believe it is time for the United Nations to take proper stock of this initiative and ask a few searching questions, recognizing what could have been achieved with greater commitment and focus. Working together, we can get our world back into a better and happier place.

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

Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

**Address by Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves,
President of the Republic of Cabo Verde**

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cabo Verde.

Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Neves (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): The Republic of Cabo Verde encompasses the inhabitants of the 10 islands that make up the national territory, located in the mid-Atlantic, off the West African coast, and an immense diaspora, which is our eleventh island, scattered across the four corners of the world.

As President of the Republic and the highest representative of this global nation, I have the enormous privilege of extending my greetings to the entire General Assembly and, from this rostrum, to bring *mantenhas* — “greetings”, in the mother tongue of Cabo Verde — from Cabo Verdeans to the peoples of the world represented in this Hall by their highest dignitaries, expressing our best wishes for prosperity and happiness for all.

We look forward, with hope, to the Summit of the Future in 2023, as foreseen in the Secretary-General's proposal expressed in “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982), so that it may effectively help

“forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like, and what we can do today to secure it”.

With that in mind, Cabo Verde reiterates before the General Assembly its firm intention to continue being an active and useful member of the United Nations system, acting and articulating its action on four major fronts, from the more specific to broader: to fully assume its responsibility in the framework of national governance; to value its specificity and grow from its status as a small island developing State; to be a spokesperson in the context of the diversity of and the designs for Africa, the continent to which it belongs; and, ultimately, to continue to be a champion of multilateralism for the advancement of the causes of progress and well-being of humankind.

In their journey, small island development States (SIDS) face such structural limitations as geographical remoteness and isolation, their small economic

dimension and dependence on imports and high costs, on the one hand, and exports of sector-concentrated services, on the other, which more frequently and intensely expose them and make them vulnerable to the impact of external shocks, whether climate-related, economic or of other nature, such as pandemics and geopolitical conflicts. For example, my country, Cabo Verde, in the past 15 years — between 2007 and 2022 — has suffered the economic and social impact of multiple crises: the economic and financial crisis of 2007–2008, at the very moment when we graduated from the list of least developed countries; the coronavirus disease pandemic, which caused a recession of 14.6 per cent in 2020; the ongoing inflationary impact of world events; and, in the last five years, one of the most profound and most serious droughts in the recent history of the country.

But like other small island developing States, Cabo Verde has the ambition to become a small island developed State. In order to achieve that, Cabo Verde will have to progressively overcome its vulnerabilities and increase its resilience, and for this, it is imperative to be able to count on external solidarity in terms of sustainable financing and indebtedness, albeit always in a process and a logic of gradual reduction of the need for external support. Although this is not a new narrative, it is nevertheless urgent that it be implemented, since with fewer than eight years to go before the culmination of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all signs and indicators suggest that we are not moving at the desired pace for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by that date.

It is also pressing because less than two years before the fourth SIDS Conference, in 2024, it is certainly legitimate and expected that the Conference make a transformative decision on the best evaluation indicators and the policy modalities that will best support SIDS in meeting the goals of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway. Cabo Verde has already submitted its application to host, in 2023, the regional preparatory meeting of the SIDS members of the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean and South China Sea region, to which it belongs, and is also prepared to monitor and support the whole process up to the conclusion of the General Conference in 2024.

It is within this context of emergency that we welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation and the decision of the President of the General Assembly to establish a United Nations high-level expert panel

to conduct the effort, including the completion and use of a multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI). We look forward to a satisfactory conclusion of the work of the high-level panel, and, in particular, that the General Assembly may adopt its MVI proposal, which we hope will be accepted and used in a consensual manner both inside and outside the United Nations. After all, we, the SIDS, also want to free ourselves from the dependence on external support, which necessarily entails reducing our vulnerabilities, while also being aware of the duty to do our homework, to be competitive and resilient, and to achieve inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth.

Since 2015, Africa's cultural and natural, material and immaterial heritage has been celebrated around the world to raise awareness and sensibility on the importance of its preservation. The African Union therefore proposed the theme "Arts, culture and heritage: levers to build the Africa we want" as the theme for the year 2021. However, in this regard, there are still questions about urgencies and the measures to be taken.

In my capacity as President of Cabo Verde, and counting on my African counterparts, I propose investing in the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the whole of Africa and reflecting on how to promote climate justice and equity in Africa and for Africa. It is a question of striving to reach consensus on a more flexible and less abstract notion of climate equity that places common but differentiated responsibilities at the heart of a public and global debate, and to create a common platform for Africa, with view to transferring responsibilities from one generation to the next. Accordingly, I must refer to the worldwide movement to support the candidacy of Creolization and Creole Cultures for the World Heritage List, for which I have accepted to be sponsor and spokesperson, as Cabo Verde was the first Creole society in the world.

This is a civil society-led initiative, which seeks for Creole countries to be able to position themselves with one voice as to their intangible heritage, promoting peace, friendship between peoples and development cooperation, based on the values that creolization has brought to civilization and a new ethos based on tolerance, diversity and fusion of cultures. Accordingly, we call for strong political support and engagement from dignitaries of Creole countries and their Heads of State.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs was a high point for multilateralism, and its progressive implementation and realization should continue to benefit from the impetus of an increasingly renewed and reinvigorated multilateralism anchored on the United Nations system. This has not happened at the desired level on the various fronts where, unfortunately, global challenges remain, while, at the same time, crises that have constituted genuine obstacles to progress have emerged, endangering the desired reinvigorating of multilateralism adapted and prepared to deal with the scale and complexity of the new challenges.

In this regard, Cabo Verde advocates an effective, inclusive, preventive, dissuasive and cooperative multilateralism, which could, as has already been stated, establish, a new global agreement between States, as well as a new global governance for the international system. We advocate a multilateralism that calls for less confrontation between blocs and greater cooperation among Member States in the construction and delivery to all of such global public goods as peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. Finally, we call for a multilateralism that is useful and facilitates a more peaceful international context, which opens the doors for countries, such as Cabo Verde, to more external funding and more and better integration in regional and global value chains.

In conclusion, I wish the General Assembly fruitful deliberations during this seventy-seventh session, the results of which we hope may pave the way for and prepare the Summits of the Future and the SIDS Conference, in 2023 and 2024, respectively. The future is to be found in each day that lies ahead, but also in the solutions we take and make possible in each of these days. We extend our best wishes to the United Nations.

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

Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty, King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Eswatini

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Eswatini, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Eswatini, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Mswati III: It is a great honour for me to address this seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, where we have once again come together as a community of nations to renew our commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

We are meeting at a time when we have just passed through a period of tragedy brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has claimed lives all over the world. We thank God that this period is subsiding. We must praise the countries of the world for uniting to fight the pandemic up to this point, where it is on the verge of being eradicated. The development and supply of COVID-19 vaccines has proved very useful, especially with regard to prevention interventions. We also applaud the United Nations for being instrumental while working under extremely difficult conditions. It remained resolute in assisting countries, and it is safe to say we are where we are today because of its efforts. Despite those challenges, it is encouraging to think that there have been some positives to take away from that experience. In the case of Eswatini, we were compelled to develop testing laboratories and oxygen storage facilities, which are now very helpful in the fight against other health issues. We have witnessed the importance of the availability of oxygen, which has been used in saving the lives of snakebite victims and in other medical emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the midst of an HIV/AIDS pandemic, which we are still battling, and it affected various programmes that had been put in place. Eswatini has made great strides in the fight against HIV and AIDS. We became a shining example for the continent and the world at large after we attained the 95-95-95 UNAIDS treatment-cascade targets in 2020. We are now focused on ending the AIDS pandemic as a global health threat by 2030. That milestone would never have been possible without the support of the development partners that have been with the country since 1986 when our first AIDS case was announced.

It is unfortunate that even after COVID-19, when we were beginning to say that there was hope, we are now confronted with the conflicts that are going on all over the world. Their consequences include, among other things, a loss of life. Those conflicts and tensions have also contributed significantly to the rise in food prices globally. They are not unique to specific areas, as they persist in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. We hope to see an end to those clashes through peaceful settlements, and we must applaud the United Nations for its efforts to prevent them from escalating. Hopefully, there will be long-lasting and fruitful results emerging from the interventions of the United Nations. As we gather here in this Hall, we are all reminded of the main purpose of the Organization's establishment, which was to reduce the tensions that lead to conflict around the world. We hope the aspirations of our forefathers will guide us in using the Organization to bring us together, so that we can resolve our differences where they exist and find lasting solutions. That will unquestionably be of great help to all humankind.

Those problems are a setback to the ongoing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), given the negative impact of COVID-19 and the fact that various conflicts are also taking their own toll on those programmes. During the pandemic we witnessed the collapse of many economies, industry shutdowns and disrupted poverty alleviation projects that could not be implemented properly owing to the pandemic prevention measures. That meant that there was no movement of people or goods. Nevertheless, now that COVID-19 is subsiding, it is high time for all of us to once again renew our focus on the SDGs and implement them, as they will play a crucial role in helping our countries develop.

We also note the importance of the role that will have to be played by financial institutions in assisting countries in the recovery process, as most countries suffered a great deal, economically and financially, and are therefore now facing challenges in raising the resources to fund that recovery. We urge our financial institutions to remain open to receiving countries that need support for reviving their developmental programmes and to welcome their requests with sympathy for their plight in the face of the challenges they have encountered in dealing with COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS. We do appreciate that in recent days we have seen the multilateral financial organizations become more welcoming to countries in need of budgetary

support. We trust that the world will continue to come together to contribute to resolving those challenges, as countries are dealing with great strains on their resources, which they will feel for some time to come.

Our theme for the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session is "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges". It fits very well with many of the issues we are facing in the world today. The Kingdom of Eswatini, like all other Member States, has not been immune to encounters that have heightened the pressure on our already stressed economies. They have derailed us from our pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Aspirations for 2063 — the Africa We Want. The theme should therefore serve to kick-start our economies towards recovery and enable us to create a sustainable future for our people. We in Eswatini are continuing our efforts to attract investment and support small and medium enterprises, as well as to create big industries. In doing so, we are aware of the need for reliable energy sources to help us achieve our investment goals, so that is one of the areas that we are working on developing as a region. We are also focused on remaining highly competitive, which is why we are ranked at the top of the World Bank's ease of doing business index in Africa when it comes to trading across borders.

The Government has also put in place fiscal support measures to ensure that the costs of establishing businesses and their initial operating costs are drastically reduced through a range of options from fiscal to non-fiscal incentives. The creation of special economic zones has put us at an advantage to leverage our export potential through attracting export-oriented manufacturing projects. Eswatini is also well positioned as a launching pad to the African Continental Free Trade Area which seeks to boost intra-Africa trade with a market of 1.2 billion people and a combined gross domestic product of \$2.2 trillion.

The country is also engaged in creating opportunities for our youth to address the issue of unemployment and poverty. There are opportunities to be explored in areas of information and communications technology, agriculture and the informal sector, to name but a few. The Kingdom of Eswatini welcomes the new programme by the United Nations Development Programme to support our youth in Africa who want to engage in entrepreneurship to mitigate the issues

of poverty. This is a noble idea, and we are ready to embrace it.

Food security and ending hunger remain a priority for the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini. We are deploying a double-pronged strategy to address this challenge by providing social safety nets for the most vulnerable groups. We have increased budget allocations, engaged in emergency food aid distribution, provided cash transfers to the elderly and vulnerable, and supported school feeding programmes and other support services for disadvantaged populations.

With regard to growth and development in agriculture, the key projects driven by these public investments include the acceleration of water harvesting and irrigation development, where an average of 1,000 hectares is developed with irrigation every year. We are also creating market-linked growth opportunities in agriculture for small and emerging farmers to produce and generate income to enhance their livelihoods.

The negative effects of climate change are compelling the Government to build more dams throughout the Kingdom for irrigation. Other initiatives include the rollout of input subsidies for staple food crops. The combination of these programmes has also increased the production of maize, our staple food, by 30 per cent for the 2021–2022 farming season, only 9 per cent short of our national target.

With global stability at stake, Africans have recognized the need to guard against opportunists who seek to take advantage of fragile economies to advance their agendas. Ours is a history littered with problems of the past and ongoing attempts to reinfiltate our countries through covert and overt means. Eswatini is of the ardent belief that Africa must have permanent representation in the United Nations Security Council, a call made in the Ezulwini Consensus in 2005. Our position emanates from the fact that every democracy has its particularity and that societies are founded according to different cultural norms and values. We will not tire of the consideration and belated adoption of this call by the United Nations to bring in a proper perspective on the African polity.

It must be noted that, when the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic, no country was spared, which means we all needed to come together to find solutions. Unfortunately, Taiwan was unable to access some of the World Health Organization's programmes and thereby implement the remedies that required their approval.

We continue to appeal for Taiwan to be considered for full participation in United Nations agencies. We are confident that the global village would benefit substantially from Taiwan's meaningful participation in the United Nations system. The Kingdom of Eswatini calls upon the United Nations to make the necessary arrangements for Taiwan to significantly participate in relevant United Nations specialized agencies and mechanisms.

As I conclude, Eswatini remains confident in this global body's ability to confront and overcome the challenges we face because most of them are human-made. We can achieve this through our full commitment to the ideals of the United Nations Charter. At this time, history is calling on each State Member of the United Nations to intensify its efforts to address our plight if we envisage triumphantly walking the path to 2030.

However, and most importantly, we must remain certain about one crucial thing: our success hinges on unity and respect for one another. Those are the key to all outcomes of this seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. Despite our diversity, we are one big happy family. We need to give the world and our peoples hope and confidence that the United Nations has the full mandate to play its role in all global issues that affect humankind. May the Almighty God bless us all.

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

King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Eswatini, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

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

Mr. Kuleba (Ukraine): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex I and see A/77/368).

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

Mr. Lu (United States of America), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia

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

Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vučić: It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Republic of Serbia. In view of our time limits, I ask everyone not to mind if I skip the burden of formalities, courtesy words and greetings to those who are present in or absent from this Hall, and instead speak directly about the essence of why we are gathered here.

I have been in this Hall so many times. The seriousness of the present moment obliges me to share difficult but true words with the Assembly. Everything we are doing here today seems at best relatively impotent and vague. Our words are hollow and empty echoes compared to the reality we are facing. And that reality is such that no one is listening to anyone here, no one strives to reach real agreements or resolve problems and almost all of us care only for our own interests, often breaching the basic principles of international law along the way and throwing away the Charter of the United Nations and other documents on which the Organization was founded. That is not the fault of António Guterres or anyone from the United Nations. It is the fault of the Powers that care for nothing other than achieving their own political, economic and — unfortunately — military goals.

We are witness to the fact that the age we live in is characterized by a complex global geopolitical situation. Our general debate is being held while world peace is being undermined to an extent not seen since the Second World War and the subsequent founding

of our United Nations. The global challenges we are facing threaten to radically change the international security architecture and jeopardize the established international legal order. Such complex times demand enormous wisdom and unity if we are to preserve peace as the absolutely most important heritage woven into the foundations of our Organization.

That is why I would like to speak clearly and accurately to the Assembly about five key challenges we are facing today. The first is returning to peace and the preservation of global stability; the second is the preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of internationally recognized States — members of the Organization — as a key principle of international public law and relations between the countries; the third is energy security in the throes of a global crisis; the fourth is the financial safety of poor and developing countries; and the fifth and last is about food supplies in the wake of the interruption of global supply chains by war.

