



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

7th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 22 September 2021, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Address by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela to introduce an address by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Plasencia González (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to the General Assembly.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex I and see A/76/332/Add.3).

Address by Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Mongolia.

Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Khurelsukh (*spoke in Mongolian; English text provided by the delegation*): I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his unanimous election as the President of the General Assembly and to wish him every success in the work of the seventy-sixth session. I pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation to him in carrying out his responsibilities.

For the past two years, countries all over the world have suffered from the unforeseen plague of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and have endured difficult times together. On behalf of the people of Mongolia, I want to express my deepest condolences for the loss of 4.6 million lives worldwide from the coronavirus. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the doctors, medical personnel and front-line workers who are tirelessly serving to safeguard the precious lives and health of people in every corner of our planet. I also want to express my sincere appreciation to the United Nations system and its agencies for their tremendous role in combating the pandemic by uniting and assisting all Member States and providing them with information and guidance.

The pandemic has affected not just global health but every area of economic, social and political life,

In accordance with decision 75/573, and without setting a precedent for mandated high-level meetings planned for future high-level weeks, the official records of the General Assembly will be supplemented by annexes containing pre-recorded statements submitted by Heads of State or other dignitaries, submitted to the President no later than the day on which such statements are delivered in the Assembly Hall. Submissions in this regard should be made to estatements@un.org.



and it has become evident that human history will be divided into pre- and post-COVID-19 periods. We have learned a number of lessons. Mongolians have a saying that “Disease never bothers to knock”, which implies that diseases do not discriminate according to race, age, gender or wealth and highlights one of the precepts of Mongolian morality, which is the importance of caring for people in trouble and not ill-treating them. Rather than discriminating against one another, we should focus on combining our strengths and overcoming the perilous pandemic confronting humankind.

In some countries we have also seen protests and insurgencies against lockdowns and home-confinement orders. Mongolia, well known as an oasis of democracy in its region, has been closely observing the human rights issues that have emerged during the pandemic lockdown. The fact that Mongolia and many other Asian countries have been going through the COVID-19 crisis without substantial conflicts over human rights demonstrates the advantage that Asia’s communal cultures have over other, more individualistic ones. I firmly believe that respecting the cultures and values of others, as well as learning from each other’s successes and failures, will be vital if we are to collectively overcome the challenges that humankind may face in the future.

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has placed an enormous strain on global health and on human resources, infrastructure and supply chains in particular. With the spread of COVID-19 infections continuing to linger, the realities of social injustice have been vividly revealed. The outbreak of the pandemic has also alerted modern nation-States to the fact that the existential importance of the health sector is just as significant as that of the defence sector. The realization is emerging that the concept of global development should involve not only green and accessible socioeconomic development but also major consideration of health and health diplomacy. There is a pressing need in the health sector to improve risk management, preparedness, investment, the promotion of public-private partnerships and the expedited application of cutting-edge technology and innovation. The countries of the world and the international community are focusing their collective efforts and mutual assistance on the vaccination process, which is considered the best protection against COVID-19. As of today, the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, which seeks to ensure equitable access to

COVID-19 vaccines, has delivered 190 million vaccine doses to 138 countries, bringing invaluable support to low- and middle-income countries.

In Mongolia, 65 per cent of the population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with the support of other countries and Government procurement, in addition to the COVAX Facility. We have seen an overall decrease in the spread of the virus in Mongolia, although there has been an uptick in recent months. The Government has therefore started taking gradual steps to return to normal life by opening services, launching classroom training and increasing the number of international flights.

The pandemic has ruthlessly challenged the world’s economies and their liquidity and resilience. Estimates indicate that in 2020 the virus reduced global economic growth by 4.9 per cent and global trade fell by 5.3 per cent. However, the world’s economy is projected to see a recovery in 2021. Information technology was the main engine of social life during the pandemic and has firmly demonstrated its role and place in life in the twenty-first century. While the use of information technology was already deeply ingrained in economic, business and financial relations, during the pandemic we saw an expansion of remote diagnostics and treatment, e-learning and working from home that gave rise to new forms of labour organization.

In the past two years, we have learned that isolation from society and loneliness are more fraught with fear than the coronavirus itself at a time when humankind is increasingly in need of socialization. We have also seen that a lack of in-person communication among family members, friends, children, colleagues, States and nations has a negative impact on businesses, education, social behaviour and relations and mental health. It is worth pointing out that if we accept the challenges facing the world as opportunities to save resources, time and space, we will be able to adapt and recover faster in our new environment.

The monarchy in Mongolia was abolished as a result of the people’s revolution of 1921. We then adopted our first Constitution and proclaimed the Republic. However, our joining of the United Nations in 1961 served as an additional guarantee of our independence and sovereignty as we became a full-fledged member of the world community. We therefore consider that anniversary an important event in our national history and are commemorating it on a large scale. Mongolians

view the United Nations as an organization that stands for peace and security, human rights, the development of nations in five continents, a faithful companion for the past 60 years and a reliable partner for many more than 60 years to come. Another Mongolian saying is that a person with friends lives in a wide space like a steppe, and a person without friends lives in a tight space like a palm. Today Mongolia has diplomatic relations with 193 countries of the world and has joined more than 70 international and intergovernmental organizations. We believe that Mongolia's accession to more than 290 international treaties is a testament to our growing position, role and responsibilities in the international arena and in world affairs.

The United Nations system and its agencies have made a significant contribution to Mongolia's development. We have cooperated productively in a number of specific areas, including strengthening democracy and good governance, improving the legal environment, ensuring human rights, reducing poverty, protecting maternal and child health and promoting environmental and sustainable development. On behalf of the people of Mongolia, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the United Nations and its agencies for providing multifaceted assistance and creating groups of donors and supporters through the challenging times that our country has faced, such as our social and economic transition in the 1990s, repeated winter disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the past 60 years, Mongolia has actively engaged in and contributed to achieving the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. My country has initiated and endorsed more than 90 General Assembly resolutions on 20 agenda items, including Disarmament Week, the Declaration on the Right to Peace, nuclear-weapon-free status, economic development, environmental protection, cooperatives, the situation of women in rural areas and literacy and education for democracy. In that regard, Mongolia declared its territory nuclear-weapon-free in 1992 and has been working actively in that regard ever since.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that we have been participating actively in United Nations peacekeeping operations since 2002; that the period from 2003 to 2012 was proclaimed the United Nations Literacy Decade at the initiative of Mongolia; and that the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, the first-ever intergovernmental body of its kind, has been established in Ulaanbaatar.

As we continue to work to support the special needs and interests of landlocked developing countries based on the advantage of our geographic location, we are striving to develop into a "transit Mongolia" — a transit, trade and service hub connecting Asia and Europe. I would also like to take this opportunity to underscore that Mongolia is committed to participating in the economic integration of the Asia-Pacific region, for example by becoming a Dialogue Partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and joining the East Asia Summit and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

The coronavirus pandemic has been the greatest disaster we have faced since the Second World War. Although 103 years have passed since the First World War, and 76 since the Second World War, we have not yet fully eliminated the dangers of war, and attempts to resolve issues by military means persist to this day. In today's world, the horrendous phenomenon of war must therefore be completely eliminated from the future of humankind and concepts of human propriety. The role and relevance of ensuring that all conflicts and misunderstandings are resolved through peaceful means and dialogue alone, along with the promotion of preventive diplomacy, are on the rise.

There is a widespread misconception that our ancestor Genghis Khan was a vicious man who conquered many nations. However, world history and studies show that he was an adherent of diplomacy and a peacemaker with a true desire to establish borders without hostilities. His dream was realized through a solid peace that lasted for almost 200 years on the great chessboard of Eurasia, a period that world scholars call the *pax Mongolica* and that was a notable contribution to the development of humankind. We Mongolians have inherited that spirit of cherishing peace from our ancestors, and today Mongolia is internationally recognized as a peace-loving democratic nation.

In 1990 we were able to transition peacefully to a democratic system without a single bullet being fired. We have no territorial or border disputes with our neighbours, no religious or ethnic conflicts. Mongolia is pursuing a peaceful, open, independent and multi-pillar foreign policy. With a view to building an intellectual immunity to war in human beings, we are therefore proposing an initiative to observe 2 September — the day that the devastating Second World War, which involved more than 100 million people from more than 30 countries and took the lives of millions, ended — as the international day to commemorate humankind's

victory over war. We are confident that the countries and peoples of the world will support our initiative.

We are seeing emerging military, political and security-related issues and an increasing number of armed conflicts related to religion, cultural differences, economic competition or globalization, along with a growing flow of refugees and environmental degradation. The political and peacekeeping operations policy of the United Nations and its model and scope have been modified accordingly. We support efforts to increase peacekeepers' roles and changes in requirements for them, as well as the aspiration to take immediate action with a compact force equipped with modern weapons, equipment and facilities in line with the operational situation of the mission concerned.

Since 2002, Mongolia has deployed nearly 20,000 Blue Helmets to 13 United Nations peacekeeping operations on three different continents and ranks high in the world in terms of the per capita deployment of peacekeepers and numbers of military personnel. Mongolia will seek to increase its participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations in future and is preparing to deploy a quick reaction force, a construction and engineering company and a level-2 hospital to United Nations missions. We are also pursuing a policy aimed at increasing the proportion of our peacekeepers who are women to 15 per cent, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. In that regard, Mongolia will host an international conference on the participation of female peacekeepers in United Nations peacekeeping operations next year in Ulaanbaatar. We call on the Department of Peace Operations and Member States for their support and cooperation in organizing the conference.

But while the pandemic and vaccination remain major concerns for the near future, we should not overlook the issues of future progress and sustainable development. In line with global development trends and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the State Great Khural of Mongolia adopted its Vision 2050, Mongolia's long-term development policy.

Because of COVID-19, my country's economy, which had been growing steadily for the three years prior to the pandemic, contracted by 4.5 per cent in 2020. Nevertheless, due to the gradual measures that the Government has taken to support the domestic economy and a favourable external economic environment,

Mongolia's economy is expected to recover and grow by an average of 4.8 per cent in the period from 2021 to 2022. International financial organizations have emphasized that the budgetary and fiscal measures that the Government of Mongolia has taken to protect its economy from the pandemic are higher than those of some developed countries, considering its economic capacity. And major banking and financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have repeatedly highlighted the fact that Mongolia has been particularly effective in protecting incomes among its low- and middle-income populations and preventing them from falling into poverty.

