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Secretary-General Urges 'Statesmanship, Not Gamesmanship and Gridlock' to Resolve Global Challenges, Geopolitical Tensions, Opening Annual General Assembly Debate

The international community “seems incapable of coming together” to respond to a slew of growing global challenges and rising geopolitical tensions, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres warned the General Assembly today as its annual high-level debate commenced, which also featured world leaders underlining the importance of multilateralism — and of the United Nations — for cooperation in a fragmenting world.

“It is time for a global compromise,” the UN chief stressed, adding that the world now needs “statesmanship, not gamesmanship and gridlock”. The Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine has unleashed a nexus of horror. Further, nuclear disarmament is at a standstill while countries develop new weapons and make new threats. Across the Sahel, a series of coups is destabilizing the region as terrorism is gaining ground. Sudan is descending into full-scale civil war. Meanwhile, the global humanitarian system is on the verge of collapse.

And, he continued, while there is still time to keep rising temperatures within the 1.5°C limits of the Paris Agreement on climate change, Group of Twenty (G20) countries – responsible for 80 per cent of greenhouse-gas emissions — must “break their addiction” to fossil fuels. The world must phase out coal, oil and gas in a fair way, and developed countries and emerging economies must reach net zero as close as possible to 2040 and 2050, respectively.

“We cannot effectively address problems as they are if institutions don’t reflect the world as it is,” he went on to say, warning that the world is inching “ever closer to a great fracture” in economic and financial systems. “It’s reform or rupture,” he underscored.

Dennis Francis (Trinidad and Tobago), President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, similarly called on Heads of State and Government to unite to address war, climate change, debt, poverty and famine. “These crises are directly impacting the lives and well-being of billions of people around the world,” he stressed. On Ukraine, he expressed concern over the continued violation of that country’s territorial integrity and sovereignty by another UN Member State. “We all want this war to end,” he emphasized.

Further, as a citizen of a climate-vulnerable region, he urged Member States to recognize the continued and escalating impacts of climate change and to deliver real, transformative results. “We do not lack capacity,” he told those present, observing: “What we lack is the will to act.”

In the ensuing debate, 35 Heads of State and Government spotlighted the multitude of challenges and crises affecting their respective nations and regions. Numerous leaders voiced shared concerns, echoing the Secretary-General’s warning over escalating divisions undermining diplomacy and international cooperation.

On that, Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States, underscored that no nation can meet today’s challenges alone. Expressing his country’s support for Ukraine, he stressed that the Russian Federation alone stands in the way of peace. He asked: “If we allow Ukraine to be carved up, is the independence of any nation secure?” Urging those present to “stand up to this

naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow”, he also underlined the need to preserve the planet, protect human dignity and provide opportunity for people everywhere.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, pointed out that hatred, when weaponized against one nation, never stops there. Many seats in the General Assembly Hall “may become empty if Russia succeeds with its treachery and aggression”, he said. Pointing to “attempts to make some shady deals behind the scenes”, he underscored: “Evil cannot be trusted — ask [Russian mercenary leader Yevgeny] Prigozhin if one bets on [Russian Federation President Vladimir V.] Putin’s promises. Please, hear me. Let unity decide everything openly.”

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Türkiye, stressed the need to end the war through diplomacy. “We have been endeavouring to keep both our Russian and Ukrainian friends around the table with a thesis that war has no winners and peace will have no losers,” he said. Unfortunately, the Security Council has ceased to be the guarantor of global security — instead, it has become a battleground for five countries. He emphasized: “The world is bigger than five and a fairer world is possible”.

In that vein, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, President of Brazil, underscored the importance of reducing inequality by including the poor in Government budgets and making the rich pay taxes proportional to their wealth. Further, reporting that military spending has totalled \$2 trillion in 2022, with nuclear spending reaching \$83 billion — 20 times higher than the regular United Nations budget — he emphasized: “The UN was born to be the home of understanding and dialogue”.

Alberto Fernández, President of Argentina, said that multilateralism is the best tool for cooperation, because hegemonic agendas limit economic and scientific cooperation and affect international peace. Noting Azerbaijan’s reported military operations to take control of Nagorno-Karabakh, he urged the international community to act to prevent new ethnic, racial or religious persecution and called on the world’s multilateral organizations to regain their strength to enforce international rules.

Meanwhile, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of Iran, said that Western hegemony “no longer resonates with the realities of today’s world”, that the former liberal order has been “relegated to obsolescence” and that “attempts to universalize American ideals throughout the world” have failed. Stressing that humanity is entering a new framework, he said that — while old Powers will continue their trajectory — “they represent the past, and we are the future”.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President of Nigeria, stated, along those lines, that Africa “is nothing less than the key to the world’s future”. While good-governance failures have hindered the continent, “broken promises, unfair treatment and outright exploitation from abroad have also exacted a heavy toll on our ability to progress”, he said. The wave crossing Africa is not a demonstration in favour of coups, he added, “it is a demand for solutions to perennial problems”.

To that end, Sadyr Zhaparov, President of Kyrgyzstan, said that — despite military-bloc thinking over past years, the United Nations has been — and remains — the most legitimate platform for diplomacy. Underscoring the need to build a multilateral system that prevents further geopolitical fragmentation, he asked those present whether international conditions were easier 78 years ago — when the UN was just beginning its work following the bloodiest war in human history — than they are today. Underlining the need to “see the world for what it is”, he called for the Organization’s transformation into a centre for global efforts to prevent conflict, reach compromise and establish peace.

Opening Remarks

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, Secretary-General of the United Nations, warned that the world is becoming unhinged. “Geopolitical tensions are rising,” he emphasized, also adding: “And we seem incapable of coming together to respond.” While the world has changed, institutions have not. “We cannot effectively address problems as they are if institutions don’t reflect the world as it is,” he added. The world is inching “ever closer to a great fracture” in economic and financial systems and trade relations; one that threatens a single, open Internet; with diverging strategies on technology and artificial intelligence; and potentially clashing security frameworks, he warned, further emphasizing the need to adapt and reform. That means reforming the Security Council and redesigning the international financial architecture so that it becomes truly universal and serves as a global safety net for developing countries in trouble. “It’s reform or rupture,” he said. The world needs statesmanship, not gamesmanship and gridlock.

“It is time for a global compromise,” the Secretary-General continued, also adding: “Politics is compromise. Diplomacy is compromise. Effective leadership is compromise.” What is needed is determination to end the scourge of war and uphold

respect for international law. The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine is in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It has unleashed a nexus of horror: lives destroyed, human rights abused, families torn apart and children traumatized. "Nuclear threats put us all at risk," he warned. The world must not relent in working for peace — a just peace in line with the Charter. Even while fighting rages, the world must pursue every avenue to ease the suffering of civilians in Ukraine and beyond. The Black Sea Initiative was one such avenue. The world needs Ukrainian food and Russian Federation food and fertilizers to guarantee food security. "I will not give up on my efforts to make it happen," he pledged.

"Around the globe, old tensions fester while new risks emerge," he continued. Nuclear disarmament is at a standstill while countries develop new weapons and make new threats. Across the Sahel, a series of coups is further destabilizing the region as terrorism is gaining ground. Sudan is descending into full-scale civil war. In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, millions are displaced and gender-based violence is a horrific reality. Haiti is overwhelmed by gang violence. In Afghanistan, a staggering 70 per cent of the population needs humanitarian assistance with the rights of women and girls systematically denied, he said. In Myanmar, brutal violence is crushing hopes for a return to democracy. In the Middle East, unilateral actions are undermining the possibility of a two-State solution — the only pathway to lasting peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis. Syria remains in ruins while peace remains remote.

The global humanitarian system is on the verge of collapse, he warned, urging all countries to fund the Global Humanitarian Appeal. Today, countries are forced to choose between serving their people or servicing their debt. Africa spends more on debt interest than on health care. The world together can take determined steps to help countries weather crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes urgently advancing the Sustainable Development Goals Stimulus of \$500 billion per year. Turning to climate change, he said, there is still time to keep rising temperatures within the 1.5°C limits of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Group of 20 countries, responsible for 80 per cent of greenhouse-gas emissions, must "break their addiction" to fossil fuels, he stressed. The world must phase out coal, oil and gas in a fair way and massively boost renewables. Developed countries must reach net zero as close as possible to 2040, and emerging economies as close as possible to 2050.

Around the globe, women's rights — including sexual and reproductive rights — are being suppressed and even rolled back, and women's freedoms curtailed, the Secretary-General went on to say. Gender equality is not the problem. Gender equality is the solution. Human rights — political, civil, economic, social and cultural — are the key to solving many of the world's interlinked problems. Turning to generative artificial intelligence, he said such technology holds much promise — but "it may also lead us across a rubicon and into more danger than we can control". New technology requires new and innovative forms of governance. He urged the need for a Global Digital Compact — between Governments, regional organizations, the private sector and civil society — to mitigate the risks of digital technology and identify ways to harness their benefits for the good of humanity.

DENNIS FRANCIS (Trinidad and Tobago), President of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, outlined this session's imperative: to unite the nations, to be united in conviction of common purpose and in solidarity of joint action. "War. Climate change. Debt. Energy and food crises. Poverty and famine. These crises are directly impacting the lives and well-being of billions of people around the world," he said, calling on Member States to rebuild trust and reignite global solidarity. Quoting the late United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, he said: "If the UN did not exist, we would have to invent it." Continuing, he said that the world is fortunate that the Organization does indeed exist and called on Member States to make full and effective use of this unparalleled resource.

Turning to the situation in Ukraine, he mentioned the continued violation of that country's territorial integrity and sovereignty by another UN Member State. The horrendous war there has unleashed untold suffering and destroyed countless families, communities and lives, while its cascading impacts are triggering food insecurity, volatility in energy prices and the threat of nuclear warfare. "We all want this war to end. It is an affront to everything that this organization and the UN Charter stands for. We need just and sustainable peace in Ukraine and elsewhere in the world, in line with international law and with the UN Charter. Peace must also be given a chance in other parts of the globe — from Africa to the Middle East," he underscored.

Referring to the current high-level week with the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, he said that there have been unacceptable delays and rollbacks with regards to the Goals and called on States "to make up for the lost momentum and work much harder in the remaining seven years to accelerate progress". "As a citizen of a climate-vulnerable region, I urge Member States to recognize the continued and escalating impacts of climate change — and to deliver real, transformative results," he stressed. As 2023 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he pledged: "As President of the seventy-eighth session, I am committed to championing vulnerable and marginalized groups."

Despite many and complex challenges, the ability exists to effect change and make a meaningful difference to the lives of billions of people. "We do not lack capacity. What we lack is the will to act. By putting aside our differences and bridging divides we can

deliver peace, progress, prosperity and sustainability to everyone, everywhere," he said, calling on Member States to re-energize the General Assembly and demonstrate capacity and will to deliver for all.

Statements

LUIZ INÁCIO LULA DA SILVA, President of Brazil, recalled that 20 years ago, speaking at the General Assembly, he expressed confidence in the human capacity to overcome challenges and evolve towards superior forms of coexistence. "I return today to say that I maintain my unshakeable trust in humanity," he stressed, while pointing to the severity of the climate crisis that "knocks on our doors and imposes losses on our brothers, especially on the poorest". Noting that hunger — that today affects 735 million people globally — was at the centre of his speech in 2003, he emphasized: "The world is increasingly unequal. The 10 richest billionaires have more wealth than the poorest 40 per cent of humanity."

"If today I return in the honourable capacity of President of Brazil, it is thanks to democracy," he underscored, emphasizing that "hope, once again, has won over fear". His country "is back" to make its contribution towards global challenges, he stressed, while also noting that it has reclaimed its foreign policy's universalism, marked by a respectful dialogue with everyone. Recognizing that the 2030 Agenda could turn into the biggest failure of the UN, he underscored the importance of reducing inequalities by including the poor in Government budgets and making the rich pay taxes proportional to their wealth. Further reiterating Brazil's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, he added: "We want to achieve racial equality through the eighteenth [Sustainable Development] Goal, which we will voluntarily adopt."

In this regard, his Government has launched a zero-hunger programme and passed a bill on equal pay for equal work and gender equality. Recalling that the Global South is the most affected by climate change, he pointed out that Brazil — by generating 97 per cent of its electrical power from clean, renewable sources — has proven that a socially fair and environmentally sustainable model is possible. He also highlighted the immense potential for generating green hydrogen and reported that, having resumed tackling environmental crimes in the Amazon, his country managed to reduce deforestation by 48 per cent in eight months. Expressing regret that the promise to allocate \$100 billion to developing countries has not been fulfilled, he recalled that, in 2022, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made available \$160 billion in special drawing rights to European countries and only \$34 billion to African countries. While the foundations of the new economic governance have not been laid, he said that BRICS [Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China, South Africa] — a strategic platform for emerging countries cooperation — was a result of this paralysis.