First, the current global developments increasingly remind us that there can be no alternative to the principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes. That principle stands out today more than ever, and is best described in the words of the Preamble to the Charter, which urge that we “practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours”. Rejecting the use of force and ensuring the peaceful resolution of disputes are pillars of world stability, but they must be accompanied by principles such as non-selective observance of the Charter and the implementation of mandatory Security Council resolutions and the basic principles of the applicable international public law.

Secondly, regarding the preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of internationally recognized States, Serbia supports the territorial integrity of all States Members of the United Nations, including, of course, the territorial integrity of Ukraine. In such a way, we behaved responsibly and seriously in this renowned institution. Nevertheless, we can hear from many speakers stories about aggression and violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Many say that this was the first conflict on European soil since the Second World War. But the truth that the territorial integrity of a country in Europe — Serbia, as a matter of fact — that did not attack any other sovereign country was violated is constantly unspoken. We ask for a clear answer to the question that I have been asking my interlocutors, leaders of many countries, for

years: what is the difference between the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia, which was grossly violated, and for which Member States, at least some, provided international recognition and legitimacy? No one has ever provided a rational answer to that question.

Let me recall the fact that Serbia has never stepped on someone else's territory, and neither has it endangered the territorial integrity of a single sovereign State so that anyone might intervene or carry out aggression against it in the way in which that was done against Serbia in 1999. Nevertheless, as I said, that did not prevent the 19 richest NATO countries from attacking a sovereign country without a decision by the Security Council. The signing, upon termination of the armed conflict, of the agreement with NATO, whose provisions envisaged the adoption of resolution 1244 (1999), and which confirmed and guaranteed the partial sovereignty and full territorial integrity of Serbia, did not prevent many Western countries from unilateral recognition of the independence of so-called Kosovo and from once again violating the territorial integrity of our country, the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1244 (1999). Owing precisely to such developments, which Serbia experienced and continues to experience, I am convinced that I am fully entitled to quote in this Hall the words of the great Martin Luther King: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Those words are carved like a reminder, but also as a warning to all of us.

Regardless of the fact that we still feel the consequences of the gross violation of the basic provisions of international public law, we do not give up on the United Nations founding principles. We will continue to advocate consistent observance of the principle of the inviolability of borders and respect for the sovereignty and integrity of all other States Members of the United Nations. Despite that position of ours, many in this Hall have issues with respecting the territorial integrity of Serbia. Participants wonder why? Because they have power in their hands and, in their eyes, we are small and weak. However, as those present can hear and see, we have the strength to tell the truth, even here.

We owe special gratitude to all those States Members of the United Nations — and they currently constitute a majority at this Assembly — that support the territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia, particularly in the space and territory of Kosovo and

Metohija. In addition, it is encouraging that the number of countries that support Serbia's position increased in the period between the two sessions, which is a trend that must continue because it is of the utmost importance to remain loyal to the basic principles embedded in the United Nations Charter, such as the principle of the inviolability of borders.

The Republic of Serbia, and I as its President, search very patiently and with a great deal of goodwill for compromise regarding Kosovo and Metohija under the auspices of the European Union and within the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. It is a difficult process; it has lasted for more than 10 years, but we see no alternative to it. It is better to negotiate for 100 years than to wage war for a single day. I hope that we will reach a mutually acceptable solution, based on compromise, because that is absolutely the only way to reach our goal, which is long-lasting peace as a prerequisite for a prosperous life for Serbs and Albanians in an entire region. We have exhausted all other options and, speaking for Serbia at least, we do not even dream about going back to the path of conflict and bloodshed. The Balkan region could not stand another conflict. I rely on the goodwill and understanding of our international partners because they well know that some earlier decisions by their Governments were bad ones and that they were not acting in favour of the future of our region and world peace.

Belgrade is running that process under very complex circumstances, with elements of a hybrid war and a dirty campaign in part of the international community against our country in various areas. It is sufficient just to recall the quotes and allegations of the world media that Serbia would attack its neighbours and that Serbia was a threat to regional stability. Of course, that never happened, and it was only one among numerous lies against the Republic of Serbia. Serbia was featured as a potential destabilizing factor in the region only to be prevented from telling the truth — that the principle of the inviolability of borders must be equally applicable to all. Serbia was, and will be, a factor for stability in the entire region. Despite many untruths and falsehoods, Serbia supports the Dayton Peace Agreement, the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the integrity of Republika Srpska within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Meanwhile, we are convinced that the nations of the Balkans have the capacity to continue their lives in the future as friends and partners, with a common

vision of membership of a united Europe. I know that well because we have already overcome many barriers that stood between our nations for years and that cost us thousands of lives and wasted futures. Serbia and Albania, for example, today have the closest and the friendliest relationship in the entire several-centuries-long common history in the area of the Balkan peninsula.

It took only clear-headed and pragmatic discussions about our future, not about our past, and talking about how to resolve the problems that were bothering our people, companies, workers, students and entrepreneurs. We discussed a great deal and by ourselves reached numerous solutions that have already removed barriers that existed between us for no rational reasons. First of all, in the economy, trade and flow of people and capital, for three years Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia have been implementing the Open Balkan initiative, which has a clear vision, namely, to open up the region for people, goods, services, capital and companies in order to create a space that would be permanently liberated from tensions and conflicts. In addition to the unquestionable common economic benefit that the initiative brings, it has a broader dimension, first of all in connecting people with different cultures and in promoting diversity, which clearly contributes to the general development of society in that part of Europe. In that way, Serbia actually continues to contribute to peace, stability and the reconciliation process in the region, whereby it certainly provides a significant contribution to global security.

We found the inspiration for the respective in the words of one of the greatest diplomats in history and a great Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, that this Organization “was not created to take mankind into paradise, but rather to save humanity from hell”.

From the moment we curbed the global pandemic, we already faced new, unprecedented challenges for this century. While we, as humankind, take one step at a time in accelerated technological development, there are existential problems ahead of us, such as energy security and the financial safety of developing countries, but also distortions in the supply chains of basic food provisions. Solidarity, which was necessary in fighting the pandemic, is needed to a far greater extent today, when people’s basic needs for food and energy are endangered.

The Republic of Serbia thinks of its energy security as an inseparable part of its national security and as the

key prerequisite for the continuation of the economic development and progress of our country. We strive to provide the continuity of the energy supply, but we share the concern over the current geopolitical challenges that undermine energy stability in the world and in Europe. We remain committed to finding solutions with the transformational strength to attain regional and European energy safety. I would like to underline that the Republic of Serbia managed to preserve continuity in energy supply during the ongoing crisis. Nevertheless, we remain vitally interested in diversifying supply sources through additional investment in energy infrastructure, but also in the faster and more efficient development of capacities based on renewables.

It is precisely at the United Nations that we named the ongoing decade the decade of action — for transformation towards a more sustainable and resilient future. It must remain so, but at a slightly faster pace. Unequal development and financial perils in developing countries cause additional social layering and inevitably bring new antagonisms. Equal development must be neither limited nor conditioned geographically or politically; it must be provided to all people, regardless of ethnic, racial, cultural or religious affiliation.

There is another very important challenge ahead that we must overcome together — finding the most efficient way to mitigate the consequences of the current international crisis inflicted on global food supply security. Developments in that regard are highly alarming, and the reality is such that all of us, with no exceptions, are struck by them. The growing prices of food and its availability have become an additional problem. The task for all of us is to find operational and efficient solutions that will leave no one behind. It is up to us, States, as the most important international subjects, to participate individually in the coordination of measures, first of all, by contributing to this noble task at the national level in order to preserve what is most valuable — human lives and human dignity.

The topic of this year’s general debate alerts us to the importance of this moment and the relatedness of international challenges. The crises we are facing remind us of the importance of open communication. It does not take much wisdom to conclude that challenges can be successfully overcome only if their causes are properly identified. Serbia believes that it is imperative that current challenges not deepen world divisions in any way and that already obvious and intentional

polarization at global levels should give way to principles of multilateralism.

I would like to underline that the Republic of Serbia stands ready to take part in collective efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals and to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Peace. Serbia shares the Secretary-General's vision of a future of global cooperation, as envisaged by *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), and it strongly supports inclusive, networked and efficient multilateralism as the best tool for responding to the most urgent challenges for humankind.

Multilateralism, collective action and common responsibility are critical elements of our discussions thus far, but I would like to underline that the starting point for each such constructive engagement is solidarity.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Serbia will continue to be a reliable partner in achieving the common goals defined within the United Nations framework, led by the firm belief that it is the best path to forge a new world for us and generations to come. But we must not forget that the United Nations is as strong as our respect for the agreed decisions and documents of the Organization.

I would like to recall something that we have already heard uttered 23 times:

“The only standard we must follow is the Charter of the United Nations.”

That is what we heard from everybody, but in the case of the Republic of Serbia, we saw that 17 of the 23 representatives speaking about the United Nations Charter and United Nations resolutions violated international law and did not follow the rules created and espoused by the United Nations. I hope that we will be able to overcome all of those difficulties and to apply the rules and procedures equally for everyone. Otherwise, I do not see the light at the end of the tunnel. Long live Serbia.

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

Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.

His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Prince Albert (*spoke in French*): Let me say how pleased I am to be here now after more than two years since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

This unprecedented health crisis exposed our shortcomings in multilateral coordination and cooperation. It forced us to take extraordinary economic and social measures — both to protect our populations and to mobilize the international monetary system. Our frantic pace of daily life makes us forget that each year in the northern hemisphere the overshoot day, which arrives earlier and earlier, alerts us to our imposition on the planet, whose resources we are inexorably exhausting.

The theme the President has chosen for this general debate is therefore a reminder that we are at a decisive turning point that requires transformative solutions in order to face the interdependent challenges before us.

Allow me to express my sincere congratulations to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and to thank his predecessor for demonstrating the leadership of a small island developing State. We share his belief in the need to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which we collectively defined in 2015, and thus preserve our environment and ensure the survival of humankind. This seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly marks a decisive year for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Peace. I pledge the full support of the Principality of Monaco in the preparation of the important deadlines to come. I am thinking, in particular, of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future in 2024.

Exactly 100 years ago, Prince Albert I, my great-great-grandfather, passed away. This humanist and visionary monarch was a tireless advocate of the fundamental role of science in advancing our societies, especially in the context of political decision-making. A century later, we commemorate his legacy, which continues to inspire my action and the policy of my Government. Monaco assumes its full share in the collective effort to preserve our planet at a time when the world is going through a pivotal period that is disrupting our way of life and international relations.

The globalization we are experiencing has accentuated our interdependence but also the relationship between man and nature. Ecosystems are now unable to regenerate themselves because of our production methods, which are based mainly on the use of natural resources, and because our frantic pace of consumption.

The fact that the year 2020 marked the only pause in the degradation of ecosystems at the global level speaks volumes about what we are collectively capable of accomplishing, for better or for worse, in a well-thought-out manner or in an emergency.

Indeed, during this emergency, research and innovation enabled the rapid production of vaccines, which we welcome. Public health issues and preparedness for future pandemics remain a priority, as does equitable access to prevention and care. I attach particular importance to the fact that my country is mobilizing within the framework of its international cooperation policy, alongside its partners, first and foremost the World Health Organization, in order to strengthen the global health architecture. We will therefore carefully examine any new crisis management mechanism that could facilitate a coordinated response based on proven scientific facts in order to avoid repeating the difficulties encountered at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more than three decades, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been warning us about the disastrous and often irreversible effects of climate change. In June 2022, at the Stockholm and Lisbon Conferences, we once again saw the intrinsic link between the well-being of human civilization and respect for the planet, of which the ocean is one of the fundamental components.

The protection of our seas and oceans is part of a family tradition, a cause to which Prince Albert

I dedicated his life. His commitment set an example for me — an example that continues to live on in my country's commitments and which I myself have chosen to follow since my accession to the throne in 2005.

Beyond our rhetoric, it is time for action, which is nothing less than seizing the last opportunity we have to build a future for humankind. As extreme climate events multiply, affecting all nations indiscriminately but particularly penalizing the most vulnerable, strengthening adaptation measures must be at the heart of our priorities. My heart goes out to the people of Pakistan who are suffering the consequences of terrible floods. These urgent and necessary efforts must be carried out in concert with policies to drastically reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. Each country, according to its own circumstances and needs, must transform its economy in depth to decarbonize it and contain the rise in temperatures.

Monaco remains resolutely committed to environmental protection and sustainable development. In this respect, the Principality is pursuing its energy transition to achieve a 55 per cent reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. In this respect, the latest assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is very clear: the tools and solutions to build a sustainable and fairer future for future generations already exist.

We are the actors. We have a duty of solidarity to succeed collectively in this energy transition. The upcoming deadlines in 2022, both within the Climate Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, must allow us to truly lay the foundations for a sustainable society. Faced with such challenges, our common failure would simply be unacceptable.

Prince Albert I was, in my eyes, an example of openness to others, a man eager to learn and listen to the most avant-garde minds. By giving the Principality a constitution, he made it a State governed by the rule of law. As the First World War approached, he tried to convince the future belligerents to find a peaceful solution to their differences.

Today, while many conflicts continue to spread terror, misery and helplessness in the world without our being able to put an end to them, war has unfortunately returned to the European continent. The military aggression against Ukraine blatantly disregards

international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, undermining the security and stability of Europe and the world. It is also inflicting untold suffering on the Ukrainian people, taking us back to the darkest hours of our history. I therefore welcome the conclusion of an agreement, under the auspices of the United Nations, that allows the export of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea, and I urge all stakeholders to respect the terms of the agreement. Global food security, already precarious, depends on it.

Nor should we forget that women and children remain the first victims of food shortages, exacerbating the vicious and intergenerational circle of poverty. Monaco has made this issue one of its cooperation priorities and devotes nearly one third of its official development assistance to it. We are resolutely committed in the long term to fighting against malnutrition, supporting small local producers and school canteens and developing sustainable agricultural sectors.

The extreme tensions that continue to grow — and we all know the quite appalling number of conflicts and civil wars taking place around the world — force us to overhaul our agenda for peace. In his address, President Macron also mentioned the very high number of these civil wars (see A/77/PV.4).

The profound change marked by globalization is now followed by the digitalization of our societies. If there is one area in which the private sector has the lead, it is that of information and communication technologies. In this respect, we must reconcile the development of these technologies with the protection of human rights and personal data.

The summit that brought us together at the beginning of the week demonstrated that new technologies are the basis for the transformation of education. We must make good use of them to adapt education systems to the world of today and tomorrow. I thank the Secretary-General for this initiative, which saw the participation of many young people. Cyberspace must not become a place of confrontation but rather an additional opportunity for cooperation.

The proliferation of hate speech and disinformation is simply intolerable. Artificial intelligence must serve humans and not manipulate their behaviour and thoughts. It is high time that we manage to set common rules so that cyberspace does not get out of hand, destroy our democracies and further separate us from each other.

By the end of the general debate of this seventy-seventh session, more than two thirds of the members of the General Assembly will have been represented by their Head of State or Government. I wish to see this as an affirmation of the indispensable role of the United Nations, the Charter and multilateral diplomacy. We must redouble our efforts and restore confidence so that, as the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims:

“recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world...”.

A strengthened and effective multilateralism, in which youth and women play a prominent role, is the most effective way to address global crises. For women are essential agents of change: gender equality and women’s economic autonomy are the foundation of a more sustainable world. What are we waiting for to promote their place in global leadership?

Monaco intends to pursue its commitment within UN-Women and through its development-cooperation policy. My delegation intends to contribute fully to the work of our United Nations, to build together a more efficient and inclusive multilateralism, working for the well-being of humankind and the planet.