Mongolia's economy, which is dominated by agriculture and mining, remains vulnerable to many kinds of risk and disaster. In the aftermath of the pandemic, we are planning to focus on structural reforms, economic diversification, investment promotion and the maintenance of fiscal and financial stability to create environmentally friendly, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Foreign direct investment will continue to play a key role in developing countries during and after the pandemic. Creating a favourable business environment and promoting foreign direct investment will remain a fundamental goal in terms of Mongolia's economy. We look forward to working more actively with foreign and domestic investors and businesses than ever before on a mutually beneficial basis. In doing that, we will comply with the principles of respect for the environment and the protection of our traditional way of life from negative impacts.

We also attach great importance to intensifying governance reform at all levels of the public and private sectors and reducing corruption, including through an e-transition, which is the most realistic mechanism available for ensuring transparency, accountability, effective service and good governance. Mongolia aims to transfer at least 90 per cent of all of its public services to its integrated digital system, and will strive to become a so-called digital nation by 2024.

Climate change has had devastating effects in recent decades. A proper diagnosis of the causes is key to overcoming its harmful effects. One of the causes of adverse climate change is thoughtless human activity, the result of our own careless behaviour towards nature and the environment. Humans have largely debated about their ethical conduct towards one other rather than towards Mother Nature, which has led to the environmental and ecological disasters we are currently

experiencing. During the pandemic lockdown, we witnessed certain signs of natural self-recovery, at least for a short time, including the quick recovery of the ozone layer, reduced air pollution, the purification of rivers and waters and revived fauna and flora. That shows how we need to change humankind's behaviour and attitude towards nature and make tangible efforts to induce positive results, because the frequency and scope of wildfires, hurricanes, floods, droughts and *dzuds* are increasing every year, causing devastating damage in every corner of the world.

Since ancient times, we Mongolians have honoured the eternal blue sky as a father and the land as a mother. We have worshipped the surrounding mountains and waters with deep love and respect and been recharged by their vital energy. Our ancestors sedulously followed and sensitively explored nature's patterns in a way that allowed them to process and use animal-derived products and food in ways that are friendly to both the environment and human health. We used the Earth's blessings, such as trees, water, animal and other natural resources, only in accordance with our own and our households' needs, thereby saving resources for future generations. That natural self-recovery reminds me of the nomadic know-how that leaves pastures fallow so that the land can rest. That wisdom from Mongolian herders offers the motherland an opportunity to rest for a while and to restore and revive itself. In our fight against climate change, let us draw lessons from traditional Mongolian nomadic civilization in treating and regarding nature respectfully and combining that with the achievements of modern science and technology, as well as best practices and traditional experiences from all over the world.

Desertification is threatening the livelihoods of more than 2 billion people around the world. The sandstorms originating in Mongolia are becoming a major problem for us. Currently, a large portion of Mongolian territory is affected by desertification or land degradation to some degree. The main reasons are an increase of 2.2°C in the mean temperature and a 7 per cent decline in annual precipitation levels over the past 80 years. The most efficient way to reverse desertification is to plant trees. We Mongolians consider planting trees, writing books and raising children to be the three superior deeds. We have therefore launched a campaign to plant billions of trees by 2030 in order to contribute to the global fight against climate change.

Climate change and the degradation of ecosystems pose a real threat to the future of humankind, irrespective of borders or ethnicity. Conscious of the critical turning point we find ourselves at, countries around the globe have decided to gather in Glasgow in November for the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. I urge my fellow leaders to increase and renew their respective contributions and pledges in relation to fostering green development, reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and developing environmentally friendly societies and economies. The key approach to making a swift recovery from the damages of the pandemic and restoring our blue planet is through close cooperation and mutual understanding and assistance, as well as our commitment to continuing and stepping up our implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Last month, the summer Olympic Games, a symbol of peace and the unity of humankind, were held successfully in Tokyo, enabling athletes from five continents to gather together. Unlike the general debate last year, when Heads of State and Government spoke virtually, this time we are meeting in person here in the General Assembly Hall and are able to greet each other warmly. Those developments give us hope that the threat of the pandemic is slowing and that eventually we will overcome it. May the eternal blue sky bless all of humankind.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya to introduce an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

Ms. Omamo (Kenya): It is my privilege and honour, as Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of Kenya, to present a pre-recorded video statement by His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex II and see A/76/332/Add.3).

Address by Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras

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

Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hernández Alvarado (*spoke in Spanish*): Since 2014 we have brought relevant issues before the General Assembly, including the severe impact of climate change on our countries, low international coffee prices, the role of organized crime and criminal groups as destabilizers of democratic Governments and the injustice that we have seen in the distribution of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines. All of our demands are justified.

The entire world is currently facing a pandemic that has brought us to our knees. The COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility had serious problems at the outset in meeting the delivery of vaccines to Member States at a critical time when lives were at stake. That highlighted the importance of ensuring that the World Health Organization does not wait for problems to arise before coming up with solutions. It cannot be unprepared to deal with that or any other emergency. Today, before the Assembly, I propose transforming the international health system, especially the World Health Organization, in view of the inequity reflected in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to developing

countries that were unable to access them despite having the money available. An emergency fund must be created with contributions from donors but also from the countries themselves to ensure equitable and timely access to vaccines and every other form of treatment.

There can be no doubt that the year 2020 was a disastrous one for Honduras. In addition to the pandemic, we were hit by Eta and Iota, two highly destructive hurricanes. They destroyed our crops and our productive and road infrastructure were severely affected. Thousands of houses were damaged and sadly, dozens of Hondurans lost their lives. Various studies by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Central Bank of Honduras estimate that the losses amount to more than \$4 billion. That may be an insignificant amount for a rich country, but for us it is a great deal, the equivalent of 30 per cent of our annual national budget. More than 445,000 Hondurans were also put out of work.

Despite being one of the countries most affected by droughts and destructive rains in the world, we are among the nations that contribute most to the conservation of the environment. While 50 per cent of our territory is forest and 30 per cent falls into the category of protected nature reserves, we are severely affected by climate change. In Honduras, we have developed a plan for a protective system against climate change consisting of multipurpose dams that collect water during heavy rains. The water is then used for human consumption and to promote intelligent agriculture with cutting-edge technology for irrigation and food production. We are complementing that by changing the ways in which we approach agriculture, using less land area with higher productivity, and by caring for our forests. However, we are not seeing green climate funds being provided as they should. That can be achieved only with real political will. Action is long overdue and we cannot understand why it is still not happening. At the recent summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in Mexico, I proposed the creation of a climate change forecasting centre. I will also take that idea to Glasgow. We demand that industrialized countries genuinely fulfil their commitments through green financing and an end to bureaucracy, and that we address mitigation, adaptation and emergency situations in the countries such as ours that are worst affected every year.

In 2014, when we took office, Honduras was the most violent country in the world and the least equal in the region. Few micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises had access to credit, and our infrastructure had been neglected for more than half a century. Most of the population had no housing and no hope of obtaining it. The economy was generally disorganized and unstable. Now, a few months before my term of office ends, I am very pleased to say that Honduras today looks very different. Despite the serious and catastrophic crises we have had to face, today we have some of the best macroeconomic numbers in the region thanks to our good management of the country's finances. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the most prestigious credit rating agencies in the world have endorsed our transparency and management of funds. Honduras can now easily access new money under better conditions with very low interest rates, which directly benefits the population in general through social programmes, among other things.

We are also continuing to build more infrastructure than any previous Honduran Government. We are working on achieving our 200-year-old dream of linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, as well as improving infrastructure in every productive region of the country. We have modernized and improved our ports and airports, including the Palmerola and Ramón Villeda Morales airports, which serve major cities. Today we are seeing significant growth in the manufacturing industry to the tune of 70 per cent. We are entering a new era in manufacturing, with modern plants producing new synthetic textiles. We have saved the State millions of Honduran lempiras with the construction of the most modern Government civic centre in the region, which will ensure that the population is served in a more efficient, closer and more comprehensive way, now and for generations to come.

We have worked hard to achieve all of this in a spirit of transparency throughout our eight years in office. We have invested and managed the resources of the Honduran people diligently and transparently in those eight years, working hand in hand with international transparency in at least four areas of Government. Together with the Organization of American States (OAS), we established the first mission to support the fight against corruption and impunity in the history of the OAS. We continue to work on transparency and the fight against corruption and crime alongside the United Nations. We have also established a transparency

secretariat to watch over the interests of the people. We are building and strengthening institutions in the service of the Honduran people and in support of prevention and civil protection, in order to care for and save lives.

Mr. Salovaara (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

One of the sectors that has given our economy the greatest boost has been tourism, which has generated more than 274,000 jobs thanks to the fact that our country still has enormous potential to be exploited in that area. We are counting on international tourism and now receive some of the largest cruise ships in the world.

For the first time in history, Hondurans who are most in need or have been neglected for many years are receiving care with dignity through the largest social programme in our history, Vida Mejor, which has assisted more than 5.7 million people with more than 41 million social benefits, ranging from home improvement to the complete construction of a house, in addition to supporting them with seed capital, soft loans and training to enable them to launch their own businesses, be their own bosses and generate jobs. Vida Mejor means dignity and social justice for the forgotten of Honduras, and its impact is tangible. According to ECLAC data, we managed to reduce poverty levels in the country by 7 per cent before the pandemic. Thanks to this social programme, we have been able to cushion the impact of the hurricanes and the pandemic and accelerate the recovery process. Entrepreneurs and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises are part of the social economy and generate more than 70 per cent of jobs in the country. They can now receive loans at very low interest rates that help to boost their businesses significantly.

Rural producers have also received historic levels of support, with the spectacular transformation of the agricultural food industry, including bonuses, technical training and a credit system at 5 per cent per annum with the best terms and rates on the market, unprecedented in our country's history. We have built more than 46,000 houses, more than all the Honduran Administrations of recent years combined. Today we are continuing that transformation with greater security, more and improved infrastructure, better assistance for entrepreneurs and more support in terms of food production and improved housing and social

programmes for those who had been forgotten. We are delivering a better Honduras.

There is a new issue that I feel obliged to raise in this Hall, as it affects many of those Governments like Honduras that are working in the international fight against drug trafficking. To understand it, it is important to remember that a decade ago, Honduras had the highest homicide rate in the world. It was also the country through which most of the drugs entering the United States passed. That was the situation in 2010 when I assumed the presidency of the Honduras National Congress. In our determination to combat that scourge, we passed a series of security laws that were feared by drug traffickers. Those measures make it clear who is who in that fight, because such actions — for example the extradition of Hondurans for the first time in a century — could have been taken only by declared enemies of drug trafficking and organized crime. No one linked to drug trafficking or intimidated by criminals would ever take such measures.