He went on to say that during Brazil's chairmanship of the Group of 20 (G20) in 2024, under the motto "Building a just world for a sustainable planet", the country will coordinate social inclusion and fight against hunger. Noting that there will be no sustainability and prosperity without peace, he underscored the importance of promoting a culture of peace. While referring to a number of ongoing global crises, including the war in Ukraine, he added: "No solution will be lasting if not based on dialogue." Reporting that military spending has totalled \$2 trillion, with nuclear spending reaching \$83 billion — 20 times higher than the regular UN budget — he emphasized: "The UN was born to be the home of understanding and dialogue." Further, he rejected unilateral sanctions, including Cuba's economic and financial embargo, and criticized any attempts to divide the world into zones of influence and revive the cold war.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, President of the United States, recalling his meeting with a small group of American and Vietnamese veterans, said that, despite the painful legacy of war, "history does not need to dictate our future". Overwhelming challenges can be resolved and deep wounds can heal if the international community chooses to stand together and recognize the common hopes that bind all humanity. In this context, he highlighted the duty of the United States to work with countries in every region, ensuring that everyone has access to health care, the environment is protected and conflicts are resolved peacefully. The United States seeks a more secure, prosperous and equitable world for all people, he said, adding: "we know that our future is bound to yours" and no nation can meet the challenges of today alone. By working together, the world made some remarkable and undeniable progress: "We avoided the renewal of a global conflict while lifting more than 1 billion people out of extreme poverty," he said.

He further underscored the need to make sure that "we are delivering for people everywhere, not just somewhere". This challenge starts with the United Nations, "it starts right here, in this room," he said, voicing support for expanding the Security Council and increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members. Turning to the situation in Haiti, he spotlighted breakthroughs on hard issues, stressing that "people of Haiti cannot wait much longer". He also drew attention to his country's significant efforts to reform and scale up the World Bank, expanding its financing to lower-middle-income countries, and to reform the World Trade Organization (WTO). Stressing the need to forge new partnerships and confront new challenges, he said that

technologies such as artificial intelligence represent both potential and peril and policies must be put into place to ensure their safety. "It is important to govern technologies, not the other way around, for them to govern us," he added.

Additionally, the United States convened the Summit for Democracy to strengthen democratic institutions, root out corruption and reject political violence, he said, also reiterating his country's commitment to stand with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The plan — outlined at the G20 — to connect India to Europe through the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel, is part of efforts to build a more sustainable, integrated Middle East. Turning to China, he said: "We seek to responsibly manage the competition between our countries so it does not tip into conflict. I've said we are for de-risking, not decoupling on China." Also, he continued, "we will push back on aggression and intimidation and defend the rules of the road, the freedom of navigation". Further, it is critical to de-accelerate the climate crisis, he said, sounding alarm over the wildfires ravaging North America and Southern Europe, the drought in the Horn of Africa and the tragic flooding in Libya. Accordingly, he stressed the need to move the global economy towards clean energy, help developing countries reach their climate goals and increase investment in the public and private sectors.

Highlighting efforts by the United States to reduce the threat of mass destruction, he called for de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and stressed that Iran must never acquire nuclear weapons. However, for the second year in a row, efforts dedicated to peaceful resolution of conflict are darkened by the shadow of war — an illegal war of conquest brought without provocation by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The United States strongly supports Ukraine in its efforts to bring about a diplomatic resolution to just and lasting peace, he emphasized, noting: "Russia alone bears responsibility for this war; Russia alone has the power to end this war immediately; and it's Russia alone that stands in the way of peace." Moscow believes that the world will grow weary, allowing it to brutalize Ukraine without consequence. "If we allow Ukraine to be carved up, is the independence of any nation secure? I respectfully suggest the answer is no. We have to stand up to this naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow," he asserted. "That's why the United States — together with our allies and partners around the world — will continue to stand with the brave people of Ukraine as they defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity and their freedom," he said. In closing, he said "we will be judged by [...] all those who inherit the world we create", underlining the need to preserve the planet, to protect human dignity and to provide opportunity for people everywhere.

GUSTAVO PETRO URREGO, President of Colombia, recalling his recent visits to Chile to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the coup, to a popular neighbourhood in Medellín where mafia used to lure youth as well as to Cuba — "an unjustly blockaded country" — noted that the multiple crises in the world have only deepened over the past year. War did not end, hunger continues, recession increases and the climate crisis has worsened, causing thousands of deaths and heating our planet. Observing that humanity is moving towards extinction, he argued that all the crises are, in effect, one — the crisis of life. This has been expressed in one indicator, he claimed, pointing to the migration flows from the South to the North. While today the number amounts to tens of millions, by 2070, the figure will have reached 3 billion, as people's homes will become uninhabitable, he emphasized.

Describing today's Colombia as one full of beauty and life, he warned that by 2070 all that might be left of it is desert. In a move to the North, people will be driven by something simpler than better economic prospects — by water. He argued that to reach the North, people will defy armies and change the Earth. "This exodus of people to the North is an exact reflection of the dimension of the failure of Governments," he said, drawing attention to a yearly increase in migration. In addition, he condemned the treatment of migrants from the South and the rise of hatred towards them, as many are pursued and imprisoned, often in facilities built out at sea to prevent them from reaching the mainland. In this regard, he accused "the whites" of still considering themselves superior, which is also reflected in the results of elections.

However, as the crisis of life advances and the clock is ticking, "we decide to waste time killing one another" instead of solving the situation and ensuring a sustainable future, he regretted. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals, all wars must be brought to an end, he underscored, stating that the war in Ukraine benefits the world Powers, while their approach to Palestine is different. To achieve peace, he thus proposed that the United Nations should as soon as possible hold two peace conferences — one on Ukraine and the other on Palestine. This would lead the way in helping to bring peace to all regions of the planet, because "both of these alone can bring an end to hypocrisy as a political practice", he insisted. He went on to state that the Sustainable Development Goals will not be met, as instead of social justice we see global injustice.

Criticizing the lack of monetary resources for climate change adaptation, he noted that what is now needed is \$3 trillion to overcome this challenge. He thus proposed to reform the global financial system, as cheap loans causing more indebtedness are not the solution. While the market will contribute as well, it is also part of the problem, he claimed. He thus called for most of the investment to decarbonize the world's economy to come from the public funds, from the efforts of societies, from bringing States and humanity together and from governing the Earth with the vision of democracy. In this way, the world will be able to finance

the Marshall Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals — for social and environmental justice on the planet. He expressed hope that this will allow humanity to achieve its objective of spreading life through the very diversity of its cultures.

ABDULLAH II IBN AL HUSSEIN, King of Jordan, said that more than 345 million people face food insecurity, daily hunger, or starvation. Among the most vulnerable are 108 million refugees. And 40 per cent of these refugees are children. “Yet these numbers cannot really convey the tragedy,” he said. Refugees are mothers, fathers and grandparents, who have made perilous journeys to save their families. They are young people with big dreams, and little children who deserve the chance to dream big. They depend on the international community for their survival, and multiple UN agencies provide vital services to help meet the need. “But in recent months, one by one, these agencies have been delivering difficult news — a severe shortfall in international funds has forced them to cut support,” he said.

In Jordan, where refugees make up over one third of the 11 million population, cuts have already thrown the lives of hundreds of thousands of refugees into uncertainty, he continued. “Fear and want bring on sharp increases in the number of refugees fleeing to Europe and beyond, on journeys that too often end in tragedy,” he said. Jordan has done everything to secure a dignified life for refugees. Nearly half of the almost 1.4 million Syrians it hosts are under 18 years of age. For many of these young people, Jordan is the only place they have ever known. Over 230,000 Syrian children have been born in Jordan since 2011. “We are sharing precious resources to help them meet basic needs — food, energy, and especially water,” he said. Jordan is among the water-poorest countries in the world. It faces these pressures just when another crisis has hit the region: climate change.

“Syrian refugees’ future is in their country, not in host countries,” he added. And the fact is refugees are far from returning. On the contrary, more Syrians are likely to leave their country as the crisis persists. And Jordan will not have the ability nor the resources to host and care for more. Jordan’s case is a microcosm of the entire region, which, he said, will continue to suffer until the world “helps lift the shadow” of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. “Without clarity on where Palestinians’ future lies, it will be impossible to converge on a political solution to this conflict,” he said. Five million Palestinians live under occupation with no say in their lives. Yet every UN resolution since the beginning of the conflict recognizes the equal rights of the Palestinian people to a future of peace, dignity and hope.

“We can see the Israeli people actively defending and engaging in the expression of their national identity. Yet, the Palestinian people are deprived of that same right,” he continued. The basic requirement for that right is the establishment of their own independent and viable State, on 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as its capital. For its part, Jordan remains committed to safeguarding Jerusalem’s identity, he continued, also urging sustainable funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). “We must protect young Palestinians from extremists who prey on their frustrations and hopelessness by making sure they continue to learn at schools under the blue flag of the United Nations, as the alternative will be the black flags of terror, hate and extremism,” he stressed.

ANDRZEJ DUDA, President of Poland, said that the Russian Federation’s brutal aggression against Ukraine has brought with it immense global problems, putting the international world order to a test. Recalling 1939 when, in the wake of the alliance between Hitler and Stalin, Poland lost its independence, was wiped out from the map of the world and subjected to extremely brutal occupation, he said his country understands the tragedy of Ukraine better than any other. “The logic of conquest, changing borders by force, disregarding the law and denying the Ukrainian people their right to exist must be stopped. This brutal war must end, and not be converted into a frozen war,” he underscored.

“Today, the victim is Ukraine. Tomorrow, it could be any one of us, if we do not follow these ironclad rules, if we do not insistently enforce compliance with international law,” he warned, voicing support to the work of the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and the Independent International Commission under the UN Human Rights Council to investigate violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the context of Russian aggression. Poland supports the idea of establishing an ad hoc special tribunal, he added, noting that that Moscow continually tries to shape international public opinion by building a false vision of reality. He also praised the United States for playing a pivotal role in assuring security in Europe for more than a century.

Given the refugee crisis caused by the war in Syria, Poland’s assistance to Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan will be maintained, he assured. The situation is most difficult in Africa, where one in five people is suffering from hunger. “Therefore, in 2022, Poland supported the World Food Programme’s (WFP) activities in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, including Lebanon, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Syria,” he said, adding that Warsaw respects “African solutions to African problems”. Noting that Poland will be a member of the Economic and Social Council for the 2024-2026 period, he said that one of its key priorities on the organ “will be to draw the international community’s attention to the impact of global crises, such as armed conflicts, the energy crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change”.

Describing the decision-making impasse in the Security Council and the situation in which the Russian Federation, a permanent member of that organ, is deliberately violating the Charter of the United Nations, he said that some people ask questions about whether the Organization is needed at all. "On behalf of Poland, a neighbour of attacked Ukraine, a country that has taken in millions of refugees, I emphatically answer: Yes," he said, stressing that the United Nations is very much needed as no better system for international cooperation has been invented. He also urged for a return to the thinking and actions of the founding fathers of the United Nations, as there will be no lasting peace without cooperation, without solidarity between richer and poorer countries and ultimately without respect for international law.

MIGUEL DÍAZ-CANEL BERMÚDEZ, President of Cuba, citing Che Guevara, said he brought the voice of the "exploited and the humiliated" to the General Assembly, adding: "We are a diverse group of nations sharing the same problems." Pointing out that many countries have not managed to get rid of the euphemism "developing countries", he said they are the main victims of the global multidimensional crisis, the abusive unequal exchange and the scientific and technical gap. "We have been united for half a century by the inescapable challenge and the determination to transform the current international order," he stressed, spotlighting that the "Group of 77" and China Member States represent 80 per cent of the global population.

"The efforts of developing countries are not enough to implement the 2030 Agenda," he underscored, calling for transformation of the international financial architecture — designed to profit on the reserves of the South — that increases underdevelopment and replicates modern colonialism. Recalling the Group's member States were forced to allocate \$379 billion from their reserves to protect their currencies in 2022 — almost twice as much as IMF's drawing rights allocated — he also said that, while the richest countries fail to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for development assistance, the nations of the South need to spend 14 per cent of their incomes to pay for foreign debt interests. In this regard, he called for redesigning the debt instruments and including activation provisions to alleviate and reschedule it once the country is affected by natural catastrophes.