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

His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Charles Angelo Savarin, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica

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

Mr. Charles Angelo Savarin, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Charles Angelo Savarin, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Savarin: My delegation, and by extension, the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica, congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his election to the preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and to wish him every success during his term.

We also express appreciation and gratitude to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for the able manner with which he presided over the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

Permit me to express my deepest condolences to His Majesty King Charles III, the royal family and the Government and people of the United Kingdom on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty was a symbol of stability and continuity, not only for the United Kingdom but for the Commonwealth and the world at large.

The seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly is being convened at a time when we are facing innumerable challenges with both current and long-term implications. They include climate change, the degradation of our ecosystem and loss of biodiversity, poverty, inequality and the growing challenge of chronic non-communicable diseases. All of those have occupied the attention of this body over the years, with only marginal progress in finding solutions to them. Compounding those challenges are other emerging threats, such as the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the war unfolding in Ukraine.

The invasion of one country by another must always be condemned, and Dominica has condemned the invasion of Ukraine without reservation. In our interconnected world, what happens in one part of the world affects us all, and so it is with the war in Ukraine. We are all victims of the skyrocketing prices of oil and petroleum products and the resulting impact on the cost of electricity and all aspects of transportation. The cost of the production of goods and services is similarly adversely affected, and as Russia and Ukraine are among the leading suppliers of grain, the conflict has created a shortage in the world's supply, with implications for hunger in countries that rely on imports from those two countries.

The developments since 2014 that led to Russia's invasion of Ukraine are well known. Nevertheless, we in Dominica are of the view that the invasion

and the ensuing war could have been prevented. The Commonwealth of Dominica therefore stands with the rest of the world in calling for an immediate cessation of the conflict that continues to rage in Ukraine. We welcomed the deal brokered between Ukraine and Russia, with the assistance of Turkey and ably supported by the Secretary-General, to have significant quantities of grain shipped from Ukrainian ports to various destinations and thereby alleviate the emerging global food crisis. For those reasons and in the interests of global peace, the Commonwealth of Dominica urges all the parties to continue upholding their end of the agreement so that further relief can be felt globally as a result.

Like most Member States, we in Dominica and the Caribbean were ill-prepared to deal with COVID-19, which the World Health Organization declared a pandemic in March 2020. Notwithstanding the fact that most countries have managed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and consequently eased the related restrictions, public health experts have warned that the pandemic is not yet over. Furthermore, with new variants continuing to emerge, COVID-19 continues to pose a threat to the global community. The pandemic has exposed the limitations of health systems in all countries large and small, developed and underdeveloped. The reality is that not all people have equal access to vaccines and life-saving medicines, even when faced with a pandemic declared by the World Health Organization.

The theme for this year's session, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges", is analogous to the approach and trajectory outlined by the United Nations for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Member States have individually embraced the SDGs as the ideal to be universally pursued and achieved by 2030. Small island developing States (SIDS) face more challenges than most in achieving those goals. The international community has pledged its support, but the question is to what extent such tangible support has been forthcoming. The challenge is to go beyond promises, commitments and pledges to achieve effective delivery and implementation.

The various global crises do not respect national borders. Our interconnected world means that no one is insulated or immune from developments taking place anywhere on the globe. Today planet Earth is under severe threat and stress and may very well

become uninhabitable if we delay decisive corrective action further. We need to talk less and start taking the concrete and sustainable actions needed to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere. In addition to tropical storms and hurricanes, we are facing prospects of droughts, warming seas and rising sea levels, all of which will affect lives and livelihoods. For that reason, we continue to champion the call for collective global action in order to build on the resilience of our small island States in the face of natural disasters that are triggered and exacerbated by our changing climate. We must lay a path for development that is sustainable and people-focused.

For a number of years, small States like ours have spoken from this very rostrum and many others like it across the world, seeking to convince the developed world to change the destructive practices threatening our planet and our very lives and livelihoods. Yet despite our best efforts, not enough corrective action is being taken. Not enough support is being given to us to adapt and build resilience to the effects of climate change that are already upon us. I will not stand here today to detail to the Assembly the ways in which climate change is affecting us. They are well known. We see the news reports. The evidence is all around us. What we need from our developed partners in the United Nations family is recognition and acceptance of responsibility that translates to a commitment to providing the funding that is required to enable our small States to become resilient. That must be readily accessible and available to all of us on grant and concessional terms, with the only criterion for access being our vulnerability to extreme weather events.

We have spoken here before of the cataclysmic impact of successive disasters on our country. Tropical Storm Erika, in 2015, and Hurricane Maria, in 2017, caused more than 90 per cent and 226 per cent loss of gross domestic product (GDP), respectively, in terms of lives lost, people displaced and livelihoods shattered. Those experiences triggered our goal of becoming the first climate-resilient nation in the world and realigned our focus to concentrate on adaptation efforts and building back better in every sector of the economy. Our small island developing States are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change — a phenomenon that will continue to escalate with every increment of global warming.

As sea levels rise, some small island States will eventually disappear, while others will experience

coastal erosion that will ultimately destroy infrastructure, villages, towns and cities. The Commonwealth of Dominica therefore reiterates its call on the international community, at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to prioritize the disbursement of climate financing to SIDS in order to support our adaptation and resiliency efforts as we seek to minimize loss and damage from extreme climate events. In that way, actions will reflect more equitable and justice-oriented responses to fulfilling the goals and promises of sustainable development. Furthermore, the continuous call for higher levels of commitment to climate justice must be reflected in tangible and effective responses.

At Headquarterstwo months ago, the Commonwealth of Dominica submitted its first voluntary national review in keeping with its international obligations and in the spirit of good global governance. Dominica reported on the tremendous progress accomplished in terms of both the advances made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and its national agenda as guided by the vision of becoming the world's first climate-resilient nation.

As it continues to recover from the destructive weather events I mentioned, Dominica's main economic industries are showing signs of positive recovery. Tourism and agriculture remain the main income-generating sectors, with GDP projected to reach pre-pandemic levels by 2023, averaging 5 per cent growth per year from 2022 to 2026. Tourism recovery has been supported by new infrastructure projects and improved and increased air access.

At the centre of Dominica's resilience agenda are its citizens. Across Dominica, new and modern climate-resilient homes are being constructed for low- and middle-income families, while modern and smart health and wellness centres have been built and equipped in urban and rural communities. That will allow those communities to withstand the impact of extreme weather events and remain operational, while also strengthening their response to other natural emergencies and pandemics.

In that regard, the Commonwealth of Dominica takes this opportunity to commend the Government of the People's Republic of China for its commitment to contribute an additional \$42 billion to the new Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund,

which will assist countries such as Dominica that are on the front line of the negative impacts of climate change to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ensuring that our citizens enjoy long and healthy lives will always be a priority. Therefore, what we grow and consume has to be a critical component of our resilience agenda. Global trends indicate that issues surrounding food security are not unique to Dominica. Indeed, under Sustainable Development Goal 2 — achieving zero hunger — Governments are called on to pursue smart and sustainable food production to help alleviate the perils of hunger.

Dominica is working to strengthen its agriculture sector in order to decrease the cost of the importation of food. There is renewed emphasis on growing what we eat and eating what we grow, while at the same time ensuring that affordable and high-quality produce is available for export on a consistent basis. Our aim is to develop a scientific and practical approach to reducing the vulnerability of farmers and fisherfolk through the adoption of resilient and sustainable practices.

We embraced the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as part of our international obligation vis-à-vis the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, for the maintenance of international peace and security. Dominica therefore calls on all nuclear-weapon States to abide by international law concerning the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the use of diplomacy as a tool in conflict resolution.

The trade and economic embargo imposed on our brothers and sisters in Cuba continues to be of great concern to us in the Caribbean, and its lifting has become more urgent in the light of the global impact on food security of the Russia-Ukraine war. The Commonwealth of Dominica continues to add its voice to those of the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations to call for the immediate lifting of the unjustified trade restrictions and export bans imposed on the good people of Cuba.

It has long been established that, whatever the objectives were 60 years ago, when the embargo was instituted, it can no longer be justified — if it ever was. The Government of Dominica therefore strongly urges the few States that continue to support those sanctions to heed the call of the overwhelming majority of us gathered here and lift the archaic and unfair embargo

against Cuba. Let us all support the full integration of the Cuban people into the global financial and trading systems.

For decades, Cuba has been training medical doctors, nurses, engineers and other professionals, as well as providing technical assistance to developing countries, as part of its South-South cooperation. Cuba also offers professional training in various disciplines to thousands of students from all over the developing world. In addition, Cuba continues to add its voice to the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking in the Caribbean and the rest of the world. We therefore join all other Member States that have called for the removal of Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, and we ask instead that we redirect our efforts to combating the real threats to global peace and security in the region.

In March 2015, the United States declared that Venezuela poses an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States and imposed sanctions on that country. The United States has been followed by several countries in imposing sanctions, since when the good people of Venezuela have endured severe hardship and suffering as a result of those numerous financial and economic sanctions, the consequences of which prevent millions of Venezuelans from meeting their most basic needs, a situation made even worse by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, further impacting Venezuela's contracted economy and an already weakened health system.

The Commonwealth of Dominica again joins the voices of many other States Members of the United Nations to call for the immediate lifting of the unjustified oil embargo and other general sanctions imposed on the people of Venezuela. The political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela demands immediate attention. It is further incumbent upon all of us to provide short- and long-term solutions and opportunities for Venezuela to resolve its challenges and quickly improve the lives of ordinary Venezuelans.

The current situation in Haiti continues to be of great concern to us and demands greater international attention. An editorial in *The Washington Post* dated 6 August 2020 called for muscular international intervention. That was followed by a statement from the Secretary General of the Organization of American States dated 8 August, in which he reproached the

international community for its failure to assist Haiti over the years and for leaving the country in chaos.

Haiti is a country that was once the wealthiest colony in the Americas. It is now the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. The magnitude 7.0 earthquake of 2010 left the country totally devastated. It claimed some 250,000 lives, left more than 300,000 people injured and laid waste the capital of Port-au-Prince and most of southern Haiti. The cost of the damage done was estimated at \$8 billion, and the cost of reconstruction at approximately \$14 billion.

United Nations agencies report that some 1.3 million people suffer from food insecurity in Haiti and some 4.6 million from limited access to basic food supplies. While I am pleased to acknowledge the recent special meeting of the lead Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community on Haiti held in Trinidad and Tobago, which sought specific solutions to the many crises that beset Haiti, the international community needs to respond as if Haiti were under invasion, as is the case in Ukraine, or as it did in the post-war reconstruction situation in Europe after the Second World War, requiring the so-called Marshall Plan.

Nothing less can overcome the deep-rooted reconstruction challenges facing Haiti. We therefore urge the United Nations family to forge an effective and unified response that brings to bear the necessary resources — financial, technical, human and otherwise — to alleviate the suffering of the Haitian people.

The severe and massive impacts of the various challenges we have experienced in recent times highlights the importance of multilateralism. As we raise the various issues confronting our individual States and share our hopes, fears and expectations, let us also seek to offer solutions to our various problems as a united international community, eager to realize a sustainable, transformative and fairer future for all.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate my country's gratitude to all our international partners and friendly Governments that have stood with the Commonwealth of Dominica, particularly through our darkest days following the major tropical storms and hurricanes that afflicted us. Our journey is one of building back better, sustainability and resilience. With their continued support, we look forward to a brighter future in the days ahead.

I wish all participants and representatives at the seventy-seventh session every success in their deliberations.

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

Mr. Charles Angelo Savarin, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

Address by Mr. Mohammad Najib Azmi Mikati, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic.

Mr. Mohammad Najib Azmi Mikati, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Najib Azmi Mikati, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Najib Azmi Mikati (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I offer my sincere congratulations to the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

I also take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Shahid for his good stewardship of the previous session and for all his efforts in that regard. I would like as well to commend His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for his continued efforts to promote the role of the United Nations Organization and develop its work.

The world today is in a very delicate situation, involving armed conflicts and interrelated crises that are of concern to us all. There is no better place to deliberate those challenges than in the General Assembly Hall, which brings together all the world's States under the auspices of the Charter of the United Nations, which my country, Lebanon, is proud to have played a role in establishing. We have enjoyed decades of productive cooperation with the United Nations.

In that context, I am delighted to thank the President of the General Assembly — and through him, the United Nations, with all its branches and specialized institutions and those operating in Lebanon — for their efforts to help Lebanon and contribute to mitigating the consequences of the crippling economic and financial crisis that it now faces.

I would like to thank in particular the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for its sacrifices and efforts to maintain stability in southern Lebanon, in close coordination with the Lebanese army. With the help of Member States, we look forward to strengthening the military capabilities and alleviating the financial burdens of the Lebanese army. In that context, we stress Lebanon's commitment to the full implementation of the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) and all resolutions of international legitimacy.

With regard to the demarcation of our maritime borders, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the commendable mediation of the United States, I would like to reaffirm Lebanon's full commitment to its sovereignty and rights over, and its enjoyment of, its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone. We reiterate our sincere desire to reach a long-overdue negotiated solution. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that we have made significant progress in that regard and hope to soon reach the desired outcome.

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

Lebanon is determined to protect its national interests and the wealth of its people, as well as to invest in its national resources. We are fully aware of the importance of the promising energy market in the eastern Mediterranean for the prosperity of the economies of the countries of the region and for meeting the needs of importing countries.

Lebanon believes in the leading role played by the United Nations. We stress our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

We also believe in the international frameworks that address disarmament issues in their various forms and welcome efforts to establish an international understanding to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction pursuant to decision 73/546. We commend the previous sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear

Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and look forward to the successful conclusion of its third session, to be held under Lebanon's presidency in November. We also look forward to contributing to the establishment of that nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Many countries in the world today face severe economic crises, the causes of which are multifaceted and well known, as they have had a major impact on all aspects of life. That has made it imperative for many Governments and countries to resort to extraordinary measures in seeking to alleviate the impact of such crises on their peoples.

In my country, Lebanon, we have faced the worst socioeconomic crisis in our history for the past several years, which has affected all our institutions and placed the majority of Lebanese below the poverty line. It has caused many people to emigrate, with our homeland losing many of its best and most promising young people. That comes on top of severe and unprecedented economic deterioration, the collapse of the national currency to its lowest levels in history and the closures imposed by the coronavirus disease pandemic, not to mention the Beirut port explosion catastrophe, the cause of which we are seeking to determine. We are also dealing with the consequences of the Syrian crisis and the burden of those who have been displaced.

In that context, the Lebanese Government is confronted by an unprecedented political crisis that has made it necessary to tread very slowly and carefully across a political and economic minefield in order to remedy the situation and create an environment conducive to pulling Lebanon out of its current crisis.

Our Government has succeeded in achieving many of its goals, most notably in the timely holding of parliamentary elections despite the difficult circumstances prevailing in the country. Nevertheless, the road ahead of Lebanon continues to be long, arduous and fraught with difficulties before it can overcome the crisis. We are working with all our resources and determination to successfully achieve that. In that connection, our Government signed a preliminary agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

From this rostrum, we pledge to advance all necessary legislative and administrative reforms in order to overcome the current crisis. We continue to count on the assistance of Lebanon's international friends, most notably the sisterly Arab States. Lebanon, an Arab country by affiliation and identity and the

co-founder of the League of Arab States, has great respect for the Arab States. Lebanon's Arab affiliation and its commitment to Arab causes reflect the provisions of its Constitution and the Taif Agreement, which ended the bloody civil war that ravaged my country. I must reiterate our full commitment to the Taif Agreement, as well as our unwillingness to tolerate any attempt to undermine its provisions.