The transformation that Honduras has undergone is extraordinary and has been recognized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and friendly Governments around the world. Since I became president, according to official United States Government data reported by the Department of State and the Southern Command, Honduras has reduced drug trafficking through its territory by a historic 95 per cent — an almost unprecedented achievement. The statistics, which span 2010 to 2019, are impressive. Under my Administration, through extradition, surrender or capture, 44 drug traffickers are now in the custody of the United States, thereby dismantling the most powerful drug cartels in the country.

Honduras has also transformed its national police, which had been penetrated by criminals. Almost half of its members were dismissed. With a commission made up of civil-society members and given full independence to make decisions, we have built a new police force that is now trusted and viewed as an example for the region. Most importantly, thanks to our decisions, the homicide rate in the country has been reduced by almost 60 per cent, saving thousands of lives each year.

Until recently, explanations of how we achieved great results by working together would have come only from Honduran officials and our allies, including United States agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Southern Command,

the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and countries such as Colombia, Chile, Israel, Mexico, the other nations of Central America and, of course, the United Nations and the Inter-American Development Bank. But now there is a new element in the form of several revelatory documents that are available to all and of interest to authorities and historians alike. They complete the picture by providing the real story from the side of the criminals. I have the public transcripts of secret recordings of Honduran drug traffickers made by the DEA. In 2013, a DEA agent infiltrated the secret meetings of several drug traffickers in Honduras. The transcripts are worth reading. They are United States Government documents, produced by official DEA sources and presented as evidence by federal prosecutors in court proceedings.

No doubt Netflix producers, particularly the writers of the show *Narcos*, are studying those recordings, because they offer a real and rare window into the thoughts and conversations of drug traffickers and assassins when they meet privately to conspire. As they talked to each other, they described their own reality. In the recordings, the drug traffickers complained that despite their best efforts, they had been unable to arrange any kind of deal with me and that I was not someone they could work or negotiate with. On the contrary, they knew that I would be ruthless when it came to organized crime. They even discussed how to try to kill me. In a recording made on 3 December 2013, after the elections, when they knew that I would be the next President, they said bluntly, “Now he will take us down.” They used a shorter and more vulgar phrase, but the gist was that it was all over, and they were right. Although the United States did not inform my Government about those meetings among drug traffickers, after I took office as President the subjects in the recordings ended up in jail in the United States for crimes related to drug trafficking.

Later, in September 2014, the FBI and the United States Embassy in Tegucigalpa informed my Government and me personally about the Mexican hitmen and their Honduran sponsors’ imminent plans to kill me in Gracias, in Lempira. I have with me the note sent to our Ambassador in Washington. We managed to prevent that crime. The criminals were captured and brought to justice in Honduras. What the audio recording proves is that they had had no dealings with me and no protection or hope from me, and with less than three weeks left before the elections in 2013,

and based on the legislation and policies that I had been promoting since 2010 and the fact that their attempts to approach me never yielded results, they were worried. That was why the drug traffickers were talking about how Mexican hitmen would kill me and that at least 100 people would die in the assassination attempt. Essentially, the criminals in the recordings were saying that Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado was not a man they could work with and that they could not buy, manipulate or intimidate him. They said repeatedly that it was not possible for criminals to get close to him because he remained *arisco*, *bien arisco*, *super arisco* — aloof, distant, standoffish — to such people. I want to explain that because the word *arisco* was not translated correctly in the official transcription. The criminals understood that they were facing a serious problem.

The messages in the recordings are shocking. However, it is unlikely that even people like those here, who follow the news, have seen much information about the release of the DEA's secret recordings, despite those and other revelations discrediting the false, worthless claims of the drug traffickers. When the media eventually reports on the transcripts, I imagine the headlines will say something along the lines of "DEA's secret recordings uncover and demolish Honduran drug traffickers' systematic false testimony". It has now been proved that the drug traffickers lied under oath and therefore committed perjury. They gave false testimonies in United Nations courts and legal proceedings in the hope of benefiting, striking deals with prosecutors and even getting revenge. One key and extremely important element is that they have violated a fundamental condition for benefiting in any way from the United States justice system. Moreover, the drug traffickers' genuine and visible behaviour speaks for itself and refutes their own false testimonies. When the drug traffickers pursued by Honduran institutions gave their initial statements in United States custody, they never mentioned having any dealings with me or receiving protection of any kind, let alone that I had accepted their money.

It is clearly all the more strange that several years later, and only after various other trials in which they testified differently, the traffickers changed their versions of the story to falsely claim the opposite. When the Los Cachiros cartel and a dozen other traffickers decided that with me as President they had no hope of carrying on their activities in Honduras and no chance

of making a deal, and that their best option was to abandon their criminal empires and submit to life in a foreign prison and place the only hope they had left in seeking a settlement with the United States, their behaviour spoke louder than any of the lies they are now telling in court.

The reason why the issue is relevant for so many Member States, and why the international media will eventually start reporting on it, is because it is vital and must be addressed. It is much bigger than Honduras or any other country. The question is whether the drug traffickers will be rewarded for their false testimony, which is what they think and expect will happen and apparently what they have been led to believe. In short, the crux of the issue is that if killers like Los Cachiros — major drug traffickers, who have confessed to at least 78 murders, including homicides and other crimes committed while they were cooperating with the DEA — are rewarded for giving false testimony, the system of international cooperation will be unsustainable, as it will introduce systematic corruption into the judicial process, which would translate into a betrayal of our allies who are risking their lives in this fight.

If the United States rewards perjury and criminals are allowed to give false testimony in United States federal court with impunity, that puts dangerous weapons in the hands of a deadly enemy — self-confessed hitmen — to be used against the most effective members of the alliance against transnational crime. If the authorities of the countries allied with the United States realize that hitmen and drug traffickers can be rewarded by the United States Government for committing perjury, there will be a real danger that trust will be lost and lead to a collapse in cooperation in countries all over the world. That would harm the interests of every country, like Honduras, that is committed to combating drug trafficking, and would dishonour the memory of the brave heroes who have sacrificed their lives in this fight, the thousands of innocent people who have lost their lives and all the Governments and institutions that have put their faith in a crucial international alliance.

Let me stress, however, that I am confident that in the end, the United States will not reward Los Cachiros and the other drug traffickers for their false testimony. We have seen, for example, that after drug traffickers testified falsely in a federal trial in New York that the Honduran military was helping them, the Commander

of the United States Southern Command got in a plane, flew to Honduras and personally presented the top military commander of the Honduran armed forces with a high military decoration at a public ceremony. It was seen as a powerful demonstration that lies should not be rewarded. Similarly, following other false testimony in New York, the top leadership of the DEA invited me and my counter-narcotics team to meet with them in Washington, D.C., where the DEA issued a strong public statement that the President and the Government of Honduras are reliable and effective partners in the fight against drug trafficking. When we began our fight, we had a trustworthy and effective partnership with the Obama-Biden Administration and with its successor. While we were working with then-Vice-President Biden, his resolve and commitment were evident, as was the alliance between North and Central America.

Today let me say that as always, my Government will continue its effective international cooperation until my last day as President in 2022. We are leaving future generations a more secure and hopeful Honduras. I will bid farewell to the Assembly in the optimistic belief that the achievements that have transformed my country will provide more and better opportunities for our people. I am certain that subsequent Governments will be able to do the same or better, which will benefit our generation, our children and their children. I warmly embrace everyone on behalf of the Honduran people.

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

Mr. Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mrs. Marsudi (Indonesia): I have the great honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by His Excellency Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, on the occasion of the general debate at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

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

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex IV and see A/76/332/Add.3).

Address by Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

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

Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zelenskyy (*spoke in Ukrainian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is time to wake up. That was the appeal made by Secretary-General António Guterres to us all, the world's leaders, on the eve of the General Assembly's general debate (see A/76/PV.3). That appeal is very special for me, because for me, every night before a meeting of the Assembly has been a sleepless one.

Back in 2019, I was excited about addressing the Assembly for the first time (see A/74/PV.5). The following year, 2020, was generally a sleepless year for the whole world because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. But I want to tell the General Assembly about last night in greater detail. At 3 a.m., my phone started ringing off the hook to inform me that Serhiy Shefir, the top aide to the President of Ukraine, had been attacked. Twelve shots were fired, three of which hit his driver. That is the price of change in my country and the price of reform. Fortunately, Serhiy survived. Fortunately, the driver's life is now out of danger. This will not be an ordinary, typical United Nations speech, however, but I hope it will be instructive to everyone here and sound the alarm that it is time to wake up.

Without flattery or exaggeration, I can say that Ukraine has been doing just that for a long time. It did not sleep when it was busy surviving the Holodomor famine and the Babiy Yar massacre. Ukraine was awake when the whole planet lived through the two World Wars

and the Holocaust, which claimed 100 million lives. That was the price for humankind to learn the hard way that all peoples and nations are equal and that every conflict should be resolved through dialogue alone, not with tanks. It was in that belief that Ukraine became one of the founding nations of the United Nations, back in 1945. I am quite certain that the representatives there would have been shocked to see the words “respect the rights of people” in the theme of the General Assembly this year. I am sure they would have asked, “What have you been doing for the past 76 years?”

That question has been answered by COVID-19. We have been playing at equality and unity, for it is one thing to share objectives and quite another to share vaccines that give life. It turns out that the lines about equality were like the words in an advertisement, with an asterisk and a footnote in fine print that says, “We are all in the same boat, but the first-class passengers will be given access to the lifeboats first”.

Ukraine did not expect any help from others, and it has been helping others without expecting their gratitude. We dispatched our doctors to Italy. We also sent personal protective equipment. Ukraine helped everyone who needed our help at a time when the world forgot that the pandemic was not here for good and that one day every nation would gather here again. But how will they look one another in the eye? I can say that Ukraine has nothing to be ashamed of. My country has the right to say that it wants to revitalize the United Nations. Indeed we do. To start with, we need to resurrect the Charter of the United Nations. It is not a set of recommendations for voluntary compliance. It does not say “Every man for himself”. If we can do that, the world will not have to admit that it has failed COVID-19, a test of unity. It will not have to look away in shame as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, on eliminating all forms of racial discrimination. Who could have imagined that medicine itself would one day become an instrument of discrimination? In the context of the continuing discussions of the global food crisis, is that how we will one day distribute bread and water?

Are we waking up? I want to believe that. COVID-19 has not been completely defeated. And the global vaccination plan is not making progress. Not to mention that any guarantees that there will be no new viruses in the world are about as good as the security guarantees in the Budapest Memorandum.