Turning to climate change, he expressed regret that the goal of mobilizing \$100 billion a year up to 2020 in climate financing has never been met. On the eve of the twenty-eighth Climate Change Conference, the Group of 77 will prioritize the implementation of the loss and damage fund and the establishment of new climate financing goals. He underscored the need for changing science, technology and innovation paradigms — limited to the perspectives of the North — that deprive the international scientific community from intellectual capital, also announcing that the Group of 77 has decided to resume the Consortium of Science, Technology and Innovation for the South to promote joint research projects. More so, the 17 cooperation projects, designed by Cuba in its Group of 77 Chairmanship, will contribute to South-South and triangular cooperation.

He went on to recall that his country has been suffering from the economic blockade for 60 years, while stressing that Havana has not implemented a single measure aimed at damaging the economic sector or social fabric of the United States. Recalling that Washington, D.C., pressured entities not to provide medicine, needed in his country to face the pandemic, he observed that Cuba's scientists created vaccines and developed ventilators that it provided to other countries. In a globalized world, it is not only absurd but also criminal to prohibit access to technologies and medical equipment that have over 10 per cent of United States components, he stressed, adding that despite Washington, D.C.'s hostilities, Cuba will continue building bridges with its people.

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN, President of Türkiye, highlighting increasingly complex global challenges, said that unfortunately it is impossible to draw a more optimistic picture of the world's future. Conflicts, wars, humanitarian crises and political tensions are getting more and more difficult to deal with. Terrorism — used as an instrument of proxy wars in Syria, Africa and the Sahel region — is causing irreparable damage to the increasingly fragile international security climate, he observed, noting that the areas of operations of terrorist organizations are spreading like an epidemic. Moreover, the signs of xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia reached alarming levels in the past year, while climate change and natural hazards have become an everyday reality in peoples' lives.

He recalled that Türkiye recently faced one of the biggest natural hazards in terms of magnitude and the area affected, with more than 50,000 people losing their lives. Similarly, Libya was subjected to heavy destruction and significant loss of life caused by storms and floods where 12,000 people perished and thousands still remain unaccounted for. As a first response to Libya, Türkiye sent three vessels and three planes, along with 567 relief personnel, hundreds of vehicles and thousands of tons of food, shelter and sanitary supplies. He also noted that his country's non-governmental organizations are participating in the relief efforts in the region with their own means and capabilities. Against this backdrop, he detailed Türkiye's vision that eliminates global injustice, addresses economic inequality and produces peace, security and stability. "It's our call for the establishment of an international system for the benefit of all humanity," he added.

He went on to underscore that the institutions established after the Second World War no longer reflect today's world and the Security Council has ceased to be the guarantor of the world's security and, instead, has become a battleground for political strategies of only five countries. As a country that has pioneered numerous initiatives to strengthen peace and stability, Türkiye attaches great importance to the Secretary-General's call for a New Agenda for Peace. "Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, we have been endeavouring to keep both our Russian and Ukrainian friends around the table with a thesis that war has no winners and peace will have no losers," he said, stressing the need to step up efforts to end the war through diplomacy, on the basis of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

Highlighting that his country ensured the delivery of 33 million tons of grain through the Black Sea Grain Initiative on the global markets, he said the failure to implement the agreement has left the world facing a new crisis. He expressed hope that this humanitarian bridge that extends to the countries in dire need will benefit from negotiations undertaken by Türkiye. Turning to the situation in Syria, he said the humanitarian tragedy in that country is now marking its thirteenth year and is worsening the living conditions of everyone in the region, regardless of their origin and faith. It is becoming increasingly important to end the crisis with a comprehensive and sustainable solution, he said, noting that the devastating impacts of the 6 February earthquake which affected 14 million people in his country was also deeply felt in Syria.

"We are sick and tired of the hypocrisy of those who are using Da'esh and similar organizations as a front to their own political and economic interests in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, but especially in Syria and Iraq," he asserted, warning against terrorist organizations, paramilitary groups, mercenaries and local elements that are used as tools of proxy wars. Against this backdrop, he urged for a global governance architecture, emphasizing that "the world is bigger than five and a fairer world is possible". He also called for a just and sustainable solution to the Cyprus issue that can no longer be realized on the basis of a federation model; expressed support to the Palestinian people; supported talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia; and voiced support for Afghanistan's people who are in dire need of humanitarian support.

MARCELO REBELO DE SOUSA, President of Portugal, reaffirmed his country's commitment to the priorities of the United Nations. Most notably he cited climate change, human rights, migrants, refugees and gender equality. Portugal also supports the success of the Summit of the Future in 2024, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum, which the country will host in 2024, and a world social summit in 2025. He highlighted the three main interconnected urgencies in today's world — the need to respect the Charter of the United Nations; accelerate the fight against climate change to fulfil the objectives of 2030 Agenda; and reform international institutions. Some of these institutions were formed in the last century and do not correspond to the current realities, he observed.

On the indivisibility of these priorities, he argued that without respect for the Charter there cannot be peace, sustainable development or institutional reform. There is no sustainable development, nor respect for the Charter, without the reform of international institutions. And there is no reform without respect for the Charter and without achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, pointing to the main problem, he questioned the credibility of global leaders participating in a General Assembly debate when the issues they identify in their statements are not treated with the appropriate urgency. He went on to underscore that achieving peace in Ukraine is crucial for the whole world, as "we cannot differentiate the struggle of the Ukrainian people from the struggle for the respect of the United Nations Charter". Equally, it is not possible to build peace without stepping up the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

"We are lagging behind, we need to promote equality among States and among peoples," he stressed. On Security Council reform, he noted that its composition reflects a world that no longer exists, recalling Portugal's support for countries like Brazil and India to get permanent seats on the organ. He went on to say that the existing financial institutions are incapable of financing sustainable development with equity and justice, claiming that "the richer have preference over the poorer nations". For a new global governance concrete solutions for institutional reforms are needed. He pointed out that it is easy to make promises and not deliver on them by not respecting international law, not contributing to justice and delaying the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. On climate change, he said that Portugal has been moving forward in decarbonization, promoting clean energy as well as protecting oceans and biodiversity.

Portugal just signed with Cabo Verde — which is part of the community of 300 million Portuguese speakers — an agreement aimed at transforming debt into investment in an environmental and climate fund, he announced. This will allow for the sustainable economic development of Cabo Verde. He said that Lisbon's goal is to extend such deals to other Portuguese-speaking countries. In addition, he called on world leaders to respect international law, build peace, cooperate with one another and work towards correcting inequalities. "Every day we lose is another day of inequality, selfishness, conflict and war. Every day we gain is another day of justice, development and peace," he underlined. He expressed hope that by the time of the 2024 general debate there will be more peace, justice, equality and climate action, as well as more reform of the United Nations and financial institutions.

SHEIKH TAMIM BIN HAMAD AL THANI, Amir of Qatar, stressed the need to unify efforts to prevent the misuse of cyberspace and regulate it on the basis of international law. Further, he said that it is unacceptable for the Palestinian people to remain prisoners of the Israeli occupation. The failure of the international community to act against the occupation continues to provide Israel with the opportunity to undermine the foundations of the two-State solution. Israel responds to Arab peace and normalization initiatives with more nationalist and ultra-orthodox extremism. This is reflected in Government coalitions, further settlement expansion, the Judaization of Jerusalem, attacks on holy sites and tightening the noose on the Gaza Strip. For its part, Qatar provides political, humanitarian and development support to the Palestinian people and contributes towards rebuilding the Gaza Strip.

In the case of Syria, the crisis is still waiting for a comprehensive settlement through a political process that also maintains that country's integrity, sovereignty and independence. Turning to Sudan, he condemned the crimes perpetrated against civilians in Khartoum and Darfur and called for perpetrators to be held to account. In Lebanon, he stressed the need to find a sustainable solution to the political vacuum by forming a Government capable of addressing the aspirations of the Lebanese people and getting them out of their economic and developmental crises. In Yemen, Qatar calls for the crisis to be resolved in accordance with the resolutions of the National Dialogue, the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Concerning the Libyan issue, he reiterated Qatar's unwavering support for the efforts of the head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and his efforts to achieve tangible results to resolve the crisis there. Regarding the situation in Afghanistan, he stressed the need to prevent it from sliding into a difficult-to-manage humanitarian crisis that becomes a haven for terrorist individuals. Further, he said that the war in Europe is affecting the whole world in vital areas such as energy and food. Qatar reiterates calls on all parties to comply with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and pursue a radical peaceful solution that is based on these principles.

On the national front, he said that Qatar's investments in liquefied gas have enabled the country to play an important role in addressing the global energy crisis. Qatar continues to develop its sovereign fund and diversify sources of its income. Doha pursues environmentally friendly policies and aims to provide humanitarian aid. He further stressed that cooperation is key to stem waves of refugees, which have become a real problem for Europe as well as for neighbouring African and Asian countries. Combating racism and campaigns of incitement against entire peoples, religions and civilizations is key. To those who seek to justify hideous acts as freedom of expression, he said, deliberately compromising the sanctity of others should not be seen as an example of the freedom of expression.

MATAMELA CYRIL RAMAPHOSA, President of South Africa, said that since much of humanity is confronted by war and conflict, by want and hunger, by disease and environmental disaster, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals seems increasingly remote. "At the moment when every human effort should be directed towards the realization of 2030 Agenda, our attention and our energies have once again been diverted by the scourge of war," he said, adding that South Africa has consistently advocated for dialogue, negotiation and diplomacy to prevent and end conflict and achieve lasting peace. He mentioned his country's participation in an African peace initiative, which seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, based on the UN Charter principle of respect for the territorial integrity of every country. "As we confront other conflicts in several parts of the world, including on our continent Africa, we need to be investing in prevention and peacebuilding," he stressed, urging the global community to be concerned by recent incidents of unconstitutional changes of Government in some parts of Africa.

Returning to global issues, he said that as long as the land of the Palestinians remains occupied and their rights are ignored, peace will remain elusive there because the actions of the Government of Israel have imperiled the possibility of a viable two-State solution. He also called for lifting sanctions against Cuba and Zimbabwe. "We call on our partners from wealthier countries to meet the financial commitments they have made. It is a great concern that these wealthier countries have failed to meet their undertakings to mobilize \$100 billion a year for developing economies to take climate action," he underscored. He called on tackling debt distress, scaling up affordable long-term financing to \$500 billion a year and expanding contingency financing to countries in need. "It is a grave indictment of this international community that we can spend so much on war, but we cannot support action that needs to be taken to meet the most basic needs of billions of people," he said.

As he is accompanied in New York by an all-women national delegation, he stressed that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals depends fundamentally on the empowerment of women in all spheres of life. "We must pay particular attention to the provision of adequate health services to every woman, child and adolescent. The empowerment of women must be central to the actions we now take towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda," he said. On climate change, he warned: "Africa is warming faster than the rest of the world." Centuries after the end of the slave trade, decades after the end of the

colonial exploitation of Africa's resources, the people of Africa are once again bearing the cost of the industrialization and development of the wealthy nations of the world, he stated, urging greater efforts to accelerate global decarbonization.

Citing a renewed commitment to multilateralism, he said that now is the moment to proceed with the reform of the Security Council, enabling it to respond more effectively to current geopolitical realities. "We are pleased that the Common African Position [on the Proposed Reform of the United Nations: "The Ezulwini Consensus"] on the reform of the Security Council is increasingly enjoying wide support. We must ensure that the voice of the African continent and the Global South is strengthened in the United Nations and broader multilateral system," he emphasized, adding that all the peoples represented here in the Organization had their origins in Africa where tools and capabilities were developed to spread across the world. "Despite its history, despite the legacy of exploitation and subjugation, despite the ongoing challenge of conflict and instability, Africa is determined to regain its position as a site of human progress," he concluded.

SERDAR BERDIMUHAMEDOV, President of Turkmenistan, stressed that the impact of multiple serious challenges may erode global security — the principle of the United Nations. Turkmenistan thus firmly and persistently upholds the principle of unity of security and its integrity. In this vein, he insisted that military, political, economic, ecological, energy, transport, food, biological and information security are indivisible. The main challenge of the Organization is to provide an integral approach to security problems as well as to mobilize the experience, skills, ideas and initiatives of Member States, he observed. He reiterated the principled position of Turkmenistan: "The United Nations is the only universal and legitimate organization responsible for peacekeeping and providing global and comprehensive security and stable, modern structure of inter-State relations."

To overcome distrust and confrontation through open and genuine dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations, he proposed to start discussions on drafting a strategy of global security. Based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, such a strategy would reflect present realities and trends, including new risks. Noting such strategies should be anchored in regional contexts, he called for a dialogue between Central Asia and the United Nations. In this regard, he announced an initiative to hold, under the Organization's umbrella, the first Conference on Security in Central Asia and Bordering Areas, to be held in Ashgabat in 2024. It will develop approaches aimed at providing stable, conflict-free development of the region by synchronizing the efforts of multiple actors.