We also reaffirm our commitment to our policy of non-alignment, which we have pursued on the same path as our previous Government, in an effort to protect our country as far as possible from adopting any position that it cannot sustain. The Lebanese Government also relies on the United Nations and its Member States, which through their commendable assistance to Lebanon have always emphasized that a capable and prosperous Lebanese State is urgently needed to ensure peace and security in the region and the world.

In the context of efforts to address the economic crisis, our Government is also working on a financial and economic recovery plan that complements our cooperation with the International Monetary Fund. We are working on a package of comprehensive structural and sectoral reforms that meet the requirements of the Lebanese people and provide them with a social safety net. We are also developing laws that ensure absolute transparency and combat the scourge of corruption, which has been exacerbated as a result of the economic collapse.

At the same time, we are working to revive the economy and to benefit from the many potential opportunities, especially with respect to the younger generations, for whom we are responsible. They are a beacon of hope for the success of a Lebanese economic model that is open to the world and offers it new opportunities.

In that context, we appeal to sisterly and friendly countries to stand by Lebanon in its ongoing crisis and support us in overcoming it by addressing the serious repercussions of the crisis on the Lebanese people and the structure of the State. We look forward to reconvening the Friends of Lebanon Conference for Investment and Finance, which has long been hosted by France in cooperation with Lebanon's friends and brothers.

The existence of a sovereign and independent Lebanese State — that is strong and capable; protects the parliamentary democratic system and public and

private freedoms; believes in tolerance, fraternity and convergence; and pursues its policy of non-alignment, rejecting the policy of axes — is urgently needed in order to ensure peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region.

In addition, a strong central Government that ensures the rule of law and its proper application, as well as an enabling environment for businesses, productive sectors and services in all their diversity — in accordance with market standards, a free economy, current requirements, and the information and communication revolution — is urgently needed by the entire region and presents the best way for all of us to tackle the challenges of poverty, unemployment, extremism and terrorism and to avoid spiralling into the unknown.

For more than a decade, Lebanon has been at the forefront of achieving the global public good by hosting a massive number of displaced Syrians. It is difficult to provide accurate figures of their number. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, we have adopted an open-border policy based on our commitment to humanitarian considerations. However, the displacement crisis currently exceeds Lebanon's capabilities.

It is also important to emphasize that the Lebanese Constitution, with the consensus of all Lebanese people, prevents any integration or settlement on its territory. The only realistic sustainable solution is to achieve the safe and dignified return of Syrians to their country in the framework of a road map that we should start work on as soon as possible, with the cooperation of all parties. Additional qualitative assistance should also be provided to the Lebanese State and its various institutions and infrastructure, which have been overstretched by the large influx of displaced persons for more than 10 years.

The Palestinian question remains the main obstacle to the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East. The injustice against the Palestinian people must end. The independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, must be realized in keeping with all the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, including resolution 194 (III), on the return of refugees to their homes.

Concerning the Palestinian refugees, I would like to emphasize the central role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in serving the goals and purposes of

the United Nations by helping to alleviate some of the suffering of Palestinian refugees and achieve a measure of regional development and stability.

In that regard, we express our deep concern about the Agency's critical financial situation and accumulated budget deficit, which jeopardize the delivery of its services. We also reiterate that Lebanon welcomes and supports all international efforts to bridge the deficit, as the primary challenge remains finding a sustainable solution to the funding gap.

Lebanon has a long cultural history. Lebanon has always promoted a message of peace, tolerance and dialogue. Although my country is currently experiencing challenging times, those difficulties will not deter the Lebanese people from moving forward to achieving once again their prosperity and strengthen the pioneering role that Lebanon has always played internationally. We want Lebanon to be a place for convergence, not division. We want Lebanon to be a space for dialogue, not competition. We want it to be a spiritual custodian that brings together the values of the divine religions and the values of truth and justice in the world. I am confident that, with the unity of its people and the help of its brothers and friends, we can achieve what we want.

In conclusion, I reiterate my gratitude to the United Nations for its continued cooperation and partnership with Lebanon and to all Member States that love and support Lebanon. I reiterate my call on everyone not to disassociate Lebanon from all the conflicts in the region and the world. The greater the challenges, the more we are willing to work together for the good of our people.

The recent series of global crises have demonstrated the importance of international cooperation in addressing them, as most of them have become transboundary in nature. I would like to conclude by referring to the beginning of the United Nations, when it commenced its collective work in solidarity and complementarity for the benefit and well-being of humankind, based on justice, security, peace and sustainable development. We hope for a better world, especially in the Middle East region.

I extend my best wishes to all members.

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

of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mohammad Najib Azmi Mikati, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jan Lipavský, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechia.

Mr. Lipavský (Czechia): The United Nations and its principles, which we established after the Second World War, are in grave danger. One of the presumed gatekeepers of the Charter of the United Nations — one of the permanent members of the Security Council, Russia — is attacking a sovereign neighbouring democracy and wreaking havoc in Eastern Europe and the entire world. If we continue to allow a new colonial war, then why are we here? Why do we keep the United Nations alive? Do we care or are we indifferent?

The Czech Government's foreign policy is guided by the legacy of our former President Václav Havel — a globally respected human rights defender and renowned politician, who once said,

“Our indifference towards others can, after all, result in only one thing — the indifference of others towards us”.

The fact that representatives of all States Members of the United Nations meet here to address major global challenges demonstrates that we are not indifferent to the suffering of others. It shows that we care.

The circumstances have changed dramatically since the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally shaken the international order. On 24 February, not only Europe but also the whole world entered a new era. Russia tried to dismantle the security architecture of the European continent by launching a colonial war of conquest. Ironically, President Putin is declaring partial mobilization and threatening the world with the use of nuclear weapons today — the International Day of Peace. What more proof do we need? That is our terrifying new reality.

Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine not only blatantly violates the United Nations Charter but also badly damages the global economy and the food security of many countries represented in the General Assembly Hall. It seriously

threatens the rules-based international order and harms all States Members of the United Nations. I am shocked to the core, listening to Russian State-controlled television channels, preaching the strategy of hunger and cold towards Ukraine and the world and approving the torture and mass killing of civilians, with the argument that the world must fear Russia.

Russia must immediately cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia's complete disregard for the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly is appalling. Czechia resolutely supports Ukraine's right to defend its territorial integrity and population, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Czechia fully supports the sovereignty, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We will never recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the upcoming sham referendums to be held in parts of the territory of Ukraine. We resolutely reject attempts to create spheres of influence instead of equal partnerships. The time of establishing colonies and acquiring territory by the sheer force of arms is over. Today it is Ukraine; tomorrow it could be any of us. We refuse a world of Russian colonial appetite.

We are horrified by the atrocities committed by the Russian invader. We condemn the existence of filtration camps run by Russia and the horrors in Mariupol, Bucha, Irpin, Izyum and many other places in Ukraine, as well as the apocalyptic shelling of civilian infrastructure.

Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens have been deported to Russia, including children. Children were forcibly taken from their parents. It reminds us of the worst practices of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in the first half of the twentieth century.

All those reports on Russian military conduct must be independently investigated. Russia must respect its obligations under international humanitarian law. Russia has an international responsibility for the aggression, but there is also an individual criminal responsibility for the crimes committed on such a large scale by Russian troops. We will hold all war criminals accountable.

Czechia supported the referral to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to open an investigation of the situation on the ground in Ukraine. We also strongly support Ukraine's application instituting

proceedings against the Russian Federation under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide before the International Court of Justice. And we call for the establishment of a special international tribunal that will prosecute the crime of aggression committed by Putin's Russia.

Apart from that, we support Ukraine comprehensively. Czechia hosts the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita — more than 400,000 in a country of 10 million. We provide large amounts of humanitarian aid. We support the stabilization, recovery and reconstruction efforts of the Ukrainian Government — not only with words but with action.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has only strengthened my country's resolve to continue supporting independent media, civil society and human rights defenders.

Unfortunately, inside Russia the human rights situation of freedom-loving citizens has worsened enormously. We successfully ran for the Human Rights Council seat vacated by Russia in May. I would like to express thanks for the broad support that we received from many of Member States.

We warmly welcome the appointment of Mr. Volker Türk as the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I wish to thank former High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet for her dedicated work during her term in office. The most recent report on China prepared by her Office shed light on the alarming human rights violations against Muslim groups, including Uyghurs.

Unfortunately, the human rights situations in countries such as Afghanistan, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Myanmar and Venezuela also continue to worsen.

We wish Myanmar would work towards a peaceful resolution of the current crisis.

We follow with horror the atrocious manner in which the Iranian authorities handle the rightful protests of women.

In Belarus, the regime uses brutal violence against its opponents. In the past two years, tens of thousands of Belarussians have been detained and all independent media and civil society organizations have been destroyed.

We are concerned that anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial are on the rise. This year marks 80 years since

the infamous Wannsee Conference and the formulation of the so-called “final solution to the Jewish question”, which resulted in the murder of nearly 6 million Jews.

Czechia reiterates Israel’s right to protect its citizens against any terrorist activities that deliberately target Israeli civilians, including rocket attacks.

Czechia currently holds the presidency of the European Union (EU). Our priorities, such as defending Ukraine, ensuring energy security and promoting democracy and human rights, are not only regional but also global in nature.

Russian aggression has only multiplied the already existing global challenges. Progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has slowed down. The prices of agriculture commodities are growing globally.

For us, working with young people and listening to their concerns is the driving force to get progress on the SDGs back on track.

Climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss are major global challenges. We need a comprehensive humanitarian, development-oriented and peace-based response to crises, including pandemics, as well as solutions that foster sustainable food systems and climate resilience.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the World Health Organization can work effectively and independently of any political influence. No one should be left behind. We firmly support the global efforts for equal access to vaccines and treatment.

The stakes are high for the upcoming twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt. It has been said many times before, but I will reiterate it once again: if we do not act now, it may soon be too late,

The development of relations between the European Union and Africa is among the priorities of the Czech EU presidency. Africa faces food shortages, the negative impacts of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Russian aggression against Ukraine has blocked the exports of agricultural products.

I cannot but express my outrage at how Russian disinformation propaganda seeks to use the food crisis in Africa to spread false narratives that the EU sanctions

against Russia caused the shortage. Obviously, if Russia had not invaded Ukraine, we would not have had to deal with that issue at all.

Turning to other security issues, we are concerned about the increased tensions in the Taiwan Strait caused by unilateral threatening actions. We expect cross-strait differences to be resolved by peaceful means, while the status quo is maintained.

The digital space carries many opportunities, but there are risks too: cyberattacks and cybercrime, the misuse of technology and in particular disinformation. Let me say this loud and clear — a lie is not an opinion. For far too long, we have overlooked the spread of disinformation directed against our common values.

Let us not forget the COVID-related disinformation. We had to learn the hard way when disinformation began to cost human lives.

That is why we need to make sure that our citizens and societies are resilient and that independent media operate freely. We will continue to reach out and help countries exposed to lies and propaganda.

Czechia promotes the concept of digital humanism, which keeps human interests and needs at the centre of emerging technologies. Instances of Internet shutdowns are growing. We must maintain a free, open, safe, secure and stable cyberspace, in which human rights apply online as they do offline.

The number of cyberattacks, including State-sponsored cyberattacks, continues to rise, as does their severity. The new potential of terrorist threat has appeared with the escalation of Russia’s aggressive policies. Terrorism maliciously feeds on weak governance, economic hardship and social injustice, with the Sahel region being the most-affected region.

Czechia reiterates its commitment to countering terrorism and supporting countries that suffer from terrorist violence or threats.

I would like to use this opportunity to remind Russia that Czechia still awaits its official response concerning the explosion that occurred in an ammunition depot in my country in 2014. That completely appalling act was planned and executed by agents of GRU, the Russian military intelligence directorate, and claimed the lives of two innocent Czech citizens, in addition to the material damage caused. Such conduct is a clear violation of international law.

The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is also negatively impacted by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Russia does not hesitate to use dangerous nuclear rhetoric, which has become a new standard for terrorizing peaceful populations.

Czechia strongly denounces Russia's occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Any armed attack on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We regret that, despite lengthy negotiations, it was not possible to achieve consensus on a final outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) because Russia opposed it.

And we call on Iran to act urgently to fulfil its legal obligations under its NPT Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and to clarify all outstanding issues. We commend the IAEA and its Director General for their professional work in verifying Iran's safeguards obligations.

The United Nations, this universal Organization, has a duty to help us better react to existing and emerging global challenges. But in these dark and stormy times, it has the duty to firmly defend the principles it was founded on — the Charter of the United Nations, human rights and the rules-based international order.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (spoke in Spanish): The impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exposed, as never before, the true nature of the current unfair and unsustainable international order. Never before has humankind had such tremendous scientific and technical potential and such a remarkable capacity to generate wealth and well-being; yet never before has the world been so unequal and the inequality so great.

A total of 828 million people, 10 per cent of the world's population, suffer from hunger, and nearly 50 million children suffer from wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition. Unemployment will affect 207 million people in 2022, 21 million more than in 2019. At the height of the fourth industrial revolution, 773 million human beings cannot read and write.

Nearly 6.5 million people died due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The vaccines to combat it are inaccessible to 1 billion people in low-income countries. In 2021, transnational pharmaceutical companies earned \$84,588 billion.

Foreign debt has been paid several times over, but it is still multiplying. Paradoxically, global military spending is soaring and, for the first time, exceeds \$2 trillion. Nothing justifies the fact that humankind is still threatened by the existence of almost 13,000 nuclear weapons. We advocate the universality of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. How much more could we do if those resources were spent on promoting health and development? How many deaths from COVID-19 and other causes could have been avoided? How many children would be saved from hunger and preventable or curable diseases?

Greenhouse gases reached record levels in 2021, and it will be the same this year. Average sea levels have reached a new high. The past seven years are the warmest ever recorded. We cannot continue to ignore the warnings of an impending climate catastrophe. We have only one Earth, the only home for all of us, rich and poor. We must act without further delay.

The philosophy of war and plunder and the unreasonable production and consumption patterns of capitalism, denounced by President Fidel Castro, will lead to a calamity. International relations are on a very dangerous path. The United States offensive aimed at subjugating States by means of threats and economic, military and political-diplomatic coercion in order to subject them to an order based on its capricious rules, together with the expansion of NATO and the development of an aggressive doctrine and fifth-generation unconventional warfare, inevitably results in a climate of tension and conflict, whose consequences are unpredictable.

Cuba, a small island developing State, has paid a high price for defending its legitimate right to exist as a sovereign and independent nation. For more than six decades, we have resisted a ruthless and unilateral economic, commercial and financial blockade, which has intensified to unprecedented levels since 2019 and during the pandemic.

Thirty years since this Assembly's first resolution against the blockade (resolution 47/19), the Government of the United States continues to ignore the almost unanimous demand of the international community

to cease its illegal and cruel policy against Cuba. It continues its efforts to generate material shortages, scarcity and suffering, to sow discouragement and dissatisfaction and to cause harm to the Cuban people.

The United States Government reinforces pressure on Governments, banking institutions and companies all over the world interested in having relations with Cuba and persistently pursues all sources of income and foreign currency inflows to the country in order to bring about economic collapse. As a result, the Cuban economy has experienced extreme pressure, which is manifested in industry, service provision, food and medicine shortages and the deterioration of the level of consumption and general well-being of the population. The human damage caused by such a policy to all Cuban families, which is impossible to quantify, is enormous, cruel and immoral. The blockade is an act of economic warfare in peacetime.

