



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Statement by
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General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly
New York, 27 September 2021

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of San Marino, I would like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Abdullah Shahid on his election as President of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly and to wish him a fruitful work.

The Republic of San Marino supports the priorities of your programme mentioned in your inaugural address and ensures you, Mr. President, full cooperation in all works of the General Assembly.

I would also like to express my Country's gratitude to the outgoing President, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, for the important work carried out during the 75th Session.

I also would like to extend my special thanks to the Secretary General, H.E. António Guterres for his energy and determination in leading the United Nations in these difficult and challenging times and in the reform processes of the Organization.



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San Marino welcomes the appointment of H.E. António Guterres for a second term as Secretary-General. We offer him our warmest congratulations and full support.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an unprecedented health, economic and social crisis. Health systems in many countries have been driven to the edge of collapse. The Pandemic has taken 4 million lives. Tens of millions of people are being pushed back into extreme poverty and hunger, erasing the modest progress made in recent years. More than 1.6 billion students were out of school. Many, particularly girls, may never return to school, contributing to a surge in child marriage and an increase in child labour. The livelihood of half the global workforce has been severely affected.

The coronavirus did not affect the world equally. In fact, it exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities and injustices in medical assistance around the world. Fatality rates have been highest among marginalized groups in advanced economies. In developing countries, COVID-19 hit even harder the most vulnerable.

Knowing all this, how can we stay hopeful when looking at the economic recovery before us? If this is how we dealt with the health emergency so far, how can we be sure that the economic policies that we are collectively called to implement in the upcoming years will not accentuate the existing gaps?

One thing is for sure. If we do not address these gaps, they will aggravate our current global challenges, such as migrations, access to the labour market and to education, just to name a few, and will ultimately result into amplified geopolitical instability.

Mr. President,

San Marino paid a very high price to this crisis. We reached one of the highest rates of mortality in the world. We finally recovered from this scourge thanks to a valuable reaction from our Authorities, who put in place policies based on the principle of



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equity. We succeeded also because of an extraordinary sense of solidarity of our People and of other Countries.

Yet, even for us, being a relatively wealthy nation in the middle of Europe, this crisis represented an exceptional struggle.

San Marino enjoys relative financial prosperity and logistical capacity. Yet, just because we are a small State, we faced alarming problems in terms of procurement of vaccines.

When finally we were able to overcome such problems by obtaining enough vaccine doses and completing a swift vaccination campaign for our population, we were actually just about to meet a different face of inequality: the inequality related to freedom of movement.

As you all know, today freedom of movement between and within countries is a prerogative that depends on what vaccine your Government was able to obtain. You might have thousands of antibodies and test negative for COVID, and yet not being allowed to enter a certain country, to enter a museum, or a sports centre, and so on.

You might understand why this is deeply troubling for a Country like mine, which is just 60 square kilometres.

This is why San Marino makes an urgent appeal to our family of Nations.

We must learn lessons from this crisis in order to fill the existing economic and social gaps and be better prepared for similar existential threats in the future.

We must secure even access around the world to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments and support, in order to prevent virus' mutations and new clusters of infections.

The COVID-19 crisis underscored the indispensable role of international cooperation through the United Nations to overcome a shared global challenge.

In these critical times, we must strengthen, more than ever, the political will and leadership to support multilateralism and reinforce the rules-based international order.

In this increasingly globalized and interconnected world, it is imperative to build a flexible system that is able to adapt on the different peculiarities of our Countries and to react quickly to multiple challenges at the same time, to be responsive to the needs



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of people, everywhere, ensuring that geopolitical interests do not prevail and that no one is left behind.

Mr. President,

The peace and security international context became increasingly fragmented.

The nature of conflicts is evolving due to the growing interconnections between scarce natural resources, climate change, socioeconomic vulnerabilities, disinformation and cyber-attacks.

Despite our efforts, in many areas of the world vulnerable populations are still facing the threat of mass atrocities.

The Government of the Republic of San Marino is deeply concerned for the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Palestine and elsewhere.

The situation in Afghanistan is of particular concern.