Turning to climate and environmental issues, he said that following the 2017 Paris Agreement on climate change, Turkmenistan has undertaken efforts at the national level reduce and eliminate the adverse impact of methane emissions. Welcoming the international community's effort to implement the Global Methane Pledge, he said that his country recently approved a road map to examine its accession to this initiative. He went on to urge the United Nations to pay close attention to ecological issues in Central Asia, highlighting the need for a strategic approach. Turkmenistan thus proposes to establish, in Ashgabat, a regional centre for technologies related to climate change in Central Asia. On the Caspian Sea, he recalled the adoption of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea by the coastal countries. Expressing hope for their cooperation with the United Nations, he put forward a Caspian ecology initiative — an international platform for interaction on relevant issues.

Turkmenistan has prioritized achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, he noted, drawing attention to their implementation in the field of transport. To this end, Turkmenistan initiated the establishment of effective dialogue platforms. These include the 2016 First United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Transport and the 2022 Ministerial Meeting on Transport for Landlocked Developing Countries, both held in Turkmenistan. In addition, he pointed out that the General Assembly adopted six resolutions on transport initiated by his country, with the last establishing a World Sustainable Transport Day. He suggested that, on this occasion, the Assembly consider convening a high-level meeting during its seventy-eighth session. Highlighting Turkmenistan's priority to assist the United Nations in providing food security, he proposed to hold — in cooperation with the United Nations, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) — a major international forum on this topic in his country.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY, President of Ukraine, noting that unity can prevent wars, said: "This Hall has seen many wars, but not as an active defender against aggression." While the next world war is seen as a nuclear war — a conflict between States "on the highway to nukes" — he recalled that Ukraine gave up its nuclear arsenal. Recalling that the Russian Federation became the "keeper" of nuclear weapons, he added: "The history shows that it was Russia who deserved nuclear disarmament. Terrorists have no right to hold nuclear weapons." He further turned to Moscow's weaponization of food, recalling that since the war, ports in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov have been blocked. Expressing appreciation to those States that supported the "Grain from Ukraine" programme, he added: "United we made weapons turn back into food again." Also pointing to the creation of a temporary sea export corridor from Ukrainian ports, he said it is alarming to see how "some of our friends in Europe play out solidarity in a political theatre". While they may seem to play their own role, they are helping to "set the stage" for Moscow, he emphasized.

He went on to say that the Kremlin has weaponized oil and gas to weaken leaders of other countries, adding that Moscow is now weaponizing nuclear energy. "Look what Russia did to our Zaporizhzhia power plant — shelled it, occupied it and now blackmails others with radiation leaks," he stated, while recognizing that the global security architecture offers no response or protection against such threats. "There is no accountability for radiation blackmailers so far", he added. Turning to the abduction of children, aimed at putting pressure on families and societies, he said that kidnapping and deportation have never been a part of Government policies before. Reporting that Kyiv has evidence of hundreds of thousands of children kidnapped by Moscow in the occupied territories and later deported, he emphasized: "We are trying to get children back home, but time goes by. What will happen to them?" Those children are taught to hate Ukraine, while ties with their families are broken, he stressed, adding: "This is clearly genocide."

When hatred is weaponized against one nation, it never stops there, he stressed, spotlighting that each decade the Russian Federation starts a new war. Pointing out that parts of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova remain occupied, he also said that Moscow "has almost swallowed Belarus" and is threatening Kazakhstan and the Baltic States. Also observing that the goal of the war in his country is to turn Ukraine's land, people and resources against those present, he said that many seats in the General Assembly Hall "may become empty if Russia succeeds with its treachery and aggression". "We must act united to defeat the aggressor and focus all our capabilities and energy on addressing these challenges," he stressed.

Turning to Ukraine's 10-point peace formula, presented in 2022 in Indonesia and supported by 140 States, he emphasized that that for the first time in modern history the international community has a chance to end aggression on the terms of the country that was attacked. To this end, Kyiv has launched several meetings between national security advisers and diplomatic representatives and held talks on its implementation in Hiroshima, Copenhagen and Jeddah, he reported, also announcing the preparation of a global peace summit. Pointing to "attempts to make some shady deals behind the scenes", he underscored: "Evil cannot be trusted — ask [Russian mercenary leader Yevgeny] Prigozhin if one bets on [Russian Federation President Vladimir V.] Putin's promises. Please, hear me. Let unity decide everything openly."

ALEJANDRO GIAMMATTEI FALLA, President of Guatemala, noted that the world has observed with horror the war against Ukraine started by the Russian Federation, which violates the principles on which the international order was built following the Second World War. "And you know what is the worst still? It seems like we have got used to it," he continued, urging to have a renewed Organization that seeks solutions and countries that are willing to look beyond their ideological positions and overcome ancestral conflicts. "For this to be achieved, every country must raise its voice, and every country must say enough is enough. Today, my country joins the cry to say enough is enough. My country joins the global call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces, respecting the territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders," he emphasized, elaborating that disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, is one of the most important pillars of the United Nations. "Imagine what a catastrophe it would be for the world if the illegal and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation destroyed the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe, which is in danger in terms of integrity and operation and which could cause a disaster of immeasurable proportions," he underscored, demanding that the five permanent members of the Security Council achieve total nuclear disarmament.

He reiterated his country's firm commitment and solidarity with the development and prosperity of the Haitian people, who are at risk due to a multidimensional crisis. "As an international community, we must react and address catastrophes before they become even more devastating," he added. Turning to Asia, he expressed his support for Taiwan [province of China], noting that "its citizens" have been excluded from having a voice to represent them in this forum.

"Four years ago, I took possession of the position of President of the Republic of Guatemala, and since then, I have heard great speeches, great treaties and commitments have been signed up to stop climate change. I want to tell everyone that today, the world is worse than it was four years ago. Because more than speeches, commitments and treaties, the world needs action," he underscored, saying that the Caribbean and Central American region suffers the most from climate change. Despite his group of countries producing a low percentage of greenhouse gases, they suffer the most damage year after year.

He also said that the serious threat of drug consumption, especially synthetic drugs, should be a topic of great concern for the international community, as transnational crime must be fought transnationally. Also, Guatemala is committed to the promotion of food security and the goal of zero hunger. In this regard, he noted with alarm the suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. "We condemn the use of hunger as a weapon of war, as this represents a violation of human rights and international humanitarian law," he added. He cited the case of the territorial, maritime and island dispute between Guatemala and Belize, which both countries are committed to resolve in a peaceful and respectful manner through the International Court of Justice — "in contrast to war due to international conflicts and the consequence of the foolishness of human beings". He also said that one

of the greatest and alarming threats to life and freedom is human trafficking, which is a true crime against humanity, linked to slavery, since it practices the purchase and sale of human beings.

KATALIN NOVÁK, President of Hungary, said her country has a thousand years of turbulent history, with wars, oppression and occupation, revolutions and wars of independence. "We know the feeling of vulnerability. We know what it's like to live divided and what suffering wars cause. We know how precious freedom is and how painful it is to be deprived of it," she said. For this reason, "the rejection of any kind of oppression has become an instinct in us," she continued, condemning unequivocally the attack on another State, namely the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, which has caused immense suffering and destruction and has destroyed peaceful life in Europe. "We are for the victims and against further escalation," she stressed, adding that her country is providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and to all those fleeing the war.

"We help beyond our size and strength," she said, pointing to the 150,000 Hungarians living in Ukraine, in Transcarpathia, who share every hardship and struggle, sacrifice and success. The war also directly affects Hungarians. "Hungarian fathers and sons living in Ukraine are also giving their lives in the trenches," she added. She recalled her two visits to Kyiv — at the invitation of President Zelenskyy — since the outbreak of the war. "I have seen the suffering that families go through. I have seen what they experience when peace is broken. I have met Ukrainian and Hungarian people who have lost family members. I have met Ukrainian children for whom a kindergarten was set up with the help and support of Hungary; children from whom the war is depriving a happy childhood," she said.

Stressing that there is no alternative to peace, she urged for the killing and destruction to stop as soon as possible, as war is never the solution. Noting that peace is only realistically attainable "when at least one side sees the time for negotiations as having come," she said that "we cannot decide for Ukrainians about how much they are prepared to sacrifice, but we have a duty to represent our own nation's desire for peace". Underlining the need to avoid an escalation of the war, she said in every war, children are the most vulnerable. War hits them hardest, although they are the ones who need security and stability the most.

She then echoed the words of Elon Musk that demographic decline is a more serious problem than the climate crisis. Little attention is paid to the real and irreversible change of the world. "If there is no child, there will be no future," she said, asking: "What is the point of looking after the Earth if we don't have children and grandchildren to pass it on to?" Against this backdrop, she emphasized that the solution to the demographic crisis lies in strengthening and supporting families. Hungary has made the strengthening of families and the tackling of the demographic crisis a priority, she noted, recognizing that a strong, united and healthy family is a guarantee of security.

ALAIN BERSET, President of Switzerland, noting that the world is going through the most significant crisis since the Second World War, said that the Russian Federation, by launching a war of aggression against Ukraine, has attacked multilateral structures. It is the poorest and the most vulnerable States that would suffer most, if the competence of the international community in the world system waivers, he added. Pointing to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Human Rights Declaration, he stressed: "It is a key point in time to unify and strengthen the international community.

Turning to inequalities, he reported that in the past 20 years, the income gap between the 10 per cent of the richest and the 50 per cent of the poorest people has doubled. Moreover, inequalities today are as stark as they were at the beginning of the twentieth century — before the Second World War — he observed, noting that they affect the most vulnerable in societies. Recognizing that these vulnerabilities are a threat to Member States, both domestically and internationally, he recalled that for too long countries have believed that defending their interests and protecting the most vulnerable are two different things. "We know today that you can't have one without the other," he asserted.

He went on to say that prevention is the starting point for all peace efforts, while pointing out that inequalities in accessing food, health care and employment lead to conflicts. In this context, he spotlighted the role of multilateral institutions in protecting civilians in armed conflict, emphasizing: "It is not an option but an obligation of all parties to a conflict." Recalling his recent visits to conflict-affected countries — Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Colombia — he said that his contact with local people highlighted the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts and engaging women in conflict-prevention to ensure lasting peace. To this end, he reiterated Switzerland's commitment to the women, peace and security agenda, while also underlining the importance of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Further, he spotlighted the need for defending the mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), reaffirming his country's support to that end. He emphasized that ICRC's work is crucial for the protection of civilians. "The United Nations embodies institutionalized hope of a better world," he stressed, noting that it is an "idealistic project", born in a time of war,

brutality and despair. This project is based on the belief, that cooperating at the international level is crucial and the world can only be better if people shoulder their responsibilities, he continued, adding: "Ultimately, what unites nations is much stronger than what separates them." Noting that the General Assembly enables States to come together, he said that the Sustainable Development Goals Summit — held on 18 September — provided Member States with an opportunity to bring life into the Assembly's agenda. "It is nothing less than our shared road map for a better future for us all," he emphasized.

NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR, President of Slovenia, describing a complex and changing world riddled with wars, climate change and lack of solidarity, spotlighted four issues — climate change, Security Council reform, pitfalls of the digital age and gender equality. They require a unified response by adopting and implementing appropriate measures. If national, private or particularistic interests continue to prevail and sideline the resolution of global issues, we risk extinguishing ourselves as a civilization, she warned. Moving to climate change, she emphasized that the devastating floods that Slovenia saw in August are just one of the examples testifying of the greatest challenge of our time. While Slovenia may be able to cope, the recovery costs for others that are frequent victims of such disasters are disproportionately high. In this regard, wealthier States should contribute more towards an environmentally sustainable world than poorer ones, she stressed. The richest private companies should also provide their fair share.

She announced that her country plans to increase its contribution to the Global Climate Fund by 50 per cent. Slovenia continues to be actively involved in ensuring climate and environmental justice, including the right to a clean and healthy environment, and in securing equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all. She thus called for the establishment of a United Nations Special Envoy on Water — an important step in ensuring more coherent efforts in this area. Recalling Slovenia's election to sit on the Security Council during 2024-2025, she reiterated that a restructuring of the organ's membership is overdue. Further, she expressed concern over the unrestricted use of the veto. This precludes action when necessary and Ukraine serves as a case in point. Accordingly, Lichtenstein's recent veto initiative invites the Council's permanent members to reflect thoroughly on the situation before resorting to this privilege, she noted.