It is time to wake up. In all honesty, Ukraine has never slept. It is hard to sleep to the sounds of explosions and gunfire that we are hearing in our occupied Donbas region for the eighth year in a row. In 2019, speaking from this rostrum, I said that more than 13,000 people had been killed and 30,000 wounded in the war in Ukraine (see A/74/PV.5). Consider this — 1.5 million people have been forced to flee their homes. Those numbers are recited at the United Nations every year, with only one difference — every year they keep growing. I spoke about that in 2020 (see A/75/PV.7) and I am saying it again today, in 2021. At this point the number of people killed has reached almost 15,000.

This is the price of freedom and independence. The shots are probably not heard as loudly in Central Park or Madison Square Garden as in the Avdiivka industrial zone or the Svitlodarsk Bulge. Do we need to revitalize the United Nations? Could it be that the United Nations should get moving to deal with this, to become faster and more mobile? Could it be time for us to meet in places where we can really hear and see these global problems? There are thousands of trouble spots in the world, and Ukraine is ready to participate in United Nations meetings alongside any of them. In my opinion, what we need to revitalize the United Nations is the truth.

“If all those who can influence developments in that country were to give their earnest support to the peace-making efforts of the world community, shells would no longer be raining down on Afghan soil and civilians in that country would no longer be terrified by machine-gun fire.”

Those are the words of Leonid Kravchuk, the first President of an independent Ukraine, speaking 30 years ago from this rostrum at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly (see A/46/PV.14). Thirty years have not been enough for them to lose their relevance. Yet it took Ukraine only one day to carry out an operation to rescue civilians in Kabul. Our military evacuated almost 700 people — Ukrainian citizens, as well as those of many other countries and members of human rights organizations, journalists representing various media outlets — the *Globe and Mail*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and the *Stars and Stripes*. They were men, women, children and elderly people from different countries, nationalities and religions. That, I believe, is a commitment to the founding principles of the United Nations.

The participation of 46 States and international organizations in the inaugural summit of the Crimea Platform on the de-occupation of Crimea represents a commitment to the founding principles of the United Nations. And I am very grateful to all of those countries. But the fact that the United Nations has ignored a platform aimed at solving problems of international law and occupation represents new, unsupported principles. If we want to revitalize the United Nations, let us remember that there are no chosen ones here who must not be offended. The United Nations is made up of 193 countries, and I invite all of them to join the joint declaration of the Crimea Platform participants, condemning the occupation and showing that they oppose changing borders by force anywhere in the world.

I do not mean this ironically or as trolling, but this format will always be open to Russia, and I want to explain why. It is because no one in the world feels safe anymore. I want to emphasize that. No one feels safe. And no one can hide behind international law as if it were a stone wall.

(spoke in Russian)

“[That] could lead to the collapse of the entire architecture of international relations. Then we would indeed be left with no rules beyond might is right. That would be a world ruled by selfishness rather than collective effort; a world ever more dictatorial and less about equality, genuine democracy and freedom...”

“What, after all, is State sovereignty ...? More than anything it is about freedom — the freedom of every person, people or State to choose their own destiny.” *(A/70/PV.13, p. 24)*

(spoke in Ukrainian; English interpretation provided by the delegation)

I spoke in Russian because I was quoting the Russian President Vladimir Putin’s statement delivered in Munich in 2007 and at the General Assembly in 2015. Was it untrue? Unfortunately, we know Moscow’s answer. In early September, Nariman Dzhelyalov, the First Deputy Head of the Crimean Tatars’ Mejlis, was illegally detained in Crimea. The Russian Federation accused a political scientist, prominent journalist, television presenter and professor of law and history of attempting to blow up a section of a gas pipeline. That is the price of freedom of speech, of fighting for one’s

rights, for human rights. I really count on the support of the international community in securing his release and that of some 450 Ukrainians who are being illegally detained in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and in the Russian Federation.

I urge everyone to support the updated resolutions on the human rights situation in the occupied Crimea and the militarization of Ukraine’s occupied peninsula, which will be submitted to the General Assembly by the end of the year. We are grateful that the item entitled “Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine” was included on the agenda of the Assembly for this session, but how could the territories of Crimea and the Donbas, which are still occupied, disappear from the agenda? That is obvious not only to us. I thank all the States that have mentioned Ukraine in their addresses here this year. That is very important. And there are many others that are not ashamed to call Ukraine their friend and partner. They are willing to call a spade a spade, an occupation an occupation and aggression aggression, without fear that anyone will walk out of this Hall. That should not happen. This is a forum for dialogue. It will definitely not bring Ukraine happiness, although it might if a certain someone departed our State’s territories and borders.

In 1945, Crimea hosted the Yalta Conference, where the foundations for world peace were laid and the decision was made to convene the United Nations Conference on International Organization to establish our Organization. Both Yalta and Crimea have been occupied for eight years now. How are we supposed to revitalize the United Nations if the very birthplace of the idea of the United Nations is now under occupation by a permanent member of the Security Council? The President of the seventy-sixth Assembly has spoken at length about climate change and the protection of the environment and nature on the planet (see A/76/PV.3). In that context, Crimea needs major attention from the United Nations. A unique ecosystem has been converted into a military base. Instead of flora and fauna, there is a naval fleet and soldiers. And in the souls of Crimeans, the biggest problem is not global warming, but rather global devastation.

We must admit that the world does not have enough time to solve all of its problems. The United Nations raises very important issues and does not have time to resolve them because new ones are always appearing. Every time, we seem to choose a “global disaster of the year”, which next year few people remember, because

by then there is a new one. At every General Assembly session the world adds these problems to the big pack of threats that it has been carrying for years and that is already overflowing. Dig down into it and we find starvation, poverty, illiteracy, lack of clean air or water — and occupied territories. We never have enough time to solve those problems, and most importantly, we never seem to have the courage. Because we act not as leaders but as politicians.

And as politicians we are simply afraid that someday humankind will call us to account. And we are leaving ourselves a way out, because what we say is that we never promised you anything. We never promised to end starvation. We said we would make every effort to overcome it. We never promised to stop climate change. We promised to intensify our cooperation to overcome climate change. How much time and paper and energy has been expended on all the iterations of “we are determined” and “we affirm our common interest in overcoming” and “we have agreed to significantly strengthen cooperation”?

If we really want to revitalize the United Nations, let us talk to one another simply and speak clearly, concretely and, most important, honestly and frankly. Then we will stop calling what happens in the General Assembly a debate. It is not a debate, because debate is a lively dialogue. It is an active dispute between differing parties. It is an opportunity to ask direct, frank questions. Take the example of another State's issuance of its passports to hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians in the occupied territory of Ukraine. Is that not evidence of an international crime? Is it not proof of impunity and contempt for international law? Moreover, the Russian Federation itself has announced it officially. And it forces Ukrainian citizens to take part in Russian parliamentary elections.

And if the United Nation does not react effectively and strongly to that, is that not proof that it is too late to revitalize the United Nations? But I believe it is not. The United Nations must support those who want to change the world for the better. Today, Ukraine is presenting a number of initiatives, platforms and summits. Take just one, the Crimea Platform. It should be working under the auspices of the United Nations. If every nation had such an effective platform, approved by the United Nations, solving problems and working around the clock, we could revive the United Nations, because we would be reviving the faith of ordinary people in the United Nations.

I know that the United Nations is often criticized. But when we do that we are criticizing ourselves. The United Nations is not a building. The United Nations is our leaders. It was they who created the Organization, 76 years ago. Could they have predicted and anticipated everything? Of course not. Could they have imagined that the right of veto, a symbol that allowed one nation to cast a vote on behalf of all, would become a tool for blackmailing everyone? No. Does that mean that all is lost? Of course not. All of us, and therefore the United Nations, need to believe in ourselves again. The United Nations has long heard only criticism, such as the accusation that the United Nations can do nothing or, worst of all, that it has become a League of Nations. Today the United Nations is like a retired superhero who has forgotten what he used to be able to do. He considers himself a burden, a weak, frail, useless old man whose life has been in vain.

Instead, perhaps, the United Nations should remember something. It could recall that since 1981 more than 1 billion people have gained access to drinking water for the first time. Who explained to the wild world that everyone has rights and that they need to be protected? Who produced the first document in which those rights are laid out in detail? Who provides food to 90 million people in 83 countries around the world? Who was responsible for eradicating the shameful phenomenon of apartheid from the planet? Whose Blue Helmets have maintained and continue to maintain peace in dozens of countries? Who created UNESCO, which protects the Vatican, Versailles, the Acropolis and 1,154 unique cultural heritage sites? Who created UNICEF, which protects children in more than 190 countries? Children are the most valuable thing we have, and therefore the call to unite on their behalf cannot be banal or outdated. We must unite for the sake of children. They are the most important thing we have.

What do we all think? Let us show that we are determined to make every effort to strengthen our cooperation. And let us just do it, even without resolutions, declarations or aligning our positions. Let us get it done, as people, as nations, as the United Nations — as those who have made their choice. Either their actions will be filled with meaning or their seats will be empty. That is the price of our choice.

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

Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Malawi to the United Nations to introduce an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense.

Mr. Ligoya (Malawi): It is my honour and privilege to introduce His Excellency Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense, who will make his contribution to the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session in a pre-recorded statement.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (annex IV and see A/76/332/Add.3).

Address by Mr. Jorge Carlos De Almeida Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde

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

Mr. Jorge Carlos De Almeida Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jorge Carlos De Almeida Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Fonseca (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): International relations, diplomacy in general and the major world and United Nations conferences in particular have accustomed us to traditional meetings marked by the physical presence of and effusiveness among participants. In-person meetings, handshakes, hugs, conversations in the corridors and negotiations in bilaterals or small committees have always been at the centre of such gatherings of the international community, which the

need for online and digital communication made a thing of the past almost two years ago.

The fact that we are meeting in person on the occasion of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session should be interpreted as a reflection of our collective determination to do everything in our power to defeat the scourge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with a view to building back better and ensuring the advent of a more resilient world.

It with this positive attitude that I begin my statement and greet, on behalf of the people of Cabo Verde, all the other peoples of the United Nations represented here by their highest dignitaries, wishing progress and well-being to all.

To the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Volkan Bozkır of Turkey, I offer my congratulations on the manner in which he performed his duties amid the difficulties of which we all are aware.

I also congratulate Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session and welcome the fact that he is from Maldives and also the sixth President to hail from a small island developing State (SIDS) similar to Cabo Verde, which reflects our multilateral system's inclusiveness. I also congratulate the President-elect for having chosen hope as the theme of his presidency. Throughout its history, Cabo Verde has always chosen the optimism of hope rather than the pessimism of resignation. Indeed, today, as we face the challenge of this exponential pandemic, hope is the way forward, especially if we can act quickly, together and in solidarity.