San Marino supports any effort aiming at providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and calls on all parties to allow full, safe, and unhindered access for the United Nations, its specialized agencies and implementing partners, and all humanitarian actors engaged in humanitarian relief activity.

We also reiterate the importance of protecting human rights including those of women, children and minorities.

In this respect, we cannot but support the UN Security Council Resolution 2593 and thank the Secretary General for having convened the High-Level Ministerial Meeting on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan on September 13 and for his continuous efforts on this matter.

We also support the commitment of the Secretary General to strengthen the UN system's ability to tackle different conflicts from a prevention-oriented perspective, as well as seeking to invest more in preventing crises.



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The Government of the Republic of San Marino is worried about a deteriorating international security environment and for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In its long history, my Country has always stood for a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We are particularly concerned about the rising nuclear risks. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons constitute an existential threat to humanity and for this reason, the Republic of San Marino is a strong supporter of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. President,

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has endangered the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to its very core. We don't have to let this crisis hinder our ambitions and hopes, because the principles underpinning the Sustainable Development Goals are essential to build back better in the post COVID-19 recovery.

Last year we entered in the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

Now, it is critical to accelerate responses to the world's serious challenges.

With the presentation of its first Voluntary National Review on July 13, San Marino renewed its commitment to a better, fairer and more sustainable world, not only for the benefit of its citizens today but also for future generations, in our Country and everywhere else.

Mr. President,

The collective fight against climate change represents the gravest emergency of our time. This must be the top priority of our efforts.



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As the impacts of climate change are becoming more visible, biodiversity loss will also become pervasive and ultimately devastating. If current trends continue, the Earth could lose the natural wealth of its ecosystems, which would in turn jeopardize global food security, water supplies, and livelihoods.

We are witnessing the grave impact of climate change on the Small Island Developing States in the Pacific, but also in other parts of the planet.

People of the world, in particular young people, demand urgent action in order to rebuild the fundamental aspects and relationship with the environment.

We will be able to reach this goal only through the full implementation of the Paris Agreement, but also by promoting important investments in adaptation and resilience.

Emerging from COVID-19 pandemic could represent an opportunity to work better on the green transition in sectors of energy, transport, tourism, aviation, agriculture, industry and infrastructure.

Mr. President,

The situation for people with disabilities has further worsened: the pandemic has deepened the difficulties in accessing education, healthcare and in participating in the life of their communities.

The international community has the duty to address this situation.

San Marino attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of rights for people with disabilities and we are honoured that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has recognized as a promising practice the guidance on triage produced by the Bioethics Committee of San Marino, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability.

Realizing the rights of persons with disabilities is central for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for our promise to leave no one behind.



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We need to build accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory societies, where people with disabilities can fully participate in the political, social and economic aspects of the community, where they are involved in the decision-making process and where their value is fully recognized.

Mr. President,

The United Nations must adapt quickly not only to the new global challenges, but also to the new opportunities offered by an increasingly interconnected world, in order to be more effective in carrying out its mandate.

Therefore, reforms are crucial to future world stability and maintenance of international peace and security, and must remain at the centre of our actions.

The Republic of San Marino is following with interest the revitalization process of the UN General Assembly, which must continue to be a reference point, a forum for the exchange of ideas and for conducting discussions, in which solutions based on a strong consensus may be achieved.

Similarly, the Security Council reform should be an objective of all member States. As we have stated on previous occasions, our Country believes that intergovernmental negotiations favour the search for an agreement based on a broad and strong political consensus, able to reflect the interests of all negotiating groups. San Marino calls for a reform that makes the Council more democratic, transparent, efficient and accountable. This goal can be achieved only through a continuous dialogue among the States and the awareness that overcoming the respective initial positions is essential to negotiate the broadest agreement possible.



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Mr. President,

To address the many and complex challenges of today, Member States must assume their responsibilities and the United Nations must be more effective and flexible in order to be able to fulfil its mandate, which is to protect the citizens of the world.

San Marino is a State with a strong identity thanks to its century-old history of peace and freedom. Our State is small, but proud to bring its contribution to the United Nations Community.

Thank you for your attention.