Moving to the challenges of the digital age, she observed that the loss of trust is partly due to science and technologies. Social media and artificial intelligence are a double-edged sword. In this context, she praised the Secretary-General's resolve to form a high-level advisory body on artificial intelligence. In addition, the Global Digital Compact should be based on a human-centric and human-rights based approach to the full lifecycle of technologies, she underscored. This comprises their design, development and application as well as decline. She went on to declare disinformation the key menace of our time, pointing to increasingly complex competing narratives. "We may have the freedom of information, but we are not protected against false information, manipulation and deceit," she pointed out. To tackle this, big tech companies should take more responsibility for the content they host and moderate, thereby increasing protection from hate speech, disinformation and other harmful online content.

She regretted that, as the world celebrates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, women and girls still experience inequality. Coupled with poverty, lack of educational opportunities and exclusion from labour market and decision-making, this leads to injustice and "a monumental waste of potential for our societies." Expressing concern that it will take 140 years to achieve the equal representation of women in leadership positions, she urged the United Nations to lead by example. To this end, she voiced support for the alternation of the gender of the General Assembly's President. She also called for a new global compact — one that is principled, elevated above particularistic interests and centred on nature, human dignity and global solidarity. Slovenia is committed to the Pact for the Future and will actively engage in the upcoming Summit, she stated.

SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV, President of Uzbekistan, noting a global crisis of confidence, reminded about the "Samarkand Solidarity Initiative" aimed at common security and development. He pledged to continue the policy of creating a new Uzbekistan, which is a law-governed, secular, democratic and social State. In April 2023, a referendum on his country's Constitution led to the adoption of "Uzbekistan 2030", a national development plan in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Since 2017, poverty in Uzbekistan has been halved, and it is planned to be reduced to 7 per cent by 2030, he said, proposing to host a world conference in 2024 titled "Social Protection: the Path towards Development" under the auspices of the United Nations.

"For a century, millions of people were forced to pick cotton in Uzbekistan. Thanks to our strong will and determination, now it is all history. Our people have been completely liberated from cotton slavery," he underscored, citing the constitutional ban on forced labour. He called for intensifying the global fight against forced and child labour. Given that nearly half of Central Asia's population consists of young people, creating opportunities for that segment has been an utmost importance, he noted, proposing to establish a working group at the United Nations to support youth development in Central Asia. Underlining the importance of equality between men and women, he said that Tashkent is interested in cooperating with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and proposes to hold an Asian women's forum in Uzbekistan in 2024.

Speaking about the Aral Sea tragedy, he said that Uzbekistan is doing its best to mitigate its consequences and 1.7 million hectares of green areas with drought-tolerant plants had been created on the dried-up bed of the sea. Over the past 30 years, the region's air temperature has increased by 1.5°C, which is more than twice the global warming average. It is expected that the per capita water supply will decrease by 25 per cent and agricultural yields by 40 per cent. "Unless we take timely and effective measures, the consequences of these problems will seriously undermine our region's socioeconomic stability," he warned, calling for the appointment of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Water Resources. He also put forward an initiative to adopt a UN General Assembly resolution titled "Central Asia Facing Global Climate Threats: Solidarity for Common Prosperity" and to discuss it at the International Climate Forum in Samarkand in 2024.

He reminded that in March in Tashkent, the Joint Plan of Action for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia was adopted. To promote religious tolerance and cooperation at the global level, he proposed establishing in Uzbekistan an international centre for interreligious dialogue and cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as to host in 2024 an international conference titled "Islam: a religion of peace and kindness". He also stressed that developments in Afghanistan directly impact international security. "Leaving Afghanistan again alone with its own problems would be a grave mistake. Ignoring, isolating and imposing sanctions only exacerbates the hardships faced by the ordinary Afghan people," he warned, adding that humanitarian aid to the Afghan people should not be reduced and calling for the development of mechanisms to utilize Afghanistan's frozen international assets to address its acute social problems. "We need an open, peaceful and sustainable Afghanistan that is actively engaged in regional cooperation initiatives and is ready for mutually beneficial partnerships with its neighbours and other countries. I believe it is essential that under the leadership of the United Nations, we jointly develop a flexible and constructive approach to the Afghan issue," he concluded.

LUIS ALBERTO ARCE CATAFORA, President of Bolivia, stressed that the capitalist system continues to replicate practices of colonial domination and exploitation, while many brilliant proposals emerging from the General Assembly have been ignored – presenting an existential threat to the planet. According to experts, the world has exceeded six of the nine planetary limits within which humanity and Earth can continue to develop and prosper, a tragic situation worsened during the last decades of unipolarity, inaction and unmet promises. However, he expressed conviction that a new international order is emerging in which all people participate "without masters or slaves". Calling for an end to the arms race, he expressed alarm that global military spending has reached historic figures, with \$2.24 trillion in weapons and war industry spending by April 2023. He further noted that a growing number of countries are seeking to use outer space to improve their military capabilities.

In view of that, he reiterated the regional commitment proclaiming Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, within the framework of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Turning to the environment, he called on each State to dedicate resources to the Damage and Loss Fund in proportion to its historical responsibility for greenhouse gases. "We must be bold and transform the expenses of war and death into investments for life," he stated. While the neoliberal order multiplies forms of domination, exploitation and exclusion, he pointed to the unprecedented and peaceful rise of the Global South, through regional and interregional processes of cooperation and integration. The emergence of trade blocs in Asia, Africa, South America or the BRICS grouping allow nations to access international markets without the need to compromise their sovereignty.

Highlighting Bolivia's economic efforts, he noted that nominal gross domestic product (GDP) increased from \$40 billion in 2021 to \$44 billion in 2022 — "the highest figure in our history" — without raising interest rates, or practicing neoliberal monetary policies, while taking care of the poorest. Turning to the climate crisis, he called for concrete actions based on the thinking of indigenous peoples, with developed countries making historical compensation and reparations to developing countries. "The systematic transfer of wealth from the South to the North has put us at a disadvantage to this day," he said. Voicing alarm over water scarcity, he heralded this year's conclusion of the Treaty on Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. Citing the active participation of indigenous peoples in Bolivian State affairs, making its recent achievements possible, he called on the Assembly to continue strengthening their rights and participation.

Voicing condemnation that 736 million women worldwide — one in every three women — have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence, he further warned that 800 women die every day from pregnancy-related complications. Calling for an end to international sanctions and unilateral coercive measures, he said a clear example of this is the illegal, inhumane and criminal economic and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, and further rejected the inclusion of Cuba as a promoter of terrorism. Such measures run contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and the mandate of the Security Council. He further urged the international community to end Israel's occupation of Palestine, allowing its people to exercise their right to self-determination in a free, independent and sovereign State within pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Current crises demand a strong United Nations, consistent with the principles that created it, committed to peace, maintaining its intergovernmental character without subordination to any hegemonic power.

KASSYM-JOMART TOKAYEV, President of Kazakhstan, stressed that humanity faces another period of geopolitical confrontation from eroding international principles. The pattern of non-compliance and withdrawal from international institutions “is extremely concerning as it could lead to the point of no return”, he warned. He urged all parties to conflicts — including the Ukrainian crisis — to seek diplomatic solutions based on the United Nations Charter and universally recognized international law. Calling for comprehensive Security Council reform, he emphasized that “the voices of middle Powers and all developing countries need to be amplified and clearly heard” to meet the interests of most of humanity. Since the Council appears unable to move beyond deadlock, it should become more representative so other countries can play a greater role in maintaining peace and security. The growing engagement of Central Asian States has been a positive force in transforming the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia into a full-fledged international organization which can contribute to mediation and peacemaking.

“Of all the challenges we face,” he continued, the most destructive is the threat of nuclear weapons. As Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal 30 years ago, only mutual trust and cooperation between nuclear Powers can produce global stability and a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, a strategic plan to completely renounce nuclear weapons by 2045 would be this generation’s most significant contribution to global security. Further, he highlighted interfaith dialogue and the principles of unity in diversity and mutual respect in order to foster a culture of peace. All holy books, including the Qur’an, deserve legal protection against barbarism and acts of profound disrespect that cannot be accepted as expressions of freedom, free speech or democracy.

Additionally, with Central Asia on the front lines of a 2 °C to 2.5°C temperature rise, he insisted that “we must all remain committed to a carbon-free future”. The urgency of climate action risks becoming a dangerous cliché, because immediate and transformational steps are required to protect the environment. Instead of using the climate agenda to restrict trade and investment, “we must focus on positive change,” he said, such as investing in green jobs, ending fossil fuel subsidies, and ensuring that all climate actions are fair and inclusive — involving women at all levels. He proposed launching a just energy transition partnership in Kazakhstan, where a gradual, sustainable, and socially responsible transition away from coal would be a big bonus for global climate goals. Without proper funding, however, ambitious plans will remain unmet. Furthermore, water scarcity in the region has created serious economic challenges that foreshadow global concerns, where demand for water may outstrip supply by as much as 40 per cent by 2040.

Noting that nearly 10 per cent of the world’s population faced hunger last year, he called for a better global food security system that boosts information exchange and the international response to food crises. “Kazakhstan is ready to act as a regional food supply hub,” he declared, as a “reliable link for nearly 80 per cent of overland transit traffic between Asia and Europe” and with “all the required resources, infrastructure, and logistics in place”. The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, the so-called “Middle Corridor”, can strengthen East-West engagement and increase the pace of trade between critical markets. More broadly, he called on all Member States to support the timely establishment in Almaty of a United Nations regional centre for sustainable development goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan. Additionally, he called for the launch of an international agency for biological safety, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s painful illustration of the world’s vulnerability to biological threats.

SEYYED EBRAHIM RAISI, President of Iran, noted that the Qur’an speaks of equality among humans, encourages serving those less fortunate and forbids all forms of violence in human interaction. Holding up a copy, he underscored: “The fires of disrespect will not overcome the divine truth.” Spotlighting the Islamophobia and cultural apartheid witnessed in Western countries, he underlined the need for respect for world religions to hold a prominent place on the United Nations agenda. Further, concurrent with the war on Islam, the world is also witnessing a war against the framework of the family, which is a fundamental pillar supporting human development. He therefore called on all religious leaders to uphold their historical responsibility to defend the sanctity of the family and on the United Nations to properly protect this framework.

Noting that history is at a critical juncture, he said that Western hegemony “no longer resonates with the realities of today’s world”, that the former liberal order has been “relegated to obsolescence” and that “attempts to universalize American ideals throughout the world” have failed. Instead, there exists a collective hope for the creation of a novel, equitable world order — central to which is abandoning global arrogance in favour of regional cooperation. Further, the formation of East-West divides should not be permitted, nor should be making trade corridors unsafe, stifling the economic progress of sovereign nations or fomenting proxy wars. Noting that these actions — ironically — are conducted in the name of defending Western democracy, he said that the global community has discerned the true essence of such democracy — “nothing more than a velvet glove hiding a cast-iron hand”.

He went on to state that Iran’s good-neighbour policy seeks to increase regional cooperation and forbid external meddling “from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf”. Any foreign presence is not part of the solution — rather, it is the problem itself. Stressing that the most serious threats in Western Asia are extremism and fundamentalism, he said that the surgical use of terrorists by

Western Governments will be overcome by the collective will of the people of the region. "Discrimination in the fight against terrorism is a green light given to the terrorists themselves," he emphasized. Turning to Palestine, he asked whether "the time has come" to end 75 years of occupation, demolition and the spilling of the blood of women and children. The situation in Afghanistan is another example of foreign meddling in the region, and he called on the international community to provide the assistance necessary to address the crisis of refugees driven from that country — many of whom have been given refuge in Iran.

On Ukraine, he underscored his country's "unambiguous position" that it does not support any war — neither in Europe nor anywhere else — and that it supports any initiative aimed towards the cessation of hostilities. Stressing that the United States' leaving of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was an "inappropriate response" to Iran's fulfilment of its commitments within that framework, he called on Washington, D.C., to choose a path — "either JCPOA or not". While stating that nuclear weapons have no place in Iran's defensive or military doctrines, he nevertheless stressed that his country "will never fall short" of obtaining its inherent right to peaceful nuclear energy. He added that the United States' use of sanctions has not yielded the desired result, calling on that country to "cease traveling on the wrong path". Reiterating that humanity is entering a new framework, he said that while old Powers will continue their trajectory "they represent the past, and we are the future".

ABDELMADJID TEBBOUNE, President of Algeria, said that for the past 50 years, his Government has pointed out how the global order's dysfunction prevents equality among Member States. Conflicts and crisis have reached unprecedented levels and millions of people have been displaced amid an increasing number of emergencies worldwide. The Security Council's weakened role over the past several years is evident. "We must all reflect on the need to uphold the rules of the Charter and establish a sound framework to strengthen international cooperation," he said, adding: "We must achieve the Global Goals in a multi-polar world." As it prepares to become a non-permanent Council member, Algeria stands ready to strengthen cooperation with all Council members and use its experience in mediation to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts. It will bring the aspirations of the African continent and Arab world to the Council as it focuses on lasting solutions to conflicts by dealing with their root causes, he asserted.