The current United States Administration maintains in force the most aggressive means of pressure against our country, adopted by the Government of President Donald Trump. The unjustified inclusion of Cuba on the State Department's arbitrary and unilateral list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism continues. That slanderous classification places a stigma on our companies and financial institutions and makes transactions and the possibility of payments and credits extremely difficult.

Cuba, which has been a victim of State terrorism, does not, and will never, promote terrorism. On the contrary, we condemn it in all its forms and manifestations. The United States Government opportunistically manipulates highly sensitive issues, such as terrorism, religion, democracy, justice, corruption and human rights. Double standards, inconsistency, selectivity and political manipulation damage the cause of human rights. The previous statement by the Czech Foreign Minister, who does not dare to mention the crime of Cuba's blockade, is a sad example.

We have clearly warned the United States Government that the factors that encourage irregular migration and cause loss of life must be addressed, such as its failure, since 2017, to fulfil its obligation under existing bilateral agreements to grant no less than 20,000 annual visas for immigrants, the existence of the Cuban Adjustment Act, politically motivated preferential treatment, restrictive pressure on regular transit countries and the strengthened economic blockade.

Today's announcement that the processing of immigrant visas will resume at the United States Embassy in Havana is a positive step. Cuba reiterates its willingness to move towards a better understanding with the Government of the United States and develop civilized and even cooperative relations between our two countries on the basis of mutual respect and sovereign equality and without undermining our independence and sovereignty, despite profound differences.

We highlight the valuable commitment of and the recent shows of respect by Cubans and Cuban descendants across the world and in this country for the sovereign rights of Cuba, as well as a rejection of the ruthless aggression by the United States, particularly the economic blockade. I am also deeply grateful for the statements made by Heads of State and Government in this general debate, for the historic support of the General Assembly and for the expressions of solidarity towards Cuba by Governments, leaders, political organizations and solidarity, social and popular movements from all over the world. That solidarity and support continue to be essential today.

Despite the enormous challenges, the people and the Government of Cuba have not lost their determination to make progress in building a more just, democratic, prosperous and sustainable socialist society. We defeated coronavirus disease with our own vaccine resources and the strength of our public-health and science system. We were able to collaborate modestly by sending, at the worst moment of the pandemic, 58 medical brigades to 42 countries and territories. We worked to restore our country's economic and social life, support the transformation of our communities and sustain and expand social programmes.

We continue to improve the legal system of law and social justice in our socialist State so as to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights by all Cubans and to enrich the system of social justice that multiple generations have enjoyed. On 25 September, after a broad process of participation and popular consultation, a legislative referendum on a new and inclusive family code will take place. It will be an exercise of genuine direct democracy and the effective popular power of the Cuban people.

"Unity in diversity" was the goal set by former President Raúl Castro. Such unity is possible in the countries of the South and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States — a community that

is growing ever stronger, and which has been creating the conditions for our region to advance towards higher forms of integration and cooperation based on the premises of the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace.

We appreciate the dignified stance taken by several countries of our region against arbitrary exclusions in forums in the hemisphere.

We renew our support for and solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, its constitutional president, Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, and the civil-military unity of its people, in the face of attempts to destabilize and subvert the internal order of that brotherly country. We reject the application of unilateral coercive measures against Venezuela.

We denounce the imperialist attempts to destabilize the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of Nicaragua. We reiterate our firm support for the brotherly Nicaraguan people and its president, Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra.

We stand in solidarity with our sister nations of the Caribbean and support their legitimate demand for reparations for the harmful effects of colonialism and slavery. They need and deserve to receive fair, special and differentiated treatment.

We reaffirm our historic commitment to the self-determination and independence of the people of Puerto Rico.

Haiti needs a special contribution from the international community for its reconstruction and development. Humankind owes a debt to that foundational Republic.

We support the legitimate claim of President Alberto Fernández and the people of the Argentine Republic to sovereignty over the Malvinas, the South Sandwich and South Georgia islands and the surrounding maritime areas. We express our full solidarity to the Vice-President of Argentina, Mrs. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who, victim of unjust and unfounded harassment by the courts and the media, recently suffered a vicious assassination attempt.

We reiterate our firm commitment to peace in Colombia. The manifest willingness of the current President Gustavo Petro Urrego and of the parties concerned to achieve peace deserves the support of the region and the international community.

The necessary resources must be provided to support the African Union's Agenda 2063, which sets the road map for the development of this sister continent.

We advocate the search for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on Syria, demand the cessation of external interference and call for full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We support a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, which guarantees the true exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to build their own State within the pre-1967 borders, with its capital in East Jerusalem. We also call for an end to the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the Saharawi people.

We reject the unilateral coercive measures imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We condemn the imposition of unjust unilateral economic measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and external interference in its affairs.

We oppose interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

We reaffirm our rejection of the imposition of unilateral sanctions against the Russian Federation.

We condemn the unfounded smear campaigns against the People's Republic of China and attempts to harm its territorial integrity and sovereignty. We reiterate our unwavering support for the one-China principle.

We are committed to a serious, constructive and realistic diplomatic solution to the current war in Ukraine — one that is conducted through peaceful means and in line with international law in a manner that guarantees the security and sovereignty of all.

Cuba will continue to raise its voice in rejection of domination and hegemony in the form of unilateral coercive measures, genocidal blockades and the attempt to impose a single culture and model on the rest of the world. We will never cease to champion the independence, sovereignty and free will of the people, without foreign interference or intervention.

Because of our glorious past and for the sake of the present and future of new generations of Cubans, under the leadership of the President Miguel Díaz-

Canel Bermúdez, we will be creative in our resistance and will fight tirelessly until we meet our dreams of peace and development, with social equity and justice for Cuba and for the rest of the world.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Naledi Pandor, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa.

Mrs. Pandor (South Africa): Allow me to join all speakers before me in congratulating the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on his election and in wishing him well in his role. I also thank the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session for his excellent leadership. Finally, I thank Secretary-General Guterres and the Deputy Secretary-General for their ongoing leadership of our multilateral Organization.

We meet at a time when the United Nations family is facing its greatest tests. The States Members of the United Nations have to work with the Organization to develop effective responses to the current challenges. As the theme of the General Assembly indicates, those challenges are diverse, immense, yet interconnected, and no country can respond alone. Some have referred to this moment as a key turning point in history. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war strongly influence those attitudes today. However, for South Africa, the real inflection point will be a world attending fully to the needs of the marginalized and the forgotten. Our greatest global challenges are poverty, inequality joblessness and a feeling of being entirely ignored and excluded. Acting on the 2021 *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) vision of the Secretary-General should become the major objective of this time — because addressing poverty and underdevelopment will, in our view, be the beginnings of the real inflection point in human history.

The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its human rights protocols all commit us to protecting all people without distinction of any kind. We must acknowledge that we face these crises today because we have not always upheld those foundational principles consistently and fairly. We believe that international law matters when this one is affected, but does not matter when this other one is affected. That does not help to uphold international law.

We have learned a great deal from the COVID-19 pandemic. It has provided us with a road map on what

we should do as the global community and what we should not do in order to address global challenges. We need to use the lessons learned from the pandemic effectively. There were some noble initiatives, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), co-chaired by President Ramaphosa of South Africa, the African Union champion for the COVID-19 response, as well as the Prime Minister of Norway. The ACT-A initiative laid the basis for a fairer distribution of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. We would like today to thank all of the countries that have acted on their financial commitment to the ACT-A initiative.

Global solidarity is also required if we are to meet other pressing challenges, such as energy and food insecurity, climate change and the devastation caused by conflicts, including the existential threat of nuclear weapons.

Up to now, instead of working collectively to address those challenges, we have grown further apart as geopolitical tensions and mistrust permeate our relations. We should, however, move forward in solidarity, united in efforts to address our common global challenges to ensure sustainable peace and development.

One of the tasks we must successfully implement in order to ensure developing countries are not left behind when treatments are available is to create and support research and innovation capacity in Africa and other parts of the world for vaccine production, to invest in strengthened public-health systems and to produce thousands more qualified professional health workers. All of that requires sustainable investment in higher education research institutions and in global research cooperation.

The mobilization of resources and capabilities to strengthen the pandemic response and the preparedness of all nations must be substantially increased. It would be a tragic indictment on all of us as leaders if future pandemics found the poorest as unprepared as many were for COVID-19.

We need to strengthen the global health architecture in order to ensure that we are better able to meet the challenges of new pandemics and other infectious diseases of concern. South Africa is proud to be part of the solution to those problems through the recent establishment of the first mRNA global-technology transfer hubs, which will contribute to the security of

supply of life-saving medication for African countries and other developing countries.

South Africa, like many other developing countries, faces huge development challenges, including in our energy sector. We need to collectively address global energy shortages, including by deploying innovative solutions that are cheaper, cleaner and more accessible. Working with international partners, South Africa is developing its Just Energy Transition Plan in order to significantly reduce harmful emissions in our country. We are working on an expanded green economy intervention that is gaining significant momentum in our country.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for focusing attention during this session of the General Assembly on transforming education. Education remains one of the most important drivers to end poverty and inequality, and we will work towards increasing access to education that is affordable as a country and as a continent. South Africa has no-fee schools at primary and secondary levels to allow the most vulnerable learners to access compulsory education. We also have a State bursary scheme for poor students who qualify for tertiary education. Over the years those measures have served to increase the enrolment of learners previously unable to access education. In the field of research and innovation, we believe we need more partnerships such as the Square Kilometre Array science infrastructure project hosted in South Africa and Australia, an international partnership that is one of the largest joint scientific endeavours in history. Partnerships of that nature must be encouraged in order to leverage scientific breakthroughs for development purposes.

We also believe that the multilateral trading system must be strengthened so that we can create an environment that is genuinely conducive to fair trade and provides opportunities for developing economies. If actionable steps such as those are not taken, developing countries will remain subject to an unbalanced global financial and trading system. Let us use this moment of renewal to reiterate our commitment to multilateralism as the only means for building a better world. The United Nations itself must of course be transformed so that it fulfils its role in a way that is cognizant of current global dynamics. It is unacceptable that 77 years after the establishment of the United Nations, five nations wield disproportionate decision-making power in the system as a whole. Its transformation must include more representative, transparent and accountable organs of

global governance. In order for our Organization to be effective, the General Assembly must be revitalized and the Security Council reformed. Nor will we have a credible Organization if it cannot hold persistent transgressors of the Charter accountable.

We believe we must act immediately to protect the environment and the world we live in, for ourselves and future generations. While Africa is the region least responsible for the climate crisis, it finds itself at the epicentre of its worst impacts. We should therefore emerge from the twenty-seventh Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27), in Egypt, with an agreement that contains enhanced and balanced actions on adaptation, mitigation and financing. It must of course take into account our common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. In addition, we must agree at COP 27 on a mechanism for loss and change. In South Africa, our Cabinet has approved wide-ranging policies to ensure that we can meet our newly determined climate-change targets. We have established a climate finance task team to lead and coordinate negotiations with international partner groups in order to give effect to the Just Energy Transition Partnership, which seeks to address South Africa's investment needs in infrastructure with the aim of facilitating our phase-down of coal so as to ensure that no one is left behind.

I do not need to reiterate that building a better world requires peace and stability. South Africa continues to believe that conflict resolution should not come through fuelling conflicts but through investing in efforts aimed at political dialogue. We should aspire to peace as a global public good. There have been no winners of the wars of the past seven decades. Instead, they have engendered strife, distrust among nations, divisions — as we are seeing this week — a perpetual misallocation of resources to weapons, and increased poverty and underdevelopment. Those are all features and effects of war.

While we work to address contemporary clashes, we should not ignore long-standing conflicts such as that of the people of Palestine, which has been on the United Nations agenda throughout the seven decades of the Organization's existence. We cannot ignore the words of Daniel Levy, the former Israeli negotiator at the Oslo talks, who addressed the Security Council recently (see S/PV.9116) and referred to the increasingly weighty body of scholarly, legal and public opinion

that considers Israel to be perpetrating apartheid in the territories under its control. Israel must be held accountable for its destructive actions, which have significantly impaired the possibility of a two-State solution. Similarly, we cannot ignore the decades-long struggle for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We must treat all conflicts across the globe with equal indignation, no matter the colour or creed of the people affected. South Africa also calls for an end to the embargo on Cuba, which continues to impede the right to development of its people. In the same vein, we call for an end to unilateral coercive measures against Zimbabwe, which have compounded the problems experienced by its people and have a detrimental effect on the broader Southern African region.

Our quest to build a better world will remain unfulfilled as long as people are still discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language. We have a responsibility to make sure that every girl child receives an education and that every woman has an opportunity to work, study or start a business and has choice and control over her life and body. We must also ensure that more women speak at the General Assembly. We need to end the violence perpetrated against the most vulnerable, most often women and children. We have witnessed that women in conflict situations are particularly vulnerable, including women journalists. The murder of Shireen Abu Akleh and others is a stark reminder of the danger that women in conflict situations face. We must do all we can to protect them and make every effort to hold those who harm them accountable.

We must also strengthen the capacity of the African continent's young people and draw on their voices. In that regard, we need to harness the demographic dividend by maximizing our investment in quality education as a means for addressing intergenerational poverty and ensuring inclusive economies.

Africa is home to more than 1.3 billion people. It is fast emerging from centuries of colonialism, occupation and exploitation, as well as wilful neglect and underdevelopment. We now have an African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, and the countries of Africa are laying a firm foundation for a new era of trade, commerce and productivity. Our countries are establishing the conditions for the seamless flow of goods and services between African markets, as well as the growth of industry and the construction of the

roads, bridges, railway lines, ports and power stations that will support growth. As we continue our efforts to end war, conflict and insurgency in several parts of our continent and prevent unconstitutional seizures of power, we will continue to seek greater alignment between our agenda and that of the United Nations and our own body, the African Union.

To overcome all those acutely global challenges, we must agree to a common path out of an increasingly polarized world. A rules-based international system, predicated on international law and strict adherence to the provisions of the United Nations Charter, is essential. Such a system should safeguard the interests of all, not only powerful countries.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Secretary-General through his vision in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which we strongly support. We believe that he has provided us with options to put aside our differences, build trust and forge a world where future generations will prosper and thrive. That, and not a mandate of division and conflict, should be the mandate that we adopt.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Roberto Álvarez Gil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Álvarez Gil (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin my statement by conveying the apologies of our President, Mr. Luis Abinader Corona, who, for unexpected reasons resulting from Hurricane Fiona, which has severely affected several provinces of our country, was unable to participate in this important general debate.

I cannot continue without first expressing our condolences to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as to the members and observers of the Commonwealth of Nations, on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her example of dedication to public service will be remembered forever.

After a painful period, which left millions of victims, we are once again in this great setting, since, thanks to science, we have managed to overcome the worst effects of the coronavirus disease. But who would have foreseen that, in the twenty-first century, the spectre of war would once again haunt Europe? It has been a severe test, and we will hopefully learn lessons that better prepare us for the challenges ahead.

Those would be preventable situations if there were the will to work together to find answers to the pressing problems facing humankind. That should be clear to us by now because, in a globalized world, there are no borders when it comes to the effects of epidemics, conflicts and violence. Precisely because ours is such an intertwined world, far-reaching goals always require “transformative solutions to interlocking challenges”, as the theme of this session of the General Assembly aptly puts it.

It is essential to recognize that this Organization needs major reforms to shake it out of the comfort in which it has been operating. It must be stressed that what is important to our countries is to consolidate a renewed multilateralism. As part of a substantive reform, the General Assembly must be given greater powers and participation in order to reduce the excessive use of the veto in the Security Council, especially when it comes to issues involving human rights violations and support for humanitarian assistance.

