

**STATEMENT**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Nikolay Milkov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of  
Bulgaria**

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MR. PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
MR. SECRETARY-GENERAL,  
EXCELLENCIES,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are living in unprecedented times of many challenges - war and insecurity, energy and food crisis, climate change, still existing consequences in the wake of the Covid - 19 pandemic. And this list of challenges is far from being complete. The abruptly increased security risks and the tectonic instabilities that occurred since the last UNGA session are threatening to destroy the ruled based world order. An order that has been built here, in this hall by all of you, by sovereign states and by the peoples of this world. For this reason at the present UNGA Session the majority of the speakers by far perceive as the biggest security risk the war that the Russian Federation wages against its neighbor, breaking basic international rules and the UN Charter itself. This illegal military aggression carried out by permanent member of the Security Council, not only undermines global security, but also puts the international rules-based order in jeopardy. Bulgaria is deeply concerned with the recent escalation of the conflict and

the partial mobilization announced by the Russian Federation. We reject the ongoing sham referenda in occupied Ukraine and consider them neither free, nor fair and without any binding force.

In these unfortunate circumstances each and every contribution for achieving more stability and cooperation among states in different regions must be encouraged and welcomed.

As South-East European country, Bulgaria attaches utmost importance to the peace, stability and prosperity in the region of the Western Balkans. We are confident that the transformative power of the EU integration process and the inclusive regional cooperation are both the most powerful tools for achieving a common space of democratic governance, market economy and political, economic and social sustainability. We will continue to support these countries on the path to the EU.

Bulgaria is concerned of the lack of progress in the efforts to advance the Middle East Peace Process, as well as the recent escalation of tension in the Gaza Strip. An enhanced cooperation between international and regional partners is needed for providing political horizon for the resumption of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. A negotiated and viable two-state solution that allows both Palestinians and Israelis to live side-by-side in peace, within secure and recognized borders is essential for stability of the entire Middle East.

Bulgaria is following with concern the critical developments in Afghanistan, including the human rights situation, and the restrictions imposed by the

Taliban on the rights of women, on girls' access to education and on journalists.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The war in Europe has global repercussions. The Russian aggression against Ukraine has caused food insecurity and energy crisis that have devastating socio-economic impacts on the countries worldwide.

The global food system has already been under pressure even before, due to factors as climate change, and COVID-19 pandemic. However, the crisis escalated dramatically because of the war, as disruptions in food, energy and financial systems in over 90 countries around the world have put 1.7 billion people at risk.

Bulgaria highly appreciates the UN-Türkiye mediated deal on the resumption of grain exports from Ukraine's Black Sea ports, and fully shares the assessment that this very welcome development has the potential to alleviate significantly the current food crisis. Notwithstanding, the situation still remains critical, and the need for humanitarian assistance to a number of countries in the Global South persists.

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Some two and a half years ago, we were faced with the first lethal pandemic of the 21st century, which changed our lifestyles, the way of doing business,

and, above all, the way we communicate with each other. The COVID-19 pandemic also triggered a revolution in human online activities and interaction through different digital communication platforms. It also caused huge quakes in both societies and economies; deepened the gap between the rich and poor, applying to both people as well as to entire nations, wiped out at least a decade of progress made in reaching the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Our planet is visibly suffering from the devastating effects of climate change: deforestation, desertification, weather extremes, environment degradation, loss of biodiversity, affecting in one way or another each and every one of us, no matter where we live.

Action is urgently needed!

EXCELLENCIES,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian and food crises in Africa, especially in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, further exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They come as an additional burden on post-COVID recovery efforts. In this context, specific and comprehensive responses are needed, addressing short-term needs of the countries concerned, as well as strengthening their resilience and sustainability. Therefore, we commend the efforts of both the UN and the African Union to address those challenges.

Dialogue and cooperation with the countries from the Indo-Pacific Region is becoming particularly important. Bulgaria supports the strengthening of partnerships with like-minded countries from the region in energy connectivity, digitalization, people-to-people contacts, security of supplies, security and defense, countering disinformation, etc. As the country holding the Presidency of ECOSOC, we attach great importance to the priorities of emerging economies with regard to sustainable development, as well as to the priorities of the small island States, taking into account their specific needs, including their existential struggle with the impact of global warming, the constant rise of Sea level.

I would like now to share with you on another very important and pressing issue. The world finds itself at a watershed