I also offer my most cordial greetings and words of appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres, first because halfway through the previous session he not only successfully completed his first term but also championed the mobilization of the United Nations and the world in the fight against the pandemic and its devastating effects, particularly in advocating for the unprecedented need for universal and more equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Secondly, I congratulate him on his reappointment, which signalled a renewed vote of confidence from the community of the United Nations to continue the work undertaken thus far. Finally, I congratulate him on the publication on 10 September last of the excellent

report entitled *Our Common Agenda*, which marked the beginning of his second term.

More than just responding to what was asked of him, that is, to guide the responses to the commitments set out in the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), the Secretary-General, in *Our Common Agenda*, offered us his vision for the future of the world and the role of the United Nations — a future that depends on our collective choice between continuing on the path to destruction caused by the COVID-19 virus, climate change and the erosion of human rights, or resuming the ascent towards progress, inclusion, environmental sustainability and development, including by means of an effective United Nations system that gives meaning to multilateralism.

Cabo Verde has no doubt regarding the future to which the Secretary-General aspires. He can therefore count on our country in that journey, particularly as concerns the goals he wants to achieve and the solutions he wishes to implement in the context of his proposal to hold a Summit of the Future, as recommended in *Our Common Agenda*, namely, to forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like and what we can do today to secure it.

Cabo Verde is a small island nation spread across the Atlantic belt of the Sahel. It is also a great nation, one that is made up of its resident population and a broad diaspora scattered in the four corners of the world but whose hearts are in Cabo Verde.

After a historical period of dependence, slavery and colonization, independence gave us the hope of making our own choices, placing that responsibility in our own hands. To support us in that process, we chose multilateralism, international cooperation and strategic partnerships to promote our dynamic inclusion in a global world. We also made a choice along that path of which we are proud: we have been a democracy for 30 years, with good governance based on the rule of law, peace, security, the promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality and inclusion, as well as the fight against poverty and inequality.

As part of our progress, we graduated from the category of least-developed country to that of medium-income country in 2008. In 2015 we achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals and chose to align ourselves with the Sustainable Development Goals,

and to that end we adopted the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and its health, economic and social impacts have dealt a brutal blow to our economy, which had been growing at an approximate clip of 6 per cent. It has also undermined the main pillars of our economy — tourism, transportation and domestic demand — resulting in reduced social protections, unemployment and increased poverty; and it has wreaked havoc in terms of macroeconomic fundamentals such as inflation, the budget deficit and debt and resulted in a sharp drop in economic growth. In short, it triggered an unprecedented recession that has caused our economy to contract by 14.8 per cent.

However, my country reacted not with resignation but with determination and immediately took all the anti-crisis measures recommended internationally for the short term. For the medium and long terms, we engaged in a participatory exercise in strategic planning to set out a common vision for 2030 entitled Cabo Verde Ambition 2030 in order to resume the sustainable development process and build back better, leveraging the lessons learned and the opportunities arising from the crisis. Those include access to concessional financing and attracting foreign direct investment, which remain major challenges.

As noted in the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development and the Ambition 2030 document, Cabo Verde intends to strengthen its alignment with values and interests steeped in multilateralism and a rules-based world order, with an effective United Nations at the centre. Such goals require the continued affirmation of Cabo Verde as a safe country and a useful and credible partner in a diplomacy that is equal to the emerging global challenges.

At this juncture, Cabo Verde's foremost priority is to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. We have made significant and consistent gains both in reducing transmission rates and in increasing vaccination rates among of the eligible population, which will be fully immunized by the end of October. That success would not have been possible without the perseverance and determination of the leaders and the people of Cabo Verde or the increased solidarity of all partners, particularly in the context of Coronavirus Disease Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility. Our most heartfelt thanks go out to all our partners.

At the same time, economic recovery remains an important priority for Cabo Verde, mainly through the reopening of the tourism sector and related activities. The mutual recognition of vaccination certificates and the revision of travel advisories are measures on which Cabo Verde has been working with public and private partners, and international guidelines will only support and encourage the return of tourism.

Cabo Verde has all the structural characteristics of a small island developing State, namely, small size and dispersion in islands, situated in large oceanic spaces and distant from major markets, which weakens our economic base and heightens our exposure to climate change and other environmental phenomena such as drought, in addition to reducing our resilience to natural phenomena and other external shocks. In that context, the manifestations and impacts of COVID-19 only exacerbate pre-existing conditions, rendering SIDS those most affected by the pandemic.

Within the United Nations, Cabo Verde is part of the Alliance of Small Island States, which advocates for measures aimed specifically at SIDS and for the international and differentiated global support measures recommended since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in 1992. In that context, the study of, debate about and hoped-for adoption by international consensus of a multidimensional vulnerability index applicable to small island developing States with respect to three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — should be helpful in classifying each nation's level of development to determine eligibility for such specific support measures, thus enabling the fulfilment of the commitments established under the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

Small island developing States in each of the three covered geographical regions — Pacific, Caribbean and from Africa to South-East Asia — have sectors that offer opportunities for economic growth in natural resources, tourism and the blue economy, among other areas. Measures to support economic growth and competitiveness in those growth areas, support for climate adaptation and increased climate resilience, direct investment facilities and general and climate finance should be undertaken globally for the benefit of small island developing States and adjusted to each nation's particularities.

Finally, the problems and challenges that SIDS face — and their solutions — should be a part of the Summit of the Future that was called for by the Secretary-General. It will be an opportunity for us to make decisions that meet the specific and legitimate interests and aspirations of this group of nations, which are among the most vulnerable within the United Nations family. We must leave no one behind.

The preservation of international peace and security was at the heart of the creation of the United Nations. For Cabo Verde, the values of liberty, peace, democracy and political stability are fundamental for the construction of more just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Faced with global challenges, we are increasingly aware of how imperative it is to fulfil this fundamental goal of the people who signed the United Nations Charter. We are also aware that the political instability that plagues different regions and the heightened insecurity resulting from violent extremism and transnational crime are barriers to the development of and peaceful coexistence among nations.

The effectiveness that we seek from the United Nations requires periodic and consistent reform of its main bodies. We recognize the progress made so far in reform of the development pillar, which has increased the efficiency of the United Nations system in progressive and innovative ways. The revitalization of the General Assembly has allowed us to be more pragmatic in our deliberations.

We also understand that the revitalization of the United Nations involves the need for Security Council reform to provide greater inclusion of Member States in decisions related to international peace and security. As a member of the African Union, Cabo Verde subscribes fully to the Ezulwini Consensus.

The history of the world has been a succession of crises and new opportunities for future progress. In the past months, we have often noted that the ongoing crisis offers opportunities and calls for action from the generation in charge today as well as from youth, who will be at the frontlines in future. As a crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has destroyed lives, compromised health care, destroyed economies and social-protection systems, reduced opportunities in education and employment for youth, and increased poverty and inequality, further exposing us to the effects of climate change and weakening the most vulnerable. But we have also seen opportunities that have arisen from

the fight against the pandemic — from the search for technology-based solutions to minimize the effects of physical distancing in communication, management, education, entertainment, diplomacy and business, to monitoring the progress of transmission, the role of science in its race to obtain a vaccine in record time, and the multiple forms of creative adaptation and response to these times in many other fields of activity.

However, the COVID-19 crisis is also part of a chain of other crises, such as climate change, geopolitical conflicts and criminal insecurity, and their interconnectedness results in increased division among those who have more and those who have less, both nationally and internationally, particularly in terms of access to vaccines for all and to financial conditions and the means to build back better. The missing link between crises and opportunities lies in the exercise of greater global solidarity to turn possible solutions into realities that will allow us to build the future we want and the United Nations we need. For both to happen — or not — the action of any individual State will not be enough, but both are perfectly achievable through collective action of the majority through solidarity.

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

The future we want has always been enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and its goals of greater peace and security, the protection and promotion of human rights and international cooperation for economic, social and cultural progress for all, provided that these goals are actually achieved. On the other hand, the United Nations we need has always been a debate between what the Organization should do and what it can actually deliver. The difference is in collective action that can bring together as much as possible what should be done and what can be done. The results achieved thus far by the United Nations system may be broadly increased or improved in all areas — from sustained peace to sustainable development. The future we want depends on our ability to seize the opportunities that arise from the crises we face. The way forward is multilateralism revisited and strengthened to meet the great challenges of the present, and the place for this new beginning may well be the Summit of the Future.

Before I end my remarks, please allow me a moment of personal privilege. As I am nearing the end of my second term, and as my country is due to hold

presidential elections on 17 October, this is the last time that I will appear before the General Assembly in this Hall as President of the Republic of Cabo Verde. The best memories I have of the United Nations are of this body, and I wish to reiterate my full commitment to working together with all of its members to continue to defend and promote the inalienable values of freedom, democracy, human rights and peace.

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

Mr. Jorge Carlos De Almeida Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to remind members of the following mitigation measures for this meeting. All delegations must use a face-covering at all times when they are in public areas and in the General Assembly Hall, except when taking the floor during the meeting. The size of a delegation in the General Assembly Hall should not exceed four persons.

Address by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, State President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

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

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, State President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, State President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Phuc (Viet Nam): I wish to extend my congratulations to Mr. Abdulla Shahid on the assumption of his duties as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. I am convinced that, under his able leadership and with his vast experience, he will lead the session to success.

I highly appreciate the significant contributions of Mr. Volkan Bozkır in his capacity as the President of the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. I also wish to

once again congratulate Mr. António Guterres on his reappointment as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I believe that, with his perseverance and dedication, he will work to guide the Organization's direction towards realizing its priorities in the years to come.

The General Assembly of the United Nations convenes this year against a unique backdrop, as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is jeopardizing people's lives worldwide. At this very moment, I do not doubt that all our thoughts these days are with our countries and our peoples; my own heart yearns for my homeland, Viet Nam, where the entire Vietnamese nation is vigorously combating this pandemic to protect the health and lives of the people, sustain economic growth and ensure social security, leaving no one behind.

No statistical figures can truly measure the grief and loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a question, above all, of the loss of lives, and subsequently of severe economic damage and far-reaching impacts on societies and people's well-being. The pandemic has sounded a warning bell of the shocking destruction that results from such non-traditional security challenges as disease or climate change if they are not addressed in a timely and decisive manner. The pandemic has also exposed the shortcomings of the global governance system and the increasing inequalities among nations.