Reforming the Organization's major organs to expand their transparency is crucial, as is revitalization of the General Assembly — the only organ that truly reflects the international community's diversity. "It is a key element of strengthening democracy among States," he said. Progress on Council reform is also essential. Algeria will continue its efforts to change the historic injustices against the African continent and support oppressed persons fighting for their freedom. Pointing to his Government's long-standing support for the Palestinian people's right to establish an independent State, he called on the Council to adopt a resolution to guarantee the two-State solution and end the unilateral practices of the occupying authority, including the settlements on Palestinian territory. He called for an extraordinary Assembly session to grant the State of Palestine the status of a full United Nations Member State.

Algeria is closely following events in neighbouring nations to find peaceful solutions, he said. He supported the United Nations' efforts to find a Libyan-led political solution to the crisis in that country. On Mali, he said Algeria is playing a leading role in efforts to overcome obstacles to peace and stressed that force must be avoided. He urged a return to the constitutional order in Niger through peaceful means and respect for the rule of law, warning: "Foreign military intervention could have dangerous repercussions for the region as a whole." He asked all parties to the conflict in Sudan to resolve their differences as the conflict casts a shadow on the entire region and the Sahel.

Algeria stands ready to share its experience in combating terrorism, which must be a priority for the entire African region, he said. Eight years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, he noted that many States still face challenges requiring more solidarity from the international community and more viable economic models. Algeria has made sustainable development a priority and achieved progress in many areas, including education, health care, electricity and water, including a significant desalinization programme. Turning to human rights, he said his Government continues to work with the Human Rights Council and in November 2022 presented its fourth universal periodic review report. Creating equality for all people, including women and youth, is pertinent; and making women and youth a driving force in a sustainable Government will help achieve equality for all, he stressed.

ALBERTO FERNÁNDEZ, President of Argentina, pointing out that along with the compounded realities of the post-pandemic era, the climate crises, war in Ukraine and rapid technological advancements in artificial intelligence, the world is experiencing a time of change which requires a rethink of education, production processes and the preservation of work. The world's issues demand solutions, he said, as "we have spent too much time diagnosing problems". With only one quarter of the Sustainable Development Goals set to be realized by 2030, it is impossible to achieve an equitable future by continuing the same paradigms that have generated inequality. He bemoaned the international financial engineering system as "abusive and unchanged," concentrating income in the hands of a few and promotes cheap labour. Spotlighting situations where global interest rates rise

whenever the United States increases its domestic rates, he said it is shameful that IMF applies surcharges to countries already burdened by external debt.

Turning to the challenge of feeding the world's increasing population amid a rise in floods, drought and tornadoes, he noted that Argentina has lost more than 20 per cent of its total agricultural exports due to the worst drought in the last 100 years. A long-term solution to food insecurity requires a fairer and more transparent, equitable and predictable international trade system for agricultural products. "We must eliminate the distortions produced by subsidies and we must prohibit food from being the subject of financial speculation," he stressed, as both discourage the investments needed to increase production to help meet growing global demand for food. In the light of current catastrophic effects of the Russian war in Ukraine, particularly on global food prices, he said multilateralism is the best tool for cooperation, because hegemonic agendas limit economic and scientific cooperation, besides affecting international peace.

Pointing to Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin corridor and its reported unleashing of military operations to take control of Nagorno-Karabakh, he urged the international community to act to prevent new ethnic, racial or religious persecution and the world's multilateral organizations to regain their strength to enforce international rules. He highlighted his country's fortieth year of restored and unbroken democracy, this year, asserting that Argentina has actively "promoted the right to memory, truth and justice". Having experienced the horror of the disappearance of 30,000 people, Argentina reiterates its appeal to the international community to ensure the protection of persons of forced disappearances, he said, challenging the world to move forward on the rights agenda because "human rights admit no kind of regression". Stressing the importance of the rule of law, he also called for an intervention on the rights situation in Guatemala.

Further, he reaffirmed his nation's commitment to gender equality, stating that his Government has developed a framework to promote women's rights, strengthened dialogue with its Latin American and Caribbean neighbours, as the region faces a historic opportunity to address the world's energy and food challenges. He however noted that "terrorism must be combatted in the framework of rule of law". Argentina has ratified commitments to anti-terrorism efforts and will continue in same. He nevertheless decried unilateral coercive measures by any country or power bloc, requesting unequivocally that Cuba be taken off the list of terrorist supporters. He reaffirmed Argentina's legitimate right to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands, South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime spaces. Regretting that the United Kingdom, the occupying power, continues to refuse to resume bilateral talks, he called on the Secretary-General to redouble efforts through his good offices to bring that country to the negotiating table.

NAYIB ARMANDO BUKELE, President of El Salvador, called for the need to "renew and reinvent ourselves", not only the United Nations, but also all countries. El Salvador, like other developing countries, has always dreamed of being great. For some countries, it was always something unthinkable. No one listening would have thought of El Salvador as a global benchmark or positive example, but despite all the stumbling blocks, the country decided to take the risk and did not accept the fate that others decided for it. Four years since his Government took office, he declared, nobody would dare to deny that the continent's smallest country would make such strides forward in achieving greatness — for the first time in its 202-year history.

In such a short time, he proclaimed, El Salvador went from being the world's murder capital and most dangerous country to becoming the safest country in Latin America. "This isn't a promise anymore, it's the reality that Salvadoran people are living through, and anyone from abroad is welcome to see it for themselves." Other countries, including in Latin America and the United States, are watching and wondering why they cannot do the same thing, he added. The answer is clear and simple: Countries must make their own decisions, reaffirm their rights to use common sense, try their own methods, implement their own plans and design their own systems. "No country has the right to impose its ideas, its way of doing things — even less when these things don't work in our countries." El Salvador reaffirmed its legitimate right to govern itself.

There is not one single recipe or formula that works for everyone, but there is one ingredient that every recipe should include: courage. That is, the right attitude, guts, and determination to do what needs to be done even when others criticize or question it. For decades, he recounted, "we tried everything that we were told was the right thing for us and it got us fighting a civil war for things far removed from us." The conflict between the West and then Soviet Union was being waged in El Salvador. With more than 85,000 people dead and one destroyed country later, he said, "they told us that it was not the right recipe, but there was a new recipe available. They made us sign up for some fake peace agreements, but there was no peace in them, and they only enabled two different gangs to plunder the loot." Under foreign Powers, the country went to the right and left, resulting in more deaths and poverty after the war than during it. Nobody did anything to change the system's root causes, institutions, or laws.

Everything was done with the "support, consent, and imposition of those who proclaimed themselves to be the great defenders of human rights and democratic institutions". Rather than giving us medicine to make us better, he emphasized, what they were

giving us was poison. However, for the first time, El Salvador tried its own remedy. Ensuring “we had God and the people on board” and not obeying external powers, his government purged the judiciary and prison system and changed laws to prevent terrorists from escaping prison. International condemnation then started from countries, media outlets, and so-called experts that “never used their power or influence to call for security for our people being murdered.” El Salvador now competes with Canada to be the continent’s safest country, he declared, as the Latin American nation with the least homicides per capita. Now a “benchmark for security,” El Salvador is an example of what all countries can achieve when they start to claim their sovereignty, he said.

SADYR ZHAPAROV, President of Kyrgyzstan, noting that the world is at a turning point, spotlighted increasing geostrategic competition between major Powers, the highest inflation rates and food prices in the last 60 years and geo-economic fragmentation. Expressing concern over declining trust between countries, he said that – on the contrary – current global challenges and risks such as climate change and growing inequality should unite the international community. Underscoring the need to build a multilateral system that prevents further geopolitical fragmentation, he asked those present whether international conditions were easier 78 years ago — when the United Nations “was just beginning its work” following the bloodiest war in human history — than they are today. Despite military-bloc thinking over past years, the UN has been — and remains — the most legitimate platform for diplomacy, and he supported it “as the only universal, intergovernmental, international Organization mandated by all Member States to find solutions” to the challenges that constantly arise.

Calling on such States to provide unconditional political support to the United Nations and its Secretary-General at this challenging time, he went on to point out that ongoing global processes directly impact Central Asia’s security and stability. Strengthening relations with regional countries is a natural priority for Kyrgyzstan, and he detailed his view of the region as a single geo-economic space, a geopolitical intermediary and a dynamic community that shares similar culture and history. On the path to full regional integration, however, it is necessary to resolve issues related to the legal delineation of State borders. Recalling armed clashes on the border between his country and Tajikistan in September 2022, he said that restraint and political will demonstrated by both sides prevented further escalation. He therefore emphasized that his country supports resolving controversial issues exclusively through peaceful diplomatic means, based on the principles and norms of international law.

Also detailing a border agreement signed with Uzbekistan in December 2022, he said that it facilitated mutually beneficial cooperation and peaceful coexistence. He then underlined the need for the international community to recognize that the people of Afghanistan are experiencing significant difficulties, amplified by the lack of a coordinated global stance on the situation there. Turning to the Sustainable Development Goals, he emphasized that the international community should not get lost in “economic intricacies” and, instead, ask whether humanity’s needs have been addressed and whether security, prosperity and well-being have been ensured. Problems such as extreme poverty and climate change can only be solved through a global, collective response, and the current reality is that developing countries face a dual challenge — the need to invest in development and, at the same time, adapt to climate change.

On that, he stressed the need to significantly increase the level of funding that meets the real needs of countries vulnerable to climate change. Kyrgyzstan reached out to its partners with a request to exchange external debt for environmental projects; however, Germany was the only country that wrote off debt. He also spotlighted the vulnerability of mountainous regions — 94 per cent of Kyrgyzstan’s territory — to climate change, calling for the creation of a broad coalition of mountainous countries that prioritizes climate adaptation and green transition. Noting today’s challenges, he quoted Jusup Balasagyn, who said about 1,000 years ago: “Our world is such that, in order to unlock the gates of truth, you must grasp its essence.” He observed that “nothing has changed since then” and — underlining the need to “see the world for what it is” — called for the UN’s transformation into a centre for global efforts to prevent conflict, reach compromise and establish peace.

SANTIAGO PEÑA PALACIOS, President of Paraguay, said multilateral institutions have achieved little tangible results in a world of much wealth and serious geopolitical problems such as the 2008 financial crisis, COVID-10 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine — resulting in frustration and a view that national solutions should prevail as interference in national sovereignty has eroded trust among Member States. “This hinders cooperation and willingness to engage for the common good,” he stressed. Measures taken by the United Nations and the Council have not been encouraging. He urged multilateral organizations to review and reform their mechanisms, measures and institutional capacities to avoid new wars like the one ravaging Ukraine. “We must work on strengthening the UN with a view to building new capacities that will enable it to respond effectively and efficiently to permanent and changing global challenges,” he said.

On Security Council reform, he said its structure should observe the UN Charter’s guiding principles to promote the peace, security and prosperity of countries on equal terms. Paraguay supports the participation of the Republic of China–Taiwan as an integral part of the United Nations system. On global trade, he said trade restrictions based on criteria, such as agricultural practices or environmental standards, generate discontent and uncertainty while creating unfair and discriminatory barriers.

Turning to climate change and sustainable development, he said Paraguay has adopted sustainable agricultural practices for more than 30 years that ensure a prosperous future for its farmers and guarantee the integrity of its land and water resources. He noted that 44 per cent of Paraguayan territory retains its forest cover and 95 per cent of the area planted with cereals and oilseeds in 2022 employs sustainable technologies, such as direct seeding and crop rotation.

Reaffirming Paraguay's commitment to the United Nations core values and objectives, he said it is ready to lead by example to a more sustainable, equitable world. Paraguay aspires to become a regional logistics centre through the South American Bioceanic Road Corridor, which will strengthen integration with neighboring countries and Pacific markets and renew and empower the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Pacific Alliance, promoting greater rapprochement between the two blocks. In addition, the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway, a multimodal network, will become the most competitive mechanism to transport products to different Pacific ports. One of the country's primary strategic aims is to keep improving regional integration while managing its waterways, aquifers, the bioceanic corridor, hydroelectric plants and river navigation. This requires a delicate balance between integration and sovereignty. Latin America has great development potential but it can only be developed through mutual respect and working together in harmony.

Turning to governance, he pointed to Paraguay's transparent electoral process this year and more than 35 uninterrupted years of democracy. There is "no other acceptable system than the non-negotiable validity of human rights and freedom", he said. He noted the fundamental role Paraguayan women have played in rebuilding the country, which continues to strengthen its institutions and its economy after decades of being the poorest country in South America. Today it is an upper-middle-income nation, with strong credibility in international financial markets; high production norms certified by international standards; and macroeconomic stability based on fiscal and monetary discipline as well as a permanent effort to improve governance.