Another pressing issue is climate change and its devastating effects, which call for proactive solidarity with those that are the least able to deal with it effectively. As an island, our country is ready to make concrete proposals in the context of the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Naturally, our positions, as small island developing States, demand that the countries that contribute most to global warming maintain on their agendas a vital cooperation mechanism with those that suffer the most from the effects of climate change. We therefore seek a greater commitment to funding for adaptation and mitigation given the crisis.

Small countries, such as ours, are significantly increasing their education programmes, at the expense of other essential aspects of development. For that reason, we attach particular importance to the Summit on Transforming Education and the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office and Youth Mobilization Day. Our country has a population of 70 per cent young people. We believe in their meaningful, full and equal participation in decision-making.

Today humankind needs results that promote peace and prevent new conflicts, especially those that pose a threat to the very existence of the planet. The Dominican Republic therefore supports the total elimination of nuclear weapons and, as proof of that,

tomorrow we will deposit our instrument of ratification for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

As part of that commitment to multilateralism and a greater presence in the community of international organizations, our country is seeking a seat on the Human Rights Council for the period from 2024 to 2026. It is our genuine desire to be part of that Council for the first time and, to that end, we hope to have the support of this community of nations.

The twenty-first century ushered in many positive developments to improve the living conditions of all humankind, but, unfortunately, events such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have created not only distress due to the loss of human lives, but also a dangerous increase in hunger in various regions, many of which are far removed from that conflict. With Russia and Ukraine being the world’s main producers of grain and fertilizers, the conflict has jeopardized the global distribution of that important food source, not to mention how Europe is being affected by shortages of fuel, of which Russia is a major supplier.

We welcome the Security Council’s extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) until July 2023, including the establishment of a unit to deal with sexual and gender-based violence, one of the most abhorrent manifestations of that violent context.

The expected results of BINUH are dependent, first, on Haitians reaching a national agreement as a starting point to combat and rein in the gangs and, secondly, on ensuring the holding of elections as soon as conditions allow.

Unfortunately, that approach has not succeeded. In that regard, the Dominican Republic believes that, as we have reiterated numerous times, stabilization efforts in Haiti must be focused on immediate peacemaking and political dialogue as the only appropriate means to deal with the violence and disorder.

As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti has stated, I would like to reiterate that criminal gangs have increased their suffocating grip on Port-au-Prince, and everything suggests that the Haitian National Police does not have the capacity to contain them. It is the responsibility of the Haitian authorities to control and put an end to the gang activity that is resulting in crimes so heinous they may amount to crimes against humanity.

We must take off our blindfolds and acknowledge that the Haitian National Police alone is not able to carry out the capacity-building necessary to maintain order and subdue the gangs. Security Council resolution 2645 (2022) puts us in a position to implement that necessary process and to take the decisions most needed for preventing the situation in Haiti from completely exceeding the reach of normal channels. The paragraphs of the resolution are indeed binding, and I would therefore like to highlight the following.

First, we need to ban without delay the illicit transfer and trafficking of small arms, light weapons and ammunition to anyone who participates in or supports gang violence, criminal activities or human rights abuses in Haiti.

Secondly, we emphasize the importance of taking appropriate measures, including by freezing the assets or banning the travel of those involved in promoting the state of violence and terror prevailing in Haiti and affecting the entire region.

Thirdly, the actions to be taken by the Secretary-General with regard to enhancing security support for the Haitian National Police's efforts to combat the high levels of violence, as stipulated in paragraph 10 of resolution 2645 (2022), must be carried out with the urgency they demand.

Fourthly, an urgent Haitian-led political agreement needs to be reached by all the parties concerned with a view to organizing legislative and presidential elections that include the full participation of the entire population, especially that of women, young people and civil society.

In that regard, we consider it important to strongly endorse what Secretary-General António Guterres stated in his interview on French television on 18 September — that it is imperative to address the security situation in Haiti and that, in addition to capacity-building for police training, what is needed is a robust police force that is capable of restoring peace and putting an end to the violence perpetrated by armed gangs, which have permeated the political and economic power structures.

We have asked ourselves on many occasions whether the most catastrophic event for the Haitian people was the 2010 earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince, causing the death of some 220,000 people, including 102 United Nations staff members, or the

current situation, which may be characterized as a low-intensity conflict. The answer, I have no doubt, is that, despite the horrible suffering caused by the earthquake, the current situation is more desperate for the Haitian people.

In the face of the earthquake in 2010, all Haitians came together in solidarity as one people and worked to support and rescue their neighbours. Similarly, concerted action was also taken at the global level to deliver relief to Haiti. The Dominican people of course immediately came to the aid of our Haitian brothers and sisters. In addition to the natural disasters it has faced, in 1986 Haiti's entire population, compelled by its civic spirit, came together to end the dictatorship that had lasted there for more than two decades. In other words, the Haitian people have historical experience in uniting together to face adversity.

Today the situation is dramatically different. Faced with the inability of the authorities to establish order and ensure public security, most people are paralysed with fear and, as a result, the resilient Haitian population feels abandoned to its own fate. The violence, which has created deep fragmentations in society, makes even the most basic social cohesion impossible, while Haitians are left to wait in despair for the delayed help of the international community. As President Abinader Corona said last year in his address to the General Assembly, Haiti can wait no longer (see A/76/PV.9). We must act responsibly, and we must act now.

The Dominican Republic reaffirms its belief that the only way to secure a lasting and sustainable response to the Haitian crisis is to ensure that it comes from Haitian people themselves. Despite the difficulties in reaching agreements, we urge and hope for that to happen so as to enable the people of Haiti to take the path required for achieving the consensus needed in their society to overcome such a grave situation. International collaboration is vital if we are to successfully bring stability and peace to the people of Haiti, its neighbours and the region. That is our only objective.

The Dominican Republic was a signatory to the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 and continues to fulfil its obligations with the same sense of responsibility with which it has done so for 77 years. We have played a role in the General Assembly's adoption of historic decisions and resolutions. The Assembly can rest assured that our country will continue to play its part in the concert of nations. We stand ready to continue

contributing to the strengthening of the United Nations, an instrument that continues to be fundamental to the maintenance of world peace and security.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Arnaldo André-Tinoco, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

Mr. André-Tinoco (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica congratulates the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on his election. We are confident that his extensive political experience will be crucial to the success of the work ahead.

A maelstrom of challenges is shaking the foundations of our Organization. The pandemic has been raging for three years now, and 30.3 per cent of humankind have yet to receive a single vaccine. The climate crisis and biodiversity loss are hitting us mercilessly and without discrimination. We are currently experiencing that at first hand in Pakistan, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica. Yet as the most vulnerable countries we are the ones stepping up our efforts, creating large protection and conservation areas and increasing our adaptation and mitigation efforts, while the biggest carbon emitters and those responsible for the climate catastrophe continue to ignore their obligations.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine not only violated the principles of the Charter of the United Nations but also provoked a humanitarian, fuel and financial crisis that will drive millions of people into food insecurity and poverty.

Moreover, the invasion has also threatened our collective security system and provoked renewed division and polarization into geopolitical and economic blocs that pit East against West and North against South. All that is happening at the very moment when we needed to build more bridges and fewer walls, when we should not lose sight of the situations in Yemen and Mali, in Myanmar and Syria, in Libya and Haiti, in Tigray and the Sahel and between Israel and Palestine.

The attacks on democracy and human rights, especially those of women and girls, also know no borders. The decline of democracy is evident in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the Asia-Pacific and my own region, where the situation in Nicaragua demands the urgent attention of the international community to ensure the release of hundreds of political prisoners, the restoration of freedom of expression and the press, civil

society's right of association and a return to democracy. In terms of rights, the cruellest example can be found in Afghanistan, where for the past year girls above the sixth grade have been forbidden to go to school, leaving them even more exposed to violence, poverty and exploitation. We have come to the General Assembly to identify comprehensive solutions to the multiple crises we face, because it is impossible to end poverty without empowering women and girls, ensure respect for human rights without addressing climate change, and address the reform of the international financial system without new parameters for the allocation of assistance.

First, for Costa Rica, the response to the multiple crises we face must be based on a rights and obligations approach. Human rights and unequivocal respect for human dignity and value are not just words. They are obligations undertaken by States, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all our human rights treaties and instruments. They are also the expression of the legitimate and universal aspirations of every person, of all peoples, who after all are the ones who enable us to be in this solemn Hall and to speak on their behalf. Costa Rica too faces challenges and gaps with regard to the full enjoyment of human rights, the building of a culture of peace and non-discrimination and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are aware that human rights are essential to combating poverty, inequality and exclusion. They are not a stumbling block, and nor should they be. They are nothing less than the only way forward.

Costa Rica has never closed its doors to migrants who see in our country a route of passage or a destination to integrate into our society. In 2021, we were fourth in the world in terms of receiving new refugee applications per capita. And we welcome the largest number of Nicaraguan citizens of any country in the world. However, our economic situation and tight finances, together with massive migratory flows, limit our ability to take action and jeopardize the shelter that we always provided to the hundreds of thousands of people who have sought refuge on our soil in the past. It is with a real sense of urgency that we call on the support of the international community to address that challenge, which has been aggravated not only by conflict and poverty but also by the impact of climate change.

In a context of multiple and accumulated crises, human rights must forge new paths. Costa Rica

welcomed the General Assembly's recognition on 28 July of the universal right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (resolution 76/300). For my country that is a beacon of hope comparable to the proclamation of the right to water, to development or to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is the right response to our triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and the loss of biodiversity. The resolution is a point of departure rather than of arrival. Costa Rica will continue to work with Member States, the United Nations and all stakeholders to break down the silo mentality and provide effective solutions to human problems, especially for those who suffer the most — the most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded.

True to our commitment to the rights agenda, Costa Rica has decided to submit its candidacy for election to the Human Rights Council for the period from 2023 to 2025. Costa Rica respectfully requests the support of the members of the General Assembly for its candidacy. Our country is an ambitious actor willing to watch over the rights of all people everywhere in the world, as well as a country that will readily commit to dialogue, mutual understanding, cooperation and solidarity in support of humankind.

Secondly, human security is key to global security. We find it inconceivable that while millions of people are waiting for life-saving vaccines, medicines or food, the richest countries continue to prioritize spending on arms at the expense of people's welfare, climate health and equitable recovery. In 2021, global military spending continued to increase for the seventh consecutive year to reach the highest figure ever recorded in history. Today Costa Rica reiterates its call for a gradual and sustained reduction in military spending, because the more weapons we produce, the more weapons will escape even our best efforts to manage and control them. It is about prioritizing the lives and well-being of people and the planet over the profits to be made from weapons and war. It is about investing in and actively building alternative approaches to security, approaches that facilitate cooperation and care rather than competition and violence.

We also believe that it is possible to achieve peace and security without resorting to the use of nuclear weapons. Since the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use, Costa Rica urges more States to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as

well as to adhere to the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety and its action plan.

We also urge the Russian Federation to cease its attacks on Ukraine and its civilians and critical infrastructure, to demilitarize the Zaporizhzhya plant and not to resort to nuclear coercion, which we condemn in the strongest terms. Costa Rica calls on both parties to ensure respect, at all times and in all circumstances, for international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The third transformative solution must be financial. We middle-income countries face significant inequalities and challenges, such as increased fiscal tightening, which limit our capacity for action and investment and threaten our social fabric. And even though we are home to the highest percentage of poor people and migrants in the world, our categorization does not allow us to access official development assistance or obtain concessional financing on favourable and fair terms. It is therefore vital to go beyond measurements such as gross domestic product per capita with new parameters for the allocation of aid, investment and international cooperation that take into account other aspects, such as structural deficiencies, climate risks, market fluctuations and fiscal stability.

The fourth action requires a higher level of ambition and urgency to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Safeguarding marine resources and the health of the ocean is critical to this end.

In the front line against the natural disasters that hit our countries, droughts and heat waves, forest fires and unprecedented floods are people. With them in mind, Costa Rica, together with France and the United Kingdom, is leading the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which seeks global conservation of 30 per cent of the Earth and 30 per cent of the ocean by 2030.

Costa Rica, which has achieved the conservation of 30 per cent of the waters under its national jurisdiction nine years ahead of schedule, invites other States to meet this shared goal. In addition, together with French President Emmanuel Macron, we announced our interest in co-hosting, in 2025, the third United Nations Ocean Conference and in holding a meeting in mid-2024 in Costa Rica that will bring together the scientific community and civil society to formulate innovative solutions for improving ocean governance.

The ocean is an immeasurable and critical resource for the continuity of life on Earth. Therefore, on this International Day of Peace, Costa Rica fervently calls for the adoption of a declaration of peace for the ocean. We cannot survive as a species without our ocean. We will not be able to fulfil our various obligations vis-à-vis the Sustainable Development Goals without a healthy ocean.

Let us support the Secretary-General's initiative for a New Agenda for Peace, which strengthens our collective capacity to prevent conflicts and resolve existing ones with sustainable, locally driven solutions.

Let us renew the social contract between our Governments and our peoples, anchoring governance arrangements in human rights, trust, inclusion, protection and participation.

Let us ensure gender parity and empower women — and in particular girls — in all spheres of life.

Let us seek new methods to measure development that adequately reflect such essential aspects as environmental sustainability, inequalities and structural gaps, the quality of institutions and the prevalence of the rule of law.

Let us build a more resilient, transparent and inclusive multilateral system and a United Nations that better embraces the needs and perspectives of all, especially within the Security Council.

Let us do more to pave the way for the United Nations to fully rise to the occasion, to do all that it has the capacity and determination to do, to help it and our own countries change the course of our common destiny while there is still a destiny to change.

Let us act with conviction and courage, with determination and with a real sense of urgency. The time is now.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gustav N. Aitaro, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Aitaro (Palau): I bring greetings from our President, Mr. Surangel S. Whipps Jr., and the people of Palau.

It is a great pleasure to be able to address the General Assembly and, at the outset, I wish to congratulate the President of the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, and pledge Palau's support

during the course of his term. I also wish to thank the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, a fellow islander — from Maldives — who was gracious enough to take the long journey to Palau during his term, Honourable Minister Abdulla Shahid, for his astute leadership over the course of the last year.

We meet at a precarious time. Thankfully, the world has made great strides in collectively combating the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The people of Palau thank all our international partners and friends who came to our aid during this difficult time, particularly the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Australia and others. The collaboration was successful in minimizing the impact of the pandemic in our small and vulnerable community.

Regrettably, while the world made great progress in pandemic recovery, new and unprecedented challenges have emerged. The war in Ukraine rages on, causing damage to infrastructure, homes, schools and cultural sites, killing innocent people and terrorizing the children of the country. Palau continues to strongly condemn the war in Ukraine and joins the international community in calling for Russia to withdraw from Ukraine's sovereign territory. We also extend our prayers to and solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

While war may be viewed as a heart attack, the climate crisis has been like diabetes — insidious and wearing us down constantly and consistently year after year. I would like to take this opportunity to join fellow leaders to express my country's deepest sympathy with our brothers and sisters in Pakistan and those impacted by Hurricane Fiona with respect to the awful climate devastation they have experienced. These catastrophes represent the unfortunate "new normal" for many in small island developing States.

Climate change is not only about hurricanes and floods. It is about droughts. It is about wildfires. It is about our ability to provide drinking water and feed our people when our lakes run dry and our aquaculture facilities and reefs are ravaged by typhoons. We face all of these challenges and more in Palau today. Our Government's inability to buy our children new textbooks or improve their nutrition programmes is because so many of our fiscal resources and energy are dedicated to addressing disaster relief. How many times do the people of our island of Kayangel have to rebuild their homes from storms before they give up?