Nonetheless, COVID-19 is not the sole challenge that we are facing today. Increasing tensions among major Powers have led to a divisive and unstable international system. Wars are taking the lives of many innocent people. Disputes over territories and resources in many areas are on the verge of erupting. In many regions, the rise of power politics, disregard for international law and unilateral acts of coercion are hindering countries from exercising their legal rights. In spite of that gloomy picture, what really motivates us is the strong desire for peace, cooperation and development among people around the globe — and our recognition of the importance of international solidarity and multilateralism.

With its 75-year experience in preserving peace and nurturing friendly, just and equitable international relations, the United Nations continues to assert its key role in the multilateral system and is effectively coordinating global efforts to respond to global challenges. Against such a backdrop, I fully support

the theme proposed by the President of the General Assembly. Let me now share with the Assembly some of my thoughts.

First, our most urgent task today is to expeditiously contain COVID-19 worldwide. The world cannot be safe if any single person or country still suffers from this pandemic. Viet Nam values the role of United Nations agencies and other multilateral institutions, particularly the COVAX facility, in promoting fair access to COVID-19 vaccines and medications. For the pandemic to be turned back, it is essential that we stand in solidarity, uphold a high sense of responsibility and step up cooperation, particularly in terms of allocating vaccines to nations with a low vaccination rate.

Secondly, the key solution to containing the pandemic and fostering economic recovery lies in our ability to strengthen our own resilience in the face of crises, but this does not mean that we have to do it alone. Resilience can only be sustained if it is based upon cooperation and connectivity among nations, particularly at a time when non-traditional security challenges, which do not know borders, can deeply affect any nation. We highly value the role played by the United Nations system and hope that it will continue to work closely with its States Members in endeavours to build resilience, without failing to accommodate the interests and concerns of all countries.

Thirdly, the challenges we face can be turned into development opportunities. As our daily lives, productive endeavours and business activities have to undergo changes to adapt to the pandemic, we are presented with an opportunity for digital transformation and the utilization of novel technologies, which can enhance the productivity, competitiveness and self-reliance of our economies. It is also a chance for us to pursue green transformation, sustainable development, trade and investment facilitation. We should also work together to promote the flow of goods and people and maintaining global supply chains. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides us with an excellent blueprint for seizing such opportunities; it is indeed a call for enhanced cooperation. We appeal to all countries to live up to their financing-for-development commitments and reschedule debt payments by developing countries, thereby turning opportunities into concrete development outcomes.

Fourthly, cooperation in mitigating and preventing the dire impacts of climate change has become more

crucial than ever before. Harsh weather conditions, sea-level rise, environmental pollution and biodiversity degradation are the cumulative consequences of decades of humankind's reckless quest for development. These challenges are pushing us to act promptly to safeguard our planet and realize the internationally agreed threshold of 1°C.

As we are heading towards the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we need to make every effort to cut greenhouse-gas emissions, and developed countries should take the lead on this. Moreover, developing countries should receive further assistance in financing, technology transfer and capacity-building, so as to reduce emissions and enhance disaster prevention and mitigation in ways that foster the transition towards a green and circular economy. This is a shared opportunity for us to ensure harmony between humans and green nature.

Fifthly, the key to fostering recovery and growth in the post-pandemic era is sustaining peace, security and stability in every country, every region and the world at large. Viet Nam calls for a global ceasefire and an end to all violence to ensure the safety of civilians and facilitate humanitarian assistance in areas of conflict.

Viet Nam endured decades of war in order to reclaim its independence and national reunification and to escape isolation and embargoes. We have made every effort to mobilize our internal strength, maintain our self-reliance and adapt to the prevailing trends of our time to reach the level we are at in our potential, international standing and prestige today. We understand that nothing is more precious than independence, freedom, peace and development for all nations. Viet Nam condemns all acts of war, power politics and violations of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. More than ever before, all stakeholders in international relations need to act in good faith and shoulder their responsibilities while avoiding tensions and confrontation. We should strive together to reshape international ties and build trust among countries on the basis of equality and cooperation. We must also respect the principles of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and resolve disputes in a peaceful manner.

At this year's general debate, we reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Cuba and urge a complete

end to the unilateral embargo on Cuba. We hope that the situation in Afghanistan will soon stabilize for the Afghan people, especially their women and children, so that they can live in peace. We support the just struggle of the Palestinian people and a two-State solution for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel.

After 35 years of renewal, Viet Nam has made historic accomplishments. We are on the verge of becoming a high-income developed country by 2045, on the centenary of Viet Nam's independence. Our aspiration to be a strong and prosperous Viet Nam can be realized only when the country is truly a law-governed State of the people, for the people and by the people. Viet Nam pursues a people-centred approach and strives to achieve social progress and equality, preserve cultural values and protect the environment while promoting sustainable and inclusive development. That is closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, which we are striving to fulfil.

We have pursued a foreign policy based on independence, self-reliance, peace, friendship, cooperation and development and the diversification and multilateralization of external relations. As a responsible member, Viet Nam is proactive and engages actively in extensive international integration, while making responsible contributions to the concerted efforts of the international community. We continue to support multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre and international law as its foundation. We uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter and strive to contribute to a more democratic and effective United Nations. We will always remember and treasure the invaluable assistance of the United Nations to Viet Nam. The fruits of Viet Nam's reform and integration can be attributed in part to the resources and policy advice of the United Nations development system.

In the region, Viet Nam works closely with fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to promote ASEAN centrality in the maintenance of peace, security and prosperity in South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region at large. ASEAN and the United Nations have consistently consolidated and developed their relations generally, becoming a role model for cooperation among the United Nations and other regional organizations. We are making vigorous efforts to implement the five-point consensus endorsed by ASEAN leaders on fostering dialogue, reconciliation and humanitarian assistance to the people

of Myanmar. Viet Nam shares ASEAN's position and the international community's common voice on the importance of peace, stability, security, safety, freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea. We hold that all parties should refrain from unilateral actions that could further complicate the situation and resolve their disputes and differences through peaceful means, in line with the Charter and international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (UNCLOS). We must also fully observe the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea and achieve a substantial and effective code of conduct of the parties in the South China Sea, in line with international law, including UNCLOS.

The President took the Chair.

On this momentous occasion, on behalf of the State and the people of Viet Nam, I want to sincerely thank all countries for the trust they have placed in Viet Nam in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2020-2021 term. Over the past two years Viet Nam has always upheld the principle of partnership for sustainable peace. We have promoted dialogue and cooperation and actively joined concerted efforts to prevent and address conflicts. Viet Nam has advocated respect for the Charter and international law, while promoting areas such as cooperation with

regional organizations, conflict prevention, mine action and the protection of people and critical infrastructure in armed conflicts.

The national flag of Viet Nam is flying high in United Nations peacekeeping missions in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and it will soon fly in other missions. Given our desire to make further contributions to the work of the United Nations, Viet Nam is campaigning for a seat at the Human Rights Council for the 2023-2025 term, as well as at other important United Nations agencies. We look forward to all countries' continued support in that endeavour.

The path ahead will not be easy. However, I am convinced that the hearts of the people of the world will beat as one. Viet Nam will work closely with countries and people around the world so that together we can prevail over the pandemic and build a world of peace, prosperity and happiness. That will be a glorious victory for us all.

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

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, State President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

Annex I**Address by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

[Original: Spanish]

At the start of the annual session of the General Assembly, I would like to convey greetings to all countries of the United Nations. I greet the peoples and the Governments of the 194 countries that are present at this session of the General Assembly; in particular Mr. Abdulla Shahid, who assumed the Presidency of this year's session of the General Assembly. I wish you every success.

The annual Assembly of the United Nations is an event, which, every September, brings together Heads of Government, Heads of State, Presidents, Prime Ministers and the world's highest-ranking authorities, to discuss our positions and debate ideas in a world that must continue building a multipolar, pluricentric structure, without imperial hegemonism.

This is the second time that our General Assembly session is being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We find ourselves participating in this session of the General Assembly at United Nations headquarters in New York from our countries — from our countries' official Government headquarters.

I convey greetings to all Ambassadors and high-ranking officials who, from their countries and from headquarters in New York, amid the pandemic, share their views of what should obtain for humankind in the twenty-first century, leaving no room for doubt. They share their views about building a new world of peace, cooperation and dialogue, based on ideological, cultural, political and religious diversity and brings together the cultures of peoples across the whole of planet Earth.

Undoubtedly, it must mean building a new world and a new human community — a world without hegemonic empires; a world liberated from attempts at economic, financial, military, political domination by a hegemon, empire or those, who, for centuries upon centuries, plundered, dominated, exploited and oppressed the peoples of the world with the old rapacious colonialism. Today, they attempt new forms of neocolonialism against our people — new forms of domination, looting, oppression and exploitation of the peoples of the world.

That is why at a General Assembly affected by the pandemic and from the very heart of our beloved homeland, Venezuela raises its voice in support of a new world without colonialism; a new world without imperialism; a new world without a dominant hegemon; a new world based on sharing, cooperation and a human community with a shared destiny. It is the multipolar, pluricentric world we long for and the reason we join the fight by all peoples of the world and the peoples of the South, in particular, based on the doctrine of the Non-Aligned Movement, the South-South doctrine — our doctrine, our vision, our commitment.

Venezuela has received strong and majority support from the Governments of the world as we addressed our country's challenges in recent years. There is no doubt that our people have received solidarity, support and cooperation from dozens of countries represented here at the United Nations. They were able to listen to the voice of truth from our earnest people.

On several occasions, Venezuela has taken to the United Nations General Assembly and organizations of the United Nations system to condemn the fierce attacks on and campaigns waged against our country by the elites that have governed the United States. Such attacks are perpetrated with the support of the elites that head organizations in Europe and elsewhere.

They sought to use international organizations and international law to justify fierce campaigns and criminal attacks against the noble, peaceful and democratic people of Venezuela. On several occasions, we denounced those attacks at the headquarters of various organizations, and we do so again today at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

At this session of the General Assembly, in September 2021, Venezuela denounces the fierce campaign and ongoing and systematic aggression, via cruel economic, financial and oil sanctions, persecution of our people and their right to economic freedom, and their economic rights and guarantees, which should be enjoyed by all peoples of the world.

There is a fierce campaign against our right to purchase what our country needs and against our right to sell what our country produces, in particular vast oil and mining resources, on Venezuelan territory, which we have exploited for decades. Financial accounts are being investigated; gold from the legal international reserves of the Central Bank of Venezuela in London has been seized and frozen, and billions of dollars in bank accounts in the United States, Europe and beyond have been confiscated and frozen.