DINA BOLUARTE, President of Peru, extolled the beauties and virtues of her nation as seen in her historic election as the country's first constitutional female President in 201 years. Stating how her Government has brought back stability and hope to the country, she paid tribute to women, girls and adolescents around the world with the mantra "no more violence against women." She restated Peru's respect for human rights, democracy and international law as well as its commitment to international cooperation with other countries, implement the United Nations Charter, and defend territorial integrity and political independence of all States. Describing poverty as the greatest problem facing the world, she called on the international community to prioritize poverty eradication, stating her Government's commitment to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals as "we cannot accept disastrous scenarios of poverty".

Recalling the United Nations development agenda model of "leaving no one behind," she lamented the millions of people displaced worldwide in the face of conflict, unemployment and extreme poverty, stating that the international system needs to cooperate for safe and regular migration. With Peru being one of the country's hardest hit by COVID-19, having lost over 200,000 lives, "my Government is firmly committed to guaranteeing access and comprehensive health care, free and universal to all, without, exception" and to expanding national vaccine coverage. She affirmed the prevention and treatment of cancer as a national goal, stating that 1.9 million children have been vaccinated against polio and measles, with 20 of the country's 26 regions having oncological centres. She observed with grave concern the internationalization of criminal networks across the globe, cautioning that the global system cannot let its guards down against crime and drug trafficking as "we must all be part of the solution." Same for climate change as manifested by the heavy rains and cyclones being experienced.

She particularly highlighted the emerging threats of coastal and meteorological phenomena, canvassing a prevention-focused approach, announcing her Government's commitment of more than \$1 billion to combat said cause. She called on the global community to join in the fight, urging "us all make the pact for life." She also announced that, just like countries made progress to reduce carbon emissions, only last month, eight Amazonian countries agreed on conservation and deforestation efforts for the Amazon and that, with 61 per cent of Peruvian territory home to 5 million Peruvians, bold actions have become necessary. She therefore urged countries to honour commitment on technology transfer and climate financing, as well as establish a loss and damage fund as agreed during the most recent Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Restating her country's commitment to peace and development, she said Peru is firmly committed to accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) forum, participation in the Alliance of the Americas for Economic Prosperity and to a pursuing a partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for development. "We await you with clear and transparent rules, with stability and legal security, with low inflation, with solid international reserves and with the sole objective of working for the sustained growth of all, but, especially, of the most vulnerable," she said. She further called on Member States to invest in Peru. Stressing that her Government is faithful to its commitment to the United Nations and to republican principles in defence of peace, democracy, and human rights, she urged Member States to "work together with one heart, one thought and one desire."

FILIFE JACINTO NYUSI, President of Mozambique, noted that the main reason for the lack of success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “remains the absence of trust and solidarity between those who have a lot and those who have little or almost nothing at all”. On the issue of peace and security, he noted several regions, particularly Africa, are grappling with armed conflicts and instability. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons has increased more than 50 per cent in the past year alone. Mozambique has experienced cycles of armed conflicts, sometimes triggered by forces alien to national interests; however, through constructive dialogue founded on trust, the country signed the Peace and Reconciliation Accord, also known as the Maputo Accord. In June, the country closed the last Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) camp, a formerly armed opposition party, with the next phase being the reintegration of ex-combatants into society.

He expressed concern that Mozambique is confronted by the nefarious phenomenon of terrorism, specifically in Cabo Delgado Province in the north. Its strategy focuses on strengthening combat operations by the Mozambican Defence and Security Forces, with the initial support of the Rwandan contingent and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) multilateral force. He further cited tangible success on the ground, though terrorists continue to sow fear in isolated villages. With improvements in safety, populations have been returning in large numbers to their home areas and resuming normal life — a pioneer experience of combining bilateral and multilateral interventions and an example of solving African problems first by Africans themselves.

However, he noted the need for substantial support for those countries that are directly intervening in countering terrorism with Mozambique.

Warning that climate change is the main crisis facing mankind in this century, he emphasized the selfishness of the countries that pollute the most. Due to Mozambique’s geographic vulnerability, the country suffers cyclically, with the latest cyclones — Idai, Kenneth and Freddy — causing hundreds of lost lives and \$2 billion in damages and losses. However, support from partners has been well below the pledges, and in many cases, partners have preferred to manage the funds outside agreed mechanisms with the Government, causing overlaps in areas or programmes which have little impact on the communities. Consequently, a substantial portion of the funds is spent on capacity-building and bureaucratic issues rather than allocating funds to those affected. Turning to the global imperative of energy transition, he called for it to work as a launchpad for poor countries. Mozambique is a regional reference for the diversity of its energy matrix, including hydropower dams and solar and wind power stations.

Mozambique, he recalled, also boasts robust environmental legislation, including in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change, and became the first African country to receive payments from the World Bank Fund to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Last year, it launched a regional initiative on the “Sustainable Management of the Miombo Forest” that culminated in the adoption of the Maputo Declaration endorsed by 11 SADC member States. Miombo woodland is the world’s largest tropical forest ecosystem and can contribute to capturing carbon on the planet. “We don’t need to come up with analytical speeches,” he stressed, calling for vigorous action by all. He further appealed for a more inclusive international financial system that is guided by transparent rules, where Africa can participate as a partner with much to offer the world — not only as a warehouse that supplies cheap commodities to countries or international multinational corporations that dominate the international market.

LAURENTINO CORTIZO COHEN, President of Panama, highlighted human development as the greatest priority in order to provide people the opportunities for a more decent life in their own countries. As the “bridge of the world” and “the centre of the Americas where all roads converge”, Panama is making colossal efforts to provide solidarity to irregular migrants, whose number is increasing every year and forcing the country to allocate significant resources to humanitarian aid. Panama is working actively with countries in the region to improve care and protection for irregular migrants entering from Colombia and crossing the dangerous Darien jungle, but the situation is unsustainable. It is “not something we asked for”, he said, characterizing Panama as “not responsible” and a “victim” to the inhumane and painful humanitarian tragedy.

The problem of irregular migration must be addressed multilaterally, he urged, with a focus on respect for human rights and under the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility. He called for the international community to fully address irregular migration as an issue not only concentrated in the Mediterranean but also as a global issue that directly affects Panama. Seeing the suffering and death of hundreds of thousands of migrants embarking on a perilous journey, he called for human development so migrants do not need to abandon their countries and expose themselves to human rights violations or even lose their lives.

Further, he emphasized that the climate crisis is a ticking time bomb, and that “time is running out for all of us”. Panama is one of 15 countries most exposed to climate risks, but it is also one of only seven countries in the world declared “carbon negative.” The country has introduced an ambitious energy transition agenda with the goal of finding and developing accessible energy that does not pollute, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 24 per cent by 2050. Panama has already faced its first case of climate displacement, relocating the population of the Carti Sugdup island due to rising sea levels. He urged the “most polluting countries” to respect the commitments made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, considering Panama’s “effective

contributions" to environmental protection. On repeated occasions, he noted, countries that commit to making changes do not deliver later on.

"We must ask ourselves: How does the climate crisis impact the first three Sustainable Development Goals? Can the international community really end poverty, achieve zero hunger, and provide health and well-being in the midst of serious drought afflicting the planet, rising sea levels, and devastating fires razing huge areas of land?" He underscored conclusions from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, warning of an unprecedented escalation of climate changes posing a grave threat to survival of life on Earth. In closing, he reiterated an appeal for dialogue, peace, and multilateralism, with respect for international law and its underlying principles. "We are in a race against the clock for human survival," he stressed. "Panama wants for the whole world what we want for our own people: peace, well-being, justice, and development."

BOLA AHMED TINUBU, President of Nigeria, said that, while failures in good governance have hindered Africa, "broken promises, unfair treatment and outright exploitation from abroad have also exacted a heavy toll on our ability to progress". Due to both longstanding internal and external factors, the economic structures of Nigeria and Africa have been skewed to impede development, industrial expansion, job creation and the equitable distribution of wealth. If Nigeria is to fulfil its duty to its people and the rest of Africa, it must create jobs, a belief in a better future and lead by example. "And we are doing so," he stressed, detailing his Government's removal of a costly, corrupt fuel subsidy and a noxious exchange-rate system. "Other growth and job-oriented reforms are in the wings," he added.

Welcoming partnerships with those "who do not mind seeing Nigeria and Africa assume larger roles in the global community", he said that the question is not whether his country is open for business. Rather, he emphasized, it is "how much the world is truly open to doing business with Nigeria and Africa in an equal, mutually beneficial manner". Direct investment in critical industries, the opening of ports to a wider range and larger quantity of African exports and meaningful debt relief are important aspects of this cooperation. He also underlined the need to affirm democratic governance as "the best guarantor of the sovereign will and well-being of the people". Military coups are wrong — as is any tilted civilian political arrangement that perpetuates injustice — but he observed that the wave crossing Africa is not a demonstration in favour of coups. Rather, "it is a demand for solutions to perennial problems", he said.

He went on to say that the West Africa region "is locked in protracted battle against violent extremists", and — in the turmoil — "a dark channel of inhumane commerce has formed". Along that route, everything is for sale, and men, women and children are seen as chattel. At the same time, mercenaries and extremists invade from the north with lethal weapons and vile ideologies. While African nations will improve their economies and disband extremists on their turf, he called on the international community to strengthen its commitment to "arrest the flow of arms and violent people into West Africa". Another important aspect of global solidarity is to secure Africa's mineral-rich areas from pilfering and conflict, he stressed, noting that many such areas have become "catacombs of misery and exploitation" and that "the mayhem visited on resource-rich areas does not respect national boundaries".

He said that, at Nigeria's door, foreign entities — abetted by local criminals aspiring to be petty warlords — have drafted thousands of people into servitude to illegally mine gold and other resources. Billions of dollars meant to improve the nation now fuel violent enterprises, and Member States must deter their firms and nationals from this pillaging. He also detailed the severe impacts of climate change on his country, stating that African nations will fight climate change — "but must do so on fair and just terms". Outlining several national measures, he said that continental efforts will register victories if established economies are "more forthcoming with public- and private-sector investment for Africa's preferred initiatives". Stressing that Africa does not wish to "replace old shackles with new ones", he said that the continent is not a problem to be avoided, nor is it to be pitied. "Africa is nothing less than the key to the world's future," he said.

LUIS LACALLE POU, President of Uruguay, said more than 190 representatives from countries around the world — with different economic, social, climatic and other situations — have gathered here and agreed to work together to achieve the same rights and principles. Yet he noted that regarding international law, the same bar is not always applied to larger countries as to smaller ones. The Assembly has gathered with an optimistic vision of humanity. Developments such as globalization, artificial intelligence and real-time communications can help the development of countries and people if they are used well. "We are living in a world with a lot of words without actions," he said.

Uruguay comes to the Assembly as a stable democracy with full, stable institutions and respect for international law, he said. Its economy has recovered to where it was before the pandemic with strong employment, historic levels of public investment in infrastructure, foreign investment and financial stability. Public finances are in good order with inflation, for example, at an historic 18-year low. The Uruguayan people have a sense of responsible freedom. He noted that at the end of his Assembly speech

delivered in September 2021, he had said the pandemic had reminded everyone that all were one. International responsible freedom, or liberty, and the well-being of independent countries are intrinsically linked to the common good. "We need to be aware of this, accept it and act as a result," he said.

Noting the many references to the environment during today's debate, he said Uruguay has been given the name "Natural Uruguay" because of its commitment to the environment. He noted that renewable energy levels are at 90 per cent and the country has significant reforestation activities and sustainable production processes. The economy and the environment are intrinsically linked. Several months ago, Uruguay issued a sustainable bond that is linked to compliance with the Paris Agreement. A system of benefits and penalties, linked to compliance with the Paris Agreement, should be applied to international loans, market access and tariffs in order to reward those engaged in environmentally friendly and sustainable practices.

Referring to the "sin of doing things well", he said Uruguay's improvements and increased standards means it no longer benefits from some international financial mechanisms, such as international trade support. A fresh look should be taken at some of these conditions. Finally, he firmly condemned the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and expressed solidarity with Ukraine. He agreed with the United Nations Secretary-General that voices should be raised against all authoritarian populism that violates human rights and hurts current and future generations, calling for a robust response from the international community.