How many times, Mr. President, does your home have to be swept away before it breaks your spirit?

Despite the challenges of this last year, we have begun to see glimmers of hope in the fight against climate change. Youth, the private sector and civil service are more engaged than ever. Over 150,000 young people went up to Glasgow for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and provided much-needed pressure for leaders to take action, and after four failed Conferences of the Parties, the Glasgow Climate Pact was finally adopted. Even major emitting countries like the United States and Australia have finally passed significant legislation to shift their domestic policies. None of these efforts get us to 1.5°C yet, but they represent a great step forward, and we commend their efforts.

As the Russian-driven energy crisis has shown us, energy independence and renewable energy sources build resilience into our economies. Palau has felt the strain of skyrocketing energy costs, which is fuelling our ambition to achieve a 100 per cent transition to renewable energy. In Palau, we have a saying “*Sel om tobed el mora buai, em chisngekl mesa blim.*” Translated, it is like the English saying, “people who live in glass houses should not throw stones”, meaning that before criticizing other people’s actions, one must look at one’s own.

It is in this spirit that our President, Mr. Surangel Whipps Jr., has committed to Palau making the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy by 2032. The message that we want to convey is clear: despite our small size, our remote location, our lack of access to financing and technology and the unique vulnerabilities of being a small island developing State (SIDS), we are committed to moving towards a net-zero carbon world. We are committed because our planet and our children need us all to be committed.

Palau extends its sincere thanks to the Government of Japan, which has committed a grant to help us update our country’s power grid to allow for the transition to renewables. We are grateful for Japan’s continued friendship and support.

Our small country had the pleasure of hosting the seventh Our Ocean Conference, together with the United States, in April of this year. The conference brought together more than 600 participants, representing more than 70 foreign delegations and 150 non-State actors. It

concluded with 410 commitments, worth \$16.35 billion. As a SIDS, we thought that it was particularly important to bring people from all over the world to Palau to show them first-hand the challenges that we face as SIDS, whether it is plastic pollution, sea level rise or the impact on our fragile corals, which underpin our major economic driver of blue tourism. The conference also highlighted the importance of ocean-based climate solutions, including shipping decarbonization, marine nature-based solutions and offshore renewable energy, in keeping the 1.5°C global warming target within reach and improving global climate resilience.

We are incredibly grateful for the wonderful partnership of the United States in co-hosting the Our Ocean Conference, which was a success due, in large part, to its camaraderie and efforts. We also thank the Republic of China-Taiwan for its generosity and support in upgrading our conference venues. Likewise, we thank our partner Japan and the Sasakawa Foundation for their generosity and significant technical support. Many other partners also contributed to make the event a success for climate action.

As a blue ocean State, Palau has been the leader in oceans issues, and we will continue to be. As co-Chair of the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy with Norway, we are pleased to have recently welcomed the United Kingdom as our seventeenth member of the ocean panel, and we are committed to working with it and all panel members to achieve 100 per cent ocean management for a sustainable ocean economy, in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand. Palau believes in the 30 by 30 initiative, and we urge all Member States to adopt management plans with a minimum marine protected area covering 30 per cent of the exclusive economic zone.

As a large ocean State, we do not believe that there is a sustainable solution to ocean issues without incorporating management and rules in the high seas. The Pacific is disappointed that the efforts of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction could not conclude a treaty text, as the preservation and fair and equitable sharing of benefits of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction is long overdue as an extension of the world’s commitment to combating climate change. The opportunity to establish regional marine protected areas, build more maritime surveillance capacity and facilitate the transfer of

marine technology should not be further delayed. We owe it to our future generations to come together for the sustainable use of humankind's common heritage.

Palau is a champion of the moratorium on deep-sea mining. The deep sea makes up 90 per cent of the marine environment, and we cannot allow great harm to come to such biologically rich areas. Before any nation is allowed to contract for deep-sea mining projects, the global community must enact serious reform of the International Seabed Authority and international regulations that comply with the mission of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to preserve and protect the marine environment.

Let me now turn to an issue that deeply impacts both Palau and SIDS. The adoption of a multidimensional vulnerability index cannot be discussed only in financial board rooms, for it has real impacts on the lives of island peoples. The multidimensional vulnerability index analysis by the United Nations Development Programme found that most SIDS are more vulnerable than their income level would suggest. We do not come here as a proud people asking for handouts. However, we need tailored solutions for our problems as small countries and meaningful access to financing. The adoption of the multidimensional vulnerability index facilitates climate action and can bring equity to global financing.

As members should know, we have a Compact of Free Association agreement with the United States. In doing so, our people signal that we have shared values with the United States. The United States also promised to help provide for our development needs after Palau gained independence from it. Since the time our Compact was signed, however, some development has occurred, but it is too little. Our economy has not grown sufficiently and is fragile, as demonstrated by a contraction of more than 30 per cent during the past five years. Much of that is due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but some to geopolitics. We should not be so vulnerable. We have been forced to borrow more than we should have to, and we lack essential infrastructure.

A strength of our association is that it requires the Governments of Palau and the United States to periodically reconsider the relationship and its terms and review Palau's requirements for assistance for public services and economic development, and it commits both of our Governments to act on the conclusions.

The United States has initiated the required thirtieth anniversary review. Its bureaucracy initially proposed unacceptably inadequate assistance, but President Biden appointed an envoy who, we trust, will get his Government to at least meet Palau's minimum needs so that our people can attain a decent standard of living without having to leave. That is essential to enabling the relationship to endure, as my Government envisions. It hopes that, when we next address the General Assembly, we will be able to report an agreement in that regard. We need greater financial and programmatic assistance and will require those for the foreseeable future and for as long as free association continues. But what we want most are Government measures and public and private investment to grow our economy.

We are deeply grateful for the assistance that the United States and other Governments, such as Taiwan and Japan, have provided, but we need more now, just as we need measures to combat and adapt to climate change's rising seas. In our case, that includes concrete action to enable our people, and, right now, especially our hospital, to move from land that now regularly floods to a higher-elevation area.

We continue to view the United Nations as an important mechanism for achieving international peace and security and sustainable development for all countries, but, in particular, for the voiceless and the most vulnerable.

I reiterate in the strongest terms that this organ can demonstrate leadership by accepting Taiwan into the United Nations system as a valuable contributor to our collective efforts to promote peace and collaborate on international matters. Most States Members of the United Nations accept Taiwan passports; so, too, should the United Nations system recognize and incorporate the Taiwanese people and enrich this organ with the benefits of their participation. Doing so is a realization of the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Taiwanese people are part of the global community and a valuable partner in combating climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. With the many challenges facing our planet and people, we need every person, including the 23 million people of Taiwan, to be part of the solutions.

When linguists studied our local Palauan language, they discovered that it was anchored in the word "heart"; *beltik er reng*, which translates as "found heart", means love. We are a people and a culture who navigate with

our hearts, and that is the message that I would like to leave Member States with today. Palau chooses love of self, love of neighbour, love of planet and love as a virtue. We believe that choosing love is our only way forward for collective peace and prosperity.

There is no profit sufficiently large to be worth the price of war or the destruction of our planet. Above all the highs and lows of this year, I trust that this institution will take away the importance of unity and respect for the rule of law. We are capable of overcoming the immense challenges of our time, but we must do so together.

Address by Ms. Elizabeth Truss, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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

Ms. Elizabeth Truss, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Elizabeth Truss, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and inviting her to address the Assembly.

Ms. Truss (United Kingdom): At the time of its foundation, the United Nations was a beacon of promise. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the building we are in symbolized the end of aggression. For many decades, the United Nations has helped to deliver stability and security in much of the world. It has provided a place for nations to work together on shared challenges, and it has promoted the principles of sovereignty and self-determination even through the Cold War and its aftermath. But today those principles, which have defined our lives since the dark days of the 1940s, are fracturing. For the first time in the history of the General Assembly, we are meeting during a large-scale war of aggression in Europe, and authoritarian States are undermining stability and security around the world. Geopolitics is entering a new era that requires those who believe in the founding

principles of the United Nations to stand up and be counted.

In the United Kingdom, we are entering a new era too. I am joining everyone here just two days after Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was laid to rest. We deeply mourn her passing, and we pay tribute to her service. She was the rock on which modern Britain was built, and she symbolized the post-war values on which the Organization was founded. Our constitutional monarchy, underpinned by a democratic society, has delivered stability and progress. Her late Majesty transcended differences and healed division. We saw that in her visits to post-apartheid South Africa and the Republic of Ireland.

When she addressed this General Assembly 65 years ago (see A/PV.707), she warned that it was vital not only to have strong ideals but also the political will to deliver on them. Now we must show that will. We must fight to defend those ideals. And we must deliver on them for all our peoples. As we say farewell to our late Queen, the United Kingdom opens a new chapter — a new Carolean age — under His Majesty King Charles III. We want this era to be one of hope and progress; one in which we defend the values of individual liberty, self-determination and equality before the law; one in which we ensure that freedom and democracy prevail for all people; and one in which we deliver on the commitments that our late Queen made here 65 years ago. This is about what we do in the United Kingdom and what we do as States Members of the United Nations.

I will therefore set out today the steps we are taking at home in the United Kingdom, our proposed blueprint for the new era we are now in and the new partnerships and instruments that we should collectively adopt. Our commitment to hope and progress must begin at home, in the lives of each and every citizen whom we serve. Our strength as a nation comes from the strong foundations of freedom and democracy. Democracy gives people the right to choose their own path, and it evolves to reflect the aspirations of citizens. It unleashes enterprise, ideas and opportunity. It protects the freedoms that are at the very core of our humanity. By contrast, autocracies sow the seeds of their own demise by suppressing their citizens. They are fundamentally rigid and unable to adapt. Any short-term gains are eroded in the long term because such societies stifle the aspiration and creativity that are vital to long-term growth. A country where artificial intelligence acts as

judge and jury and where there are no human rights and no fundamental freedoms is not the kind of place where anyone truly wants to live, and it is not the kind of world we want to build.

But we cannot simply assume there will be a democratic future. There is a real struggle going on between different forms of society, between democracies and autocracies. Unless democratic societies deliver on the economy and security that our citizens expect, we will fall behind. We need to keep improving and renewing what we are doing for this new era, demonstrating that democracy delivers. As Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, I am determined that we will deliver the progress that people expect. I will lead a new Britain for a new era.

First, that begins with growth and building a British economy that rewards enterprise and attracts investment. Our long-term aim is to get our economy growing at an average of 2.5 per cent. We need that growth to deliver investment around our country, the jobs and high wages that people expect and public services like the National Health Service. We want people to keep more of the money they earn so that they can have more control over their own lives and can contribute to the future.

Secondly, it means securing affordable and reliable energy supplies. We are cutting off the toxic power and pipelines from authoritarian regimes and strengthening our energy resilience. We will ensure that we cannot be coerced or harmed by the reckless actions of rogue actors abroad. We will transition to a future based on renewable and nuclear energy, while ensuring that the gas used during that transition is from reliable sources, including our own North Sea production. We will be a net energy exporter by 2040.

Thirdly, we are safeguarding the security of our economy — the supply chains, the critical minerals, the food and the technology that drive growth and protect people's lives and health. We will not be strategically dependent on those who seek to weaponize the global economy. Instead, we are reforming our economy to get Britain moving, and we want to work with our allies so that we can all move forward together. The free world needs that economic strength and resilience to push back against authoritarian aggression and win this new era of strategic competition. We must do that together. We are therefore building new partnerships around the world. We are fortifying our deep security alliances

in Europe and beyond through NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force. We are deepening our links with fellow democracies such as India, Israel, Indonesia and South Africa. We are building new security ties with our friends in the Indo-Pacific region and the Gulf. We have shown leadership on free and fair trade, striking trade agreements with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and many others. We are also in the process of acceding to the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Rather than exerting influence through debt, aggression and control of critical infrastructure and minerals, we are building strategic ties based on mutual benefit and trust, and we are deepening partnerships such as the Group of Seven and the Commonwealth. We must also collectively extend a hand of friendship to the parts of the world that have too often been left behind and left vulnerable to global challenges, whether that is the Pacific or Caribbean island States dealing with the impact of climate change, or the countries of the Western Balkans facing persistent threats to their stability. The United Kingdom is providing funding, using the might of the City of London and our security capabilities to provide better alternatives to those offered by malign regimes.

The resolute international response to Ukraine has shown how we can deliver decisive collective action. The response has been built on partnerships and alliances, as well as on being prepared to use new instruments, including unprecedented sanctions, diplomatic action and rapid military support. There has been a strength of collective purpose. We have met many times, spoken many times on the phone and made things happen. Now we must use those instruments in a more systematic way to push back on the economic aggression of authoritarian regimes.

The G-7 and our like-minded partners should act as an economic NATO, collectively defending our prosperity. If the economy of a partner is being targeted by an aggressive regime, we should act to support that partner — all for one and one for all. Through the G-7's \$600 billion Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, we provide an honest and reliable alternative for infrastructure investment around the world, free from debt with strings attached. We must go further to friend-shore our supply chains and end strategic dependence. That is how we will build collective security, strengthen our resilience and safeguard freedom and democracy.

Nevertheless, we cannot let up on dealing with the crisis we face today. No one is threatening Russia. Yet, as we meet here today, barbarous weapons are being used to kill and maim people in Ukraine. Rape is being used as an instrument of war. Families are being torn apart. Earlier today, we saw Putin desperately try to justify his catastrophic failures. He is doubling down by sending even more reservists to a terrible fate. He is desperately trying to claim the mantle of democracy for a regime without human rights or freedoms. He is making yet more bogus claims and sabre-rattling threats. That will not work. The international alliance is strong, and Ukraine is strong.

The contrast between Russia's conduct and Ukraine's brave, dignified First Lady, Olena Zelenska, who is here at the United Nations today, could not be more stark. Ukrainians are not just defending their own country, they are defending our values and the security of the whole world. That is why we must act. That is why the United Kingdom will spend 3 per cent of GDP on defence by 2030, thereby maintaining our position as the leading security actor in Europe. That is why at this crucial moment in the conflict, I pledge that we will sustain or increase our military support to Ukraine, for as long as it takes. New weapons from the United Kingdom are arriving in Ukraine as I speak, including more multiple launch rocket system rockets. We will not rest until Ukraine prevails.

In all of those areas, on all of those fronts, the time to act is now. This is a decisive moment in our history — in the history of the Organization and in the history of freedom. The story of 2022 could have been that of an authoritarian State rolling its tanks over the border of a peaceful neighbour and subjugating its people. Instead, it is the story of freedom fighting back. In the face of rising aggression, we have shown that we have the power to act and the resolve to see it through. However, that must not be a one-off. It must be a new era in which we commit to ourselves, our citizens and this institution that we will do whatever it takes — whatever it takes — to deliver for our people and defend our values.

As we mourn our late Queen and remember her call to the Assembly, we must devote ourselves to that task. Britain's commitment to that is total. We will be a dynamic, reliable and trustworthy partner. Together with our friends and allies around the world, we will continue to champion freedom, sovereign and

democracy. Together, we can define this new era as one of hope and progress.

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

Ms. Elizabeth Truss, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for the general debate in this meeting.

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

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (spoke in Arabic): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply, following the statement made by the representative of Morocco (see A/77/PV.5), to refute his misleading allegations that he launched in a desperate attempt to exploit this rostrum to spread propaganda and lies about the conflict in Western Sahara. In that regard, my country's delegation would like to underscore the following points.