Venezuelan oil and mining companies are banned from trading their products and opening bank accounts across the world for the purposes of making purchases, collecting payments and conducting business transactions freely, as stipulated under international law.

It is cruel and is, in essence, criminal and systematic financial, monetary, commercial, economic and energy persecution. Venezuela therefore raises its voice in condemnation of such persecution before the peoples of the world.

For years, we have faced threats, fierce campaigns and aggression. I can tell you today, from the heart of Caracas, which witnessed the birth of those who liberated America, that the Venezuelan people, with their great capacity for resilience and resistance, rose up. The year 2021 is a special and wonderful year in which we marked the 200th anniversary of the resounding victory of the Battle of Carabobo. We already celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Carabobo for our independence. In 2021, we have already moved from the cruel and painful phase of resistance to a phase of recovery and sustained growth with science, innovation, technology and the spiritual capacity of hardworking people, who refuse to yield. We are a rebellious and free people, who have grown from all the difficulties that have affected us over the years.

We have chosen the path of recovery and comprehensive growth for our nation. We have chosen to deploy the productive forces of a country subjected to an infernal blockade, criminal persecution and cruel torture of its economic and social fabric. We courageously and decisively say to the peoples of the world, with intelligence and wisdom, that it is possible to confront imperial aggression and move forward.

That is why we again demand the lifting of all criminal sanctions by the United States of America and by the Governments of the European Union against the Venezuelan economy and society. We demand it based on logical and moral grounds. We say it on behalf of 30 million Venezuelan men and women. We are grateful for the support of the countries of the United Nations in advancing this great objective of our country and our region.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm our solidarity with and our support for the Republic of Cuba and the people of Cuba, in their request, endorsed 27 times by a majority vote at the United Nations, for the immediate lifting of all trade and economic blockade measures against the Republic of Cuba and the people of Cuba. Venezuela also raises its voice in support of justice and out of solidarity with Cuba — a Republic and a heroic people.

In this regard, our country was able to face and overcome all these circumstances. That is why we believe it is necessary to circulate within the United Nations Secretariat, from the Presidency of the annual General Assembly to all levels of representative Embassies and Governments, the official findings of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, who made a seven-day visit to Venezuela this year. The Special Rapporteur issued a very objective, raw and realistic report on these criminal sanctions and recommended that they be lifted immediately and that international law, international humanitarian law, be respected. The Rapporteur also recommended that Venezuela's right to freedom; its economic, commercial and financial guarantees and the full exercise of its rights as a sovereign member of the United Nations be respected.

In 2021, we also welcomed the fact that Venezuela is moving forward in two main directions — in inclusive dialogue towards peace in our country and in marking the twenty-ninth electoral process in the past 20 years. Major elections will be held on 21 November 2021 for the people to elect regional, municipal and local authorities, as mandated by our country's Bolivarian Constitution.

This year, we started several rounds of dialogue with the business sector, the social sector, trade unions and the political arena. We reaffirmed the path of dialogue and recently launched, on 13 August, a national dialogue forum for peace and sovereignty in Mexico City.

It is a very important dialogue process that seeks out the most extremist opposition forces that attempted to carry out a coup d'état in Venezuela. They encouraged foreign invasion of our lands and planned to assassinate me. We hoped that those extremist sectors would return to politics, the Constitution and the electoral path.

I can say to the United Nations that we have succeeded. We succeeded in having them return to politics, the Constitution and the electoral path. Now, with the support of the Government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico; the special diplomatic assistance of the Kingdom of Norway; the direct presence of the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Netherlands, we are implementing a comprehensive agenda to bring about social and economic recovery in Venezuela through dialogue.

I thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, for his support in the dialogue process in Mexico. I request the full support of the United

Nations to ensure that the dialogue process in Mexico advances towards new partial agreements and a global agreement to strengthen peace, sovereignty, prosperity and bring about comprehensive recovery in Venezuela. That is my request and I thank you. In that regard, Venezuela will remain in all international forums.

We stated in the organizations responsible for climate change that a practical, verifiable response is urgently needed for action against greenhouse gas emissions, global warming of the oceans and the environment and all climate change-related events and disasters. Verifiable and effective action measures are needed to halt the acceleration of the processes that undermine planet Earth's ecological balance.

Over the years, and even, recently, in this city that is home to the headquarters of the United Nations, New York, we have seen major flooding. We have seen simultaneous fires and flooding in India, China, New York, Spain and Venezuela. We have seen major drought in southern South America and the unprecedented drying up of the Paraná River. Such events compel us to demand that powerful Governments take efficient and effective action to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions and give hope to the world in the face of a truly worrisome and tragic situation for many people on planet Earth.

The United Nations system, without a doubt, the multilateral world and international law — it is these spaces that must be strengthened. It is the sovereignty of peoples in a courageous world, based on international law. A new world must be built. It is a new world that emerges from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and from the peoples of the United States of America. A new world is being reborn to put an end to old hegemons and to those that claim to police and judge the peoples of the world.

It is time for freedom, sovereignty and independence to reign. A new world needs a new United Nations so that we can all share life and solidarity and the just and necessary path of a new community — the new world.

Venezuela raises its own voice in support of that new world.

Thank you very much, dear rulers of the world.

Thank you very much to all the peoples and authorities of the United Nations.

Thank you very much.

Annex II

Address by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya

H.E. Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session,

H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you today in this seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. I congratulate you Mr. President on your election to preside over the seventy-sixth Session, and assure you of Kenya's full support during your tenure.

The theme for this Year's Session — "Building resilience through hope — to recover from COVID-19" — has inspired my address today.

The Secretary-General, in his report on Our Common Agenda, observed: "Humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: a breakdown or a breakthrough." The world needs to take seriously this warning from the Secretary-General. In doing this I urge the following immediate multilateral actions:

- (i) First, we must put equitable global vaccine access at the core of "Building Back Better" from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (ii) Second, we need to provide tangible climate financial support to developing countries and ensure that a significant portion of "green manufacturing" is located in developing countries;
- (iii) Third, we must align our conflict resolution tools to the strategic shift in threats to regional and international peace and security;
- (iv) Fourth, we must strengthen the competence of states to manage diversity and regional trust between citizens and institutions, and between citizens and their leaders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As of a week ago, close to five thousand Kenyans had succumbed to COVID-19. We mourn these Kenyans and the 4.7 million lives that have been lost around the world. The pandemic's devastating impact on global travel, tourism, supply chains and investment has caused the deepest economic recession in nearly a century.

Kenya responded swiftly and boldly to contain the pandemic; and, as a result, the human toll, though most distressing, pales in comparison to other parts of the world.

While we also undertook measures to cushion different sectors of our economy, the economic pain has been, pronounced. Now is the time to rebuild.

To rebuild successfully requires a worldwide response in confidence and investment to enable production and consumption to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels. The surest way to building that confidence is by making vaccines available to the world, in an equitable and accessible manner. That, sadly, is currently not the

case. The asymmetry in the supply of vaccines reflects a multilateral system that is in urgent need for repair.

At the heart of the global effort to “Building Back Better”, we must make concerted, structural changes that should enable a quantum increase in investment and technology transfers. Not as charity, but instead driven by enlightened self-interest and solidarity.

A fast-developing Africa will offer the entire world the benefit of its demographic dividend of youth and vast investment opportunities. Africa can become an engine of sustainable global growth and an exporter of peace and stability and transformative prosperity.

Excellencies, many leaders have noted, on previous occasions, the need to deliver concurrently economic recovery linked to climate change action. As COP-26 approaches, we should aim to make clear commitments that contribute to developing country investments in green manufacturing and the infrastructure it requires.

A “Green Building Back Better” that delivers jobs and shared prosperity, will win the support of the young generation and intensify the drive towards climate change action.

Mr. President,

Kenya is ready to become a leading green industry country. We have mounted a strong climate change response. We have submitted an updated National Determined Contribution (NDC) plan that aims to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent by 2030.

Kenya also has a “Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016-2030)”, which will enable us to achieve higher economic growth and support a low-carbon development path.

Kenya has also identified a range of ocean based adaptation priorities to integrate Ocean-based climate solutions with the global response to climate change.

We look forward to co-hosting the second United Nations Ocean Conference with Portugal in late June 2022, to galvanise commitments and partnerships that will promote ambitious global ocean action, and scale up investments in the Blue Economy.

This follows Kenya’s successful co-hosting of the first global “Sustainable Blue Economy Conference” in 2018, with Japan, Canada and other partners.

Mr. President,

Kenya is, blessed with a youthful, well-educated, and productive population that has managed to build one of the most vibrant mixed economies in Africa.

We are implementing ambitious programmes to prepare the country to produce decent and rewarding jobs. Our investments in roads, air and port infrastructure, and critical health care facilities throughout the country, are the most extensive and ambitious in our history.

We have also delivered a national competency based curriculum and on universal access to schooling, which will further boost competitiveness of our workforce.

My Administration is simultaneously focusing on the immediate needs of our people. We have targeted 3.3 million households that are most at risk and in the process achieved a 50 per cent reduction in the number of food insecure Kenyans.

By next year, we will have achieved a 27 per cent reduction in malnutrition among children under 5 years of age, created 1,000 agro-processing SMEs and 600,000 new jobs. We will also have recorded a 48 per cent increase in agriculture sector contribution to GDP.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the President-in-Office of African, Caribbean and Pacific States Organisation, I convened and chaired an extraordinary inter-Sessional Virtual Summit, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in June last year.

We made the Nairobi “Nguvu ya Pamoja” Declaration calling for the need to transcend the COVID-19 pandemic through global solidarity.

I also recently hosted the inaugural Africa-CARICOM Summit, during which we re-established the critical need for peoples of African descent to strengthen our economic and political linkages. It was a historic and proud moment for me personally to be part of the great legacy of Pan Africanism in our world!

What ties these events, and others that I have participated in during the last year, is the collective conviction that the global system is not working well for all our people and all our regions.

The unequal trade and investment patterns, the outflows of illicit finance and inflows of illicit small arms and light weapons, the extraction versus production mentality, are all escalating global inequality, fragility, conflict and violence. Many of the tools at our disposal to deal with these challenges are not living up to their promise. One such core tool is the United Nations Security Council in which Kenya has been an elected active member since the beginning of the year.

In October 2021, Kenya will assume the presidency of the Security Council. During that period, I will chair several signature-events. These include; one, how we can make an appreciation for diversity, a core aim in promoting state building and the pursuit of peace. Second, how illicit small arms and light weapons impact peacekeeping operations; and third is how to better support and promote women peacekeepers and peace builders.