PETR PAVEL, President of the Czech Republic, recalled that his country has its own experience with wars and interventions, including decades' long military occupation imposed by Moscow, which "taught us what it means when 'might makes right'". Visiting Ukraine in April, he "saw the infamous crime scenes at Bucha and Borodyanka", stressing that the "list of stories full of horror is endless." The Russian Federation must unconditionally withdraw all troops from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, with its leaders held accountable for the crime of aggression against its neighbour. He noted that from day one, his country has stood by Ukraine's side and provided the defenders with weapons and ammunition, and per capita, has received more Ukrainian refugees than anybody else, mostly women and children. He called for a just and durable peace on the defender's terms.

"Those who contest the international rules steer the wheel of global security backwards, into confrontation, and sooner or later at the expense of all of us," he stressed. Expressing concern over the security, humanitarian and political crises unfolding in the Sahel, he called on the international community to find a way to end the series of military coups and ensure a return to constitutional order. This is the only way countries can effectively protect themselves against terrorism and achieve the much-needed economic and social development called for by African people. He emphasized that some countries pretend to be willing to help, but in reality, create economic and political dependencies which undermine long-term stability. He condemned China's military actions raising tensions in the Taiwan Strait, and its unfriendly actions against partners in the South China Sea. He further cited reckless escalation of nuclear or intercontinental ballistic missile activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran.

Turning to the Middle East, among the world's most volatile regions, he pointed to efforts to normalize relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours, bringing positive steps towards stability and peace. Having its own national experience with oppression, fundamental rights and freedoms "are deeply embedded in our values system and foreign policy," he stated. Prague strives to pursue an active human rights and democracy policy and is a staunch supporter of international human rights mechanisms, currently serving as the Presidency of the UN Human Rights Council. He called for greater efforts to support media freedom to enable access to independent and factual information, as without it "disinformation and propaganda can win."

"The 2030 Agenda is a promise to current and future generations, which we need to keep," he stated, noting that in the latest SDGs Index, the Czech Republic ranked as the eighth most advanced country in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Turning to climate change, he cited it as the single most destructive threat to the current and future existence and well-being of all humankind since prehistoric times. Thirty years after the end of the cold war, he emphasized that the world is witnessing efforts by authoritarian regimes to redefine core principles of the multilateral order. Malign actors use cyberspace; disinformation; and economic, political and other tools to disrupt democratic processes, to undermine institutions and to weaken security. "The challenges we face today are significant and it is apparent that only collective action can ensure a safe and prosperous future for all," he stressed.

SURANGEL WHIPPS, President of Palau, said that his country's vulnerability to climate change, struggles with the high cost of imported food and goods as well as infrastructure challenges due to its remote location, highlight the unique challenges faced by small island developing States in their pursuit of sustainable development. The country's new developmental perspective was borne out of a harsh lesson it first experienced in 2016 when it lost 13 per cent of its tourism strength, a situation which peaked to 98 per cent in 2021. This, in addition to the difficulty in accessing essential deliveries during and in the aftermath of the

COVID-19 pandemic grossly devastated its economy. "There are Palauans today who survived a war that was not of their own making — only to suffer from the ripple effects of another," he said.

The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, beyond aggravating his country's economic situation, also underscores the connectedness of global economies, he said. He spotlighted the global security implications of the invasion and their corresponding effects on world order, stating that current happenings serve as a reminder of the urgent need for worldwide peace and security. Unequivocally condemning the Russian Federation's aggression on Ukraine, he also urged the United Nations and concerned parties involved in the Taiwan Strait to de-escalate tensions. He noted migration as a significant problem faced by his country, having lost nearly 50 per cent of its population since 1994 to other climes in their quest to seek better opportunities. It is therefore imperative to stimulate dialogues and activities that would promote empowerment in a bid to discourage continuous exodus.

Similarly inimical to his country's progress is the climate problem with cultural heritages and livelihoods severely impacted, and the imperatives of overcoming them crucial. Since his childhood, the island nation has shrunk by two-thirds due to sea-level rise. Stating that G20 nations have a vital role to play in mitigating climate change impacts and reducing emissions, he pointed out that the fate of homes and cultures are at the risk of extinction "if we fail to take action on climate change". He further called on the international community to increase access to climate action as it "is time to change matrix on accessing climate mitigation funds." He also appealed that all parties ensure all commitments pledged are acted upon. Commending the success of COP26 and COP27, he advocated for a global Deep-Sea mining moratorium in adherence with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea's precautionary principle.

He echoed United States President Biden's call for Security Council reforms, advocating for a permanent seat on the Council for countries like Japan. He proposed abolishment of the veto power, also advocating for a change in Taiwan's status within the United Nations, including its meaningful participation in crucial specialized agencies and processes such as the World Health Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as its "23 million people have much to offer to the world". The world is under siege from war and climate change, threats that undermine sustainable development and drive poverty, including in the Pacific Islands. "We must act now to improve life across our shared ocean and world," he said. Like the Palauan boy Tebang, who, unable to move a log alone, succeeded with his friends by chanting 'it can move,' he added: "We too can move mountains if we speak and act together".

MACKY SALL, President of Senegal, noted that for millions of people, daily life remains marked by fear, violence, poverty and inequality. The tragedy of illegal migration is a reminder of the need to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and to relentlessly continue the fight against the criminal networks which organize this illicit trafficking of human beings. Voicing concern over the resurgence of coups d'état in Africa, he strongly condemned any form of unconstitutional change of Government. Further, terrorism continues to gain ground on the continent, without an appropriate reaction from the Security Council. He noted that during its membership in the Council in 2016 and 2017, Senegal warned of the ineffectiveness of peacekeeping operations in Africa, whose mandates and equipment hardly respond to the nature of the situations. He reiterated his Government's support for the right of the Palestinian people to a viable State, coexisting peacefully with Israel.

He recognized the valuable services provided by the United Nations system and Bretton Woods institutions to member countries for almost 80 years. However, the multilateral system, a legacy of a bygone past, has become obsolete — as the United Nations Secretary-General rightly warned, a system which continues to ignore the realities of its time and the needs of more than three quarters of the Organization's Member States, accentuates inequalities, generates the conditions for its challenge, and causes the risk of its fragmentation. To avoid this divide, wisdom calls for reforming global political, economic and financial governance, so that it is more representative of diversity. The international community can get there if it generates the necessary political will, as the Group of 20 (G20) showed by admitting the African Union as a full member.

Calling for a revitalized universalism, more open and more effective in tackling major challenges, he cited the climate emergency. While extreme phenomena are increasing, Senegal remains committed to the implementation of the Paris climate accord. Thanks to its proactive energy mix policy, renewable energies now represent 31 per cent of its electrical capacities, and with the signing last June of a Partnership for a Just Energy Transition, his country aims to increase this rate to 40 per cent by 2030. On that note, he thanked those partner countries who are mobilizing €2.5 billion over an initial period of 3 to 5 years, starting in 2023, to finance Senegal's projects. At the same time, Dakar is continuing to build low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, including two mass transport systems: a regional express train and a rapid transit bus line, both electric.

With the implementation of national and continental projects, such as the Great Green Wall, “our countries are clearly committed to climate action, within their means,” he stated. However, for the most part, green projects in Africa are financed by commercial debt, whereas they should be supported by the mobilization of \$100 billion per year agreed upon since the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15) in 2009 to finance climate action. Climate justice, he stressed, would require that a continent which contributes less than 4 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and which suffers the most, should not be condemned to debt to repair and prevent damage for which it is not responsible. Senegal supports a just and equitable energy transition, taking into account the specific needs of African countries, including universal access to electricity of which more than 600 million Africans remain deprived.

OLAF SCHOLZ, Chancellor of Germany, said 50 years ago two German States joined the United Nations: the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Their accession was preceded by a visionary policy of détente. It required both States to commit to resolve conflicts without force, renunciate any revisionism and hold a foreign policy that did not ignore the cold war realities. He mentioned the beginnings of their membership not for historical interest, but because the prohibition of the use of force still remains the United Nations unfulfilled core pledge. In addition, the inviolability of borders and the sovereign equality of States must be defended by everyone in today’s multipolar world. “And because we today, especially today, need the courage, creative energy and will to fill in the rifts,” he said. “The rifts which are deeper than ever.”

The world needs more cooperation that strengthens existing alliances and seeks new partners to reduce the risk of excessively one-sided dependencies. “Anyone seeking order in a multipolar world has to start here at the United Nations,” he said, adding that is why Germany supports the UN system and is its second-largest contributor after the United States. Only the United Nations, using the values enshrined in its Charter, can fully realize the aspirations of universal representation and sovereign equality for all. He added that the obstruction of a few members, no matter their influence, does not negate that the overwhelming majority of States agree on many issues. “All of us have an interest in ensuring that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of our countries are respected,” he added.

Turning to the challenge of anthropogenic climate change, he said traditional industrialized countries have a very special responsibility to fight against the climate crisis even as many other countries are today’s biggest emitters. Economic development must be decoupled from carbon dioxide emissions and solutions and technologies are available and being used. Germany honours its pledges on international climate financing and tripled its contribution to €6 billion in 2022, up from €2 billion in 2014 and €4 billion in 2020. Germany holds an equal ambition to achieve the Global Goals. “Climate action or development, this trade-off will not work,” he said. Germany plans to use next year’s Summit of the Future to accelerate the push to implement the 2030 Agenda, he added.

Turning to reform at the United Nations, he said the composition of the Security Council is the most obvious example of how the Organization does not currently represent the reality of a multipolar world. Welcoming that more partners, including three permanent Council members, want to see progress on reform, he stressed that Africa, Asia and Latin America deserve greater representation. Under this premise, a text with various options can be negotiated. “No country should obstruct these open-ended negotiations with excessively high demands,” he said. He said his thoughts remain with people in Sudan, eastern Congo, Ukraine and other places for whom peace is a distant dream. The Russian Federation President can end the Ukraine war at any time with one single order and must understand that Member States are serious about the Organization’s principles. “That in the multipolar world of the twenty-first century, we do not see a place for revisionism and imperialism,” he added.

FUMIO KISHIDA, Prime Minister of Japan, urged the international community to renew cooperation to protect and strengthen human dignity as a driving force across the world. Hailing from Hiroshima, he has made nuclear disarmament his “lifelong mission” and called on leaders of nuclear-weapon States to step up progress towards a world without nuclear weapons. As it is “paramount to transcend purely government efforts and engage in multi-layered efforts,” he said Japan will contribute 3 billion yen to establish a new “Japan Chair for a world without nuclear weapons” at overseas research institutes to overcome the divisive debate between academia and Government on choosing deterrence or disarmament. Japan seeks to normalize its relationship with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea by comprehensively resolving outstanding issues, including abductions, nuclear and missile issues, and settling “our unfortunate past”. To open up a new era together, he conveyed his determination to meet with President Kim Jong-Un face-to-face at any time and without any conditions, with an interest in holding high-level talks under his direct supervision “to realize a summit meeting at an early time.”

Underscoring the world’s status at a “historical inflection point,” he reflected on the origins of the United Nations and reiterated the importance of the rule of law and Japan’s interest in protecting the right of vulnerable nations and peoples to live in peace. In particular, the Russian Federation’s infringement on international law must be rectified as soon as possible and the nuclear threat must be ended. Regarding the Security Council, he expressed Japan’s support to increase African representation and expand both permanent and non-permanent membership. Moreover, Japan will continue efforts to increase the transparency of Council

discussions, including by improving access to deliberations. Regarding peacekeeping, his Government will further extend aid, including by contributing an additional \$9 million to support capacity-building for personnel deployed in African Union peace support operations. He also reiterated Japan's new plan for a free and open Indo-Pacific where diverse nations coexist and prosper together, based on principles of the rule of law and inclusiveness.

On climate, he stated that Japan will further support disaster risk reduction for countries vulnerable to climate change, including island States. Before net zero is achieved, Japan will also work to mitigate potential impacts from rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Additionally, he urged the international community to prepare for the next infectious disease outbreak. In line with public and private sector pledges at the Group of Seven to achieve universal health coverage and strengthen prevention, preparedness, and response to health crises, Japan will contribute \$7.5 billion from 2022 to 2025. Japan will also continue to work with developing countries to ensure equitable access to medical countermeasures for health emergencies.

On the emerging issue of technology, he noted the need to balance the "progress of digitalization" with human dignity. While digital technology is bringing benefits to everybody, there are also risks of violating privacy and human rights. Japan launched the Hiroshima Artificial Intelligence (AI) Process on Generative AI, in order to advance more trustworthy AI and build a digital ecosystem with international rules compatible with human dignity. Overall, in the face of an increasingly divided international community experiencing multiple crises, he called for a common language that resonates with everyone. "We should go back to the very basic foundation of treating human life and dignity with paramount importance." By focusing on human dignity, the international community can steadily advance "human-centred" cooperation.

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