First, concerning the legal nature of the conflict in Western Sahara, that issue was and remains one of decolonization, so that the people of Western Sahara can exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and fair referendum, pursuant to all United Nations resolutions adopted since the conflict appeared on the agenda of the United Nations, in particular resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV), on the basis of which it is clear that the two parties to the conflict are Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, which is recognized internationally as the only legitimate representative of the people of Western Sahara.

With regard to the so-called solution that is promoted by imposing so-called self-determination as the only solution, it constitutes a precedent that undermines the foundations of international legitimacy and the Charter of the United Nations, which we must defend in this respected Hall. It is also contrary to the firm doctrine of decolonization established at the United Nations.

Secondly, concerning the round table mechanism, as usual Morocco has exploited that mechanism to promote its colonial approach and attempt to circumvent international legitimacy and change the nature of the conflict from an issue of decolonization into one of a bilateral conflict, in keeping with its illusions, which render that mechanism ineffective and useless.

Thirdly, Algeria has hosted refugees from Western Sahara in Tindouf camps since 31 October 1975. That was the outcome of the illegal occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco, following the departure of the former colonial forces. Algeria remains convinced that the refugee census is a purely technical issue and an integral part of a comprehensive political plan, within the plan for peace that was adopted by the United Nations in 1990.

A census would make no sense without a free and fair referendum that would allow the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination, which is not subject to any statute of limitations, according to international legitimacy and as is the case for other peoples of the world.

Morocco spreads false allegations and slanders about the alleged links between Western Sahara refugees and terrorist groups. That is yet another desperate attempt to distort the will of the people of Western Sahara, who look forward to exercising their legitimate right to self-determination, as do all other peoples of the world.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply to respond to the statement made by the representative of the Czech Republic this evening and to react briefly to a number of similar comments made in statements delivered today and yesterday.

The Czech representative made baseless allegations against a number of countries, including my own, that we categorically reject. In that regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate our Government's eternal commitment to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all our people, particularly our women and girls. It is obvious that double standards are being applied here against the Iranian delegation, which spares no effort when it comes to preserving the rights and dignity of women and girls, because as we heard in its statement, the Czech delegation supports the regime that systematically undermines the rights of the Palestinian people.

We strongly advise that delegation to avoid the politicization of human rights issues. Advocacy for human rights should not interfere with the legal and legitimate sovereign rights of States, and neither should it violate the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We invite that delegation to respect the Charter of the United Nations and international law and avoid any interference in the internal affairs of other Member States.

As reiterated in our earlier statement (see A/77/PV.6), the Islamic Republic of Iran remains a staunch supporter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as one of its original signatories and has fully complied with its commitments under that treaty. We will also continue working with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The meeting rose at 9.15 p.m.

Annex I

Address by Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

Greetings to all people of the world who value peace and unity between different and equal nations! I wish you all peace!

I thank you that we are united in our striving to restore peace and to guarantee peace for any nation that has become a victim of the armed aggression.

A crime has been committed against Ukraine, and we demand just punishment.

The crime was committed against our state borders. The crime was committed against the lives of our people. The crime was committed against the dignity of our women and men.

The crime was committed against the values that make you and me a community of the United Nations.

And Ukraine demands punishment for trying to steal our territory. Punishment for the murders of thousands of people. Punishment for tortures and humiliations of women and men.

Punishment for the catastrophic turbulence that Russia provoked with its illegal war and not only for us, Ukrainians, but for the whole world. For every nation that is represented in this Hall of the UN General Assembly.

I am speaking on behalf of the state, which is forced to defend itself, but has the formula for peace. I am speaking to everyone who wants to hear how to achieve peace.

I will present a formula that can work not only for us, but for anyone who may find themselves in similar circumstances as we did. It is a formula that punishes crime, protects life, restores security and territorial integrity, guarantees security, and provides determination.

There are five preconditions for peace.

Dear Mr. President of the General Assembly!

Dear Secretary-General of the United Nations!

Dear heads of states and governments!

Dear journalists!

Nations of the world!

Ukraine wants peace. Europe wants peace. The world wants peace. And we have seen who is THE ONLY ONE who wants war.

There is only one entity among all UN Member States who would say now, if he could interrupt my speech, that he is happy with this war — with his war. But we will not let this entity prevail over us, even though it is the largest state in the world.

Ukraine showed strength on the battlefield, using its right to self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. And no one will reproach us now or in the future with weakness or inability to fight for ourselves, for our independence.

We are achieving a result in this fight and we see what the end of this war will be, and what will be the guarantees of a stable peace.

The UN Charter proclaims the equality of nations — and we proved that Ukraine is equal among the equals.

The UN Charter protects the inviolability of borders — and we confirm our state borderline by expelling the occupiers outside.

The UN Charter stipulates the value of human rights, dignity and life, and we also stipulate them — with every Ukrainian city freed from Russian occupation.

We did not provoke this war. We held 88 rounds of talks in various formats to prevent this war, just from the beginning of my presidency until February 24 this year.

But Russia — instead of stopping the crime of aggression, which it started back in 2014 — turned it into a full-scale invasion. And we have no choice but to defend ourselves. We do it. We push the aggressor beyond the internationally recognized border of the Ukrainian state.

And this is the first item of our peace formula. Comprehensive item. Punishment.

Punishment for the crime of aggression. Punishment for violation of borders and territorial integrity. Punishment that must be in place until the internationally recognized border is restored. Until the aggression stops. And until the damages and losses for the war are fully compensated.

Therefore, sanctions against the aggressor are a part of the peace formula. Blocking the trade and relations with the aggressor is a part of the peace formula. All this is a punishment.

So long as the aggressor is a party to decision-making in the international organizations, he must be isolated from them — at least until aggression lasts. Reject the right to vote. Deprive delegation rights. Remove the right of veto — if it is a Member of the UN Security Council. In order to punish the aggressor within the institutions.

We should not turn a blind eye to propagandists who justify aggression, but apply a full package of personal restrictions against them. That is a punishment for lying.

Citizens of the aggressor state should not be allowed to enjoy tourism or shopping in the territory of those who value peace, but should be encouraged through visa restrictions to fight against the aggression of their own state. Punish for abetting the evil.

A Special Tribunal should be created to punish Russia for the crime of aggression against our state. This will become signal to all “would-be” aggressors, that they must value peace or be brought to responsibility by the world.

We have prepared precise steps to establish such Tribunal. They will be presented to all states.

Ukraine will appeal to the UN General Assembly to support an international compensation mechanism.

We count on your support.

Russia should pay for this war with its assets. It is also a punishment. This is one of the most terrible punishments for Russian officials, who value money above everything else.

The second item of the peace formula is the protection of life. The most concrete item.

Now, while the sessions of the General Assembly continue, in the Ukrainian town of Izyum, Kharkiv region, the exhumation is under way ... of bodies from a mass burial, which happened when the territory was controlled by Russian troops. The bodies of women and men, children and adults, civilians and soldiers were found there. 445 graves.

There is a family that died under the rubble of a house after a Russian airstrike — father, mother, 6- and 8-year-old girls, grandparents. There is a man who was strangled with a rope. There is a woman with broken ribs and wounds on her body. There is a man who was castrated before the murder, and this is not the first case.

Ask, please, the representatives of Russia why the Russian military are so obsessed with castration. What was done to them so that they want to do this to others?

The only thing that differs the mass burial in Izyum from what the world saw in Bucha is, in fact, the burial. The Russian army was in Izyum for a longer time, and therefore the bodies of the killed people were buried, and not scattered on the streets.

So, how can we allow the Russian army somewhere on Ukrainian soil, knowing that they are committing such mass murders everywhere? We cannot.

We must protect life. The world must protect life. Every state suffering the armed aggression needs the opportunity to protect its citizens and liberate its territory.

If it requires help with weapons or shells — they should be provided. If you need financial help for this, it should be given. If for this, it is necessary to help with the intelligence data — just do it. But what is not needed, is lies.

We can return the Ukrainian flag to our entire territory. We can do it with the force of arms.

But we need time.

We tried to speed it up. We tried to implement the basic provisions of the UN Charter for Ukraine through negotiations.

But Russia is afraid of real negotiations and does not want to fulfill any fair international obligations. It lies to everyone. As it is typical for aggressors, for terrorists.

Even now, when Russia talks about negotiations, it only wants to slow down its retreat. Russia wants to spend the winter on the occupied territory of Ukraine and prepare forces to attempt a new offensive. New Buchas, new Izyums ... Or at least it wants to prepare fortifications on occupied land and carry out military mobilization at home.

We cannot agree to a delayed war. Because it will be even hotter than the war now.

For us, this is a war for life. That is why we need defense support — weapons, military equipment and shells. Offensive weapons, a long-range one is enough to liberate our land, and defensive systems, above all, air defense. And we need financial support — to keep internal stability and fulfill social obligations to our people.

Physical and social protection are two elements of any nation's life. So, the second item of our peace formula is the protection of life. By all available means — allowed by the UN Charter.

The third item of our peace formula is restoring security and territorial integrity.

Look at how many elements of global security Russia has undermined with its war — maritime safety, food safety, radiation safety, energy safety and safety from weapons of mass destruction.

We are already restoring maritime safety and food security. And I thank Mr. Antonio Guterres for his personal involvement. Algeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Israel, India, Iran, Yemen, Cyprus, China, Korea, Lebanon, Türkiye, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Romania and France have already received Ukrainian agricultural products.

And we have to increase the supply by sea. Both under market conditions and within the UN Food Program, for which Ukraine is always a reliable partner.

By the way, despite all the difficulties caused by the war, we decided to provide humanitarian aid to Ethiopia and Somalia, so we will send them an additional amount of our wheat.

But it is more difficult with other security elements.

On the eve of the General Assembly meeting, Russia fired missiles at the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Plant. The explosion hit the station buildings — windows were broken, walls were damaged. The rockets exploded only three hundred meters from the walls of the reactors!

And this is after the IAEA's clear appeal to Russia to stop any hostile activity against any nuclear facilities of Ukraine and, in particular, against the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station — the largest one in Europe, which Russia has turned into a target.

And that makes all of you a target.

Russian radiation blackmailing is something that should concern each and every one of you, because none of you will find a vaccine against radiation sickness.

The cost-of-living crisis continues in dozens of countries, it roots in the destabilization of the energy market. It is necessary to remove the main factor of global price turbulence, namely: Russian energy blackmailing.

It is necessary to cap the prices at which Russia exports its energy re-sources. It is necessary to make Russian oil and gas — just ordinary goods again. Currently, oil and gas are Russia's energy weapons. And that is why it manipulates the markets so that electricity, gas, petrol and diesel become the privilege of few instead of being a common good available to all.

Limiting prices is safeguarding the world. This is the way to restore energy and price security.

But will the world go for it? Or will it be scared? Will it be scared of Russian threats?

It is necessary to take only one strong step, after which everything will become clear. The time has come for this.

This step will put everything in place. After the Russian missile terror. After the massacres. After Mariupol. After the burning of Ukrainian prisoners in Olenivka by the Russian military. After blocking the ports. After the strikes of Russian tanks and missiles on nuclear power plants. And after threats to use nuclear weapons, which have become the rule, not the exception, for Russian propagandists ...

We must finally recognize Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. At all levels. In all countries that confess the values of peace and protection of human life. Legally. Politically.

If you don't have a legal mechanism, you can make a political decision — in the parliaments. This is the foundation for restoring global security. If this strong step is taken, doubts will disappear — whether to take other important steps.

And what is very sensitive — is the border, the territorial integrity.

When one country tries to steal the territory of another state, it puts all world nations under attack.

Global security cannot be restored without restoring the territorial integrity of the nation which suffered the armed aggression.

So, the third item of the Ukrainian peace formula is the restoration of security and territorial integrity. The fourth item is security guarantees.

Every nation has the right to security guarantees. Not only the largest nations. Not only the most fortunate ones.

We have proposals to upgrade the security architecture for Ukraine, and for Europe and the world, which will not allow any more aggression against us. We are already presenting them to partners.

Proposals for legally binding multilateral and bilateral treaties. These are the conditions for the guarantors to act, and the timeline for their actions to bring results — results on land, at sea and in the air; in diplomacy and politics, in economy and finance, in providing weapons and intelligence. Each of you, who will receive the text of our peace formula will also see the details of what we offer as security guarantees.

I do not want to compare our offers with the guarantees of any alliances that exist on the planet now. I want to stress that it is always much better to guarantee the security of a nation, preventively, rather than to stop a war after it has already begun.

And the fifth item of the Ukrainian peace formula is determination. Something without which the other four items will not work.

This is our determination to fight. This is the determination of the partners to help us, and also themselves. And this is the determination of the world to unite

around the one who fights against armed aggression and to call to order the one who threatens all.

So, all five items of our formula:

punishment for aggression;

protection of life;

restoration of security and territorial integrity;

security guarantees;

and determination to defend oneself.

This is the formula of crime and punishment, which is already well known to Russia. And this is the formula of justice and law and order that Russia has yet to learn. As well as any other potential aggressors.

What is not in our formula? Neutrality.

Those who speak of neutrality, when human values and peace are under attack, mean something else. They talk about indifference — everyone for themselves. Here's what they say. They pretend to be interested in each other's problems. They take care of each other formally. They sympathize only for protocol. And that is why they pretend to protect someone, but in reality, they protect only their vested interests. This is what creates the conditions for war. This is what needs to be corrected in order to create conditions for peace.

All you need is determination.

There was a lot of talking about reforming the UN. How did it all end? No result.

If you look carefully at our peace formula, you will see that its implementation is already becoming a de facto reform of the United Nations. Our formula is universal, and unites the North and the South of the world. It calls for the world's majority, and encourages to expand the representation of those who remained unheard.

This is an imbalance when Africa, Latin America, most of Asia, Central and Eastern Europe comply with the right of veto, that they themselves never had.

And this is what Ukraine is talking about. And have you ever heard such words from Russia? But it is a permanent member of the Security Council. For some reason. For what reason, not Japan or Brazil, not Türkiye or India, not Germany or Ukraine. The day will come when this will be resolved.

As for the talks between Ukraine and Russia.

Probably you have happened to hear different words from Russia about the talks — as if they were ready for them. But. They talk about the talks but announce military mobilization. They talk about the talks but announce pseudo referendums in the occupied territories.

What is true then? The military mobilization in Russia is true. Sham referendums are also true. Russia wants war. It's true. But Russia will not be able to stop the course of history. Mankind and the international law are stronger than one terrorist state. Russia will be forced to end this war. The war it has started.

I rule out that the settlement can happen on a different basis than the Ukrainian peace formula. The further the Russian terror reaches, the less likely it is that anyone in the world will agree to sit at one table with them.

And if my words will be followed by new Russian missiles and acts of terrorism it will only prove the weakness. Russia's weakness. Its inability to prevail over us, its inability to prevail over the world.

It will only prove that 5 items of the Ukrainian peace formula must be implemented as soon as possible.

We are ready for peace. But true, honest and fair peace. That's why the world is on our side.

And finally.

I want to thank one hundred and one countries that voted for my video address to take place. It was a vote not only about the format. It was the vote about principles.

Only seven countries voted against: Belarus, Cuba, North Korea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, Russia and Syria.

Seven who are afraid of the video address. Seven who respond to principles with a red button. Only seven.

One hundred and one — and seven.

Friends! — if this coalition is against our determination, then I congratulate you all. Because this means that peace will prevail over any aggression, and that there is no Obstacle for us to implement the peace formula.

I thank you for your attention!

Once again, I wish you all peace!

Слава Україні