Excellencies,

In many countries, we are witnessing state fragility that leads to protracted crises. This fragility is, driven mainly by inability of countries to manage diversity within nations, thus offering militant and terrorist groups opportunities to create social discontent and control large territories within affected countries.

The tools to deal with these crises are not proving adequate; so we must work to improve their capabilities. The most important task we can undertake is to increase the competence of states to manage both political and social diversity within their nation states.

Indeed, countries must do so in a way that strengthens the trust between citizens and public institutions and citizens and their leaders. I believe that the tough

experiences that Kenya has had, and our determination to rise above them, are a good case study for other states.

Mr. President,

I am proud to lead a country that has worked hard to deepen its democracy and to entrench the rule of law, embracing all in the society irrespective of race, colour, gender or religious affiliation.

Throughout my tenure as the President, I have led a nation that is marching forward to attain the “Greatness We Believe, Is In Us”. I am proud to have furthered that ambition by building bridges of unity and inclusion for all.

I want every Kenyan to know and to be proud of how our nation, Kenya, is highly regarded in the “Community of Nations”. Kenyans must never forget the hand-of-friendship that extended to us on various times, by many states seated in this General Assembly; nor what our contribution has been to the international community.

Finally, Kenya must never forget those countries that still struggle against occupation and illegal sanctions that cause suffering and undermine the human rights of people in our world.

As I conclude, we offer our solidarity and commitment as a Member State of the United Nations to undertake the journey back to recovery and to prosperity, “building forward better” in a multilateral system that is fair and effective.

Mr. President, I Thank You. God Bless You All!

Annex III

Address by Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia

His Excellency President of the UN General Assembly,

His Excellency UN Secretary-General,

Excellencies, Leaders of UN Member Countries.

The world community looks towards the UN General Assembly to provide answers to major global concerns.

When will the people be free from the pandemic? When will the economy recover and grow inclusively? How to sustain the planet for future generations? And when will the world be free from conflict, terrorism, and war?

Given the recent global developments, there are many things that we need to do together.

First, we must bring hope that we can tackle the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly, fairly, and equally.

We know that “no one is safe until everyone is”. The capacity and pace among countries in tackling COVID-19, including in vaccinations, differs widely. Politicization and discrimination towards vaccine continues to take place.

We must solve these issues with concrete steps.

In the future, we must reorganize global health security architecture, global health security system.

New mechanisms are required to mobilize global health resources, which includes financing, vaccines, medicines, medical equipment, as well as healthcare workers worldwide, quickly and fairly.

We need to establish a standardized global health protocol in cross-border activities, such as vaccines criteria, test results, and other medical conditions.

Second, global economic recovery can only be attained if the pandemic is under control and countries join hands in helping one another.

Indonesia, along with other developing countries, embrace quality investments. Those that open up many job opportunities, transfer of technology, human resources development, and contributes to sustainability.

Third, Indonesia’s commitment toward climate resilience, low carbon development and green technology is firm and clear.

However, energy and technology transformation process must facilitate the participation of developing countries in development of industries and become technology producers.

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of the importance of diversification of production centres across the world.

Fourth, we must be stern in fighting intolerance, conflicts, terrorism, and war. Peace in diversity and the protection of women’s and minority rights must be upheld.

Concerns on the marginalization of women and violence in Afghanistan, Palestine's elusive independence, and the political crisis in Myanmar, must be our common agenda.

The leaders of ASEAN met in Jakarta and agreed on the Five Points Consensus, of which its implementation requires the full commitment of the Myanmar military.

The great hope of the global community must be met with concrete steps and tangible results.

These responsibilities fall upon our shoulders. The global community awaits. It is our duty to provide hope for the world's future.

Excellencies,

In 2022, Indonesia will assume the G20 Presidency, under the theme of "Recover Together ... Recover Stronger".

Indonesia strive for the G-20 to work for the benefit of all, developed and developing countries, north and south, big and small, Archipelagic countries and small island states in the Pacific as well as vulnerable groups that must be prioritized.

Inclusiveness will be the main priority during Indonesia's Presidency. This is Indonesia's commitment to show that no one is left behind.

Green and sustainable economy will also be one of the priorities.

Indonesia is aware of our strategic place on climate change. Thus, we will continue to work hard to fulfil our commitments.

In 2020, Indonesia reduced its forest fires by 82 per cent, compared to the previous year. Deforestation rates have dropped significantly, the lowest in 20 years.

At the global level, Indonesia will put forward burden sharing, not burden shifting.

In facing these challenging global agendas, Indonesia reiterates its hope and support towards multilateralism.

It is imperative for us to safeguard an effective multilateralism, with concrete work and results.

Let us work together ... to Recover Together ... Recover Stronger.

I thank you.

Annex IV

Address by Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi and Minister for Defense

Your Excellency Mr. Abdullah Shahid – President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly;

Your Excellency Mr. António Guterres — UN Secretary-General;

Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

By the time I finish speaking, close to five thousand new babies will have entered our troubled world. In fact, the number of babies to be born in the 7 days of this debate is over 3 million.

Now, this new crop of humanity and billions more to come in the next 80 years, has no voice and no vote at this assembly. Yet it is they, not we, who will live in the future we create here. The task of choosing that future for them lies with us. This assembly is a fork in the road where we must choose between two futures for our children and their children.

We must choose for our children a future of zero carbon emissions; or a future of daily climate catastrophes that wipe out crops, homes, cities, and some nations in this room.

We must choose for our children a future of solidarity, hospitality, and generosity that transcend borders and national identities in times of global crisis; or a future of greed that hoards life-saving technologies, medicines, and vaccines in one hemisphere while the other hemisphere is robbed of its raw materials and left perishing.

We must choose for our children a future of peace fostered by equitable sustainable development between north and south and between east and west; or a future of conflicts triggered by the widening economic inequality between rich and poor, men and women, young and old.

We must choose for our children a future of good governance delivered through strong democratic institutions that safeguard human rights, uphold the rule of law, and maintain world peace; or a future of corrupt and oppressive governments propped up by proxy wars between developed nations and enabled by a weak and undemocratic United Nations that serves the interests of its Security Council at the expense of its member states' development and inclusion.

The place to make that choice is here, and the time to make that choice is now. Here and now, we must move with speed and synergy to pull civilization out of this sinking wreckage. Here and now, we must silence our petty and narrow interests to give voice to our shared desire to build back better and leave no one behind. Here and now, we must answer the four crises that are before us: the climate crisis, the COVID crisis, the sustainable development crisis, and the UN Governance crisis.

Now, the starting points for answering each of these crises are simple. For the Climate Crisis, the starting point is three words: Fulfil Your Pledge. It's been over ten years since the developed nations that polluted our planet the most pledged \$100 billion towards climate mitigation and adaptation. These are nations that tell the

rest of us to follow their example, nations that tell us to consider them friends, nations that call us corrupt and untrustworthy when we say one thing and do another, nations that tell us that they are the leaders in this global village.

Well, it's time to show that leadership. Fulfil Your Pledge. Mind you, this is not a donation. This is a cleaning fee, because if you pollute the planet we all call home, it is only right that you should pay to clean it up. So Fulfil Your Pledge.

No ifs, no buts, no ands.

Similarly, the starting point for ending the COVID Crisis is three words: Release the Vaccines. It is reported that half a billion vaccine doses being kept by developed countries will expire in three months. What are you waiting for? Release the Vaccines. Release the vaccine doses and the vaccine production rights to save human lives. In most of the 46 member states of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the 16 member states of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), both of which are chaired by Malawi, vaccination rates are below 2 per cent. The rate would be at 0 per cent were it not for the COVAX Facility coordinated by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization.

With such limited access to vaccines, we have had to make the most of preventive and remedial measures. In Malawi alone, we have brought three waves of the pandemic under control without the use of lockdowns; we have constructed and staffed recovery centres in record time; we have treated COVID patients and registered a recovery rate of over 85 per cent; we have cut infection rates down from 40 per cent to less than 5 per cent; we have kept the death toll from COVID below 3,000; and we have facilitated monthly cash transfers to support thousands of households exposed to loss of income by the pandemic.

But in a world where the virus keeps mutating and spreading, the measures we have employed to achieve all this are not sustainable. The most effective weapon we need is the vaccine. As such, you can imagine our disappointment to be at an assembly like this, rubbing shoulders with nations that are now administering booster shots while most of our people have yet to get their first one. This form of vaccine nationalism is wrong. It is insensitive. And it must end. Release the Vaccines.

At the same time, to help us recover from the economic devastation caused by this pandemic, the starting point is three words: Cancel the Debts. This is the single most impactful thing that would help developing nations like Malawi build back better and not be left behind. We already have a Social Economic Recovery Programme for addressing the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. But what is missing is the debt cancellation that will help us focus on recovery. The effectiveness of this approach has already been proven by the G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). So, I say again:

Cancel the Debts.

As for the sustainable development crisis, the starting point for progress is again three words: Let's Work Together. As a global community, we are off track on a number of sustainable development goals, and there is no path of progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda that does not involve working together across borders, across sectors, and across SDGs.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I was happy to host the 41st Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government in Malawi.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I was happy to host a Pre-UN Food Systems Summit for African Heads of State and Government, where we shared what we have learnt from the successful implementation of the Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP), which increased Malawi's food production by 21 per cent in its first season.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I was happy to address the first ever Summit for Heads of State from Africa and CARICOM.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I am happy that Malawi is one of 8 nations that are Global Champions on SDG7 to achieve clean energy for all by 2030.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I am looking forward to host a Climate Conference for SADC next month, in readiness for our collaboration with other regions at the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I am looking forward to meeting other LDCs for the fifth Summit of our grouping in Doha this coming January.

Let's work together, because even though my country has a ten-year implementation plan for achieving Agenda 2030 on SDGs, much of that plan cannot be done in isolation. The bottom line is, if one nation among us fails or succeeds to achieve sustainable development, so do the rest.

This need to work together brings me to the fourth and final crisis confronting us: the UN Governance Crisis. In a world that needs multilateralism more than ever to tackle the global challenges we face, the United Nations is indispensable. As such, the UN must be the gold standard of democracy, accountability, transparency, and equity. It is therefore our position that the starting point for creating a UN that reflects these values is three words: Reform this institution.

One reform urgently needed is the implementation of the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus, which demands two Permanent Seats for Africa, with Veto Power, on the UN Security Council and five Non-Permanent Seats. It is time for the United Nations to practice the democratic values it preaches. That is the UN we want for the millions of new-borns entering the troubled world we have created, because that is the UN they can trust to create a better world.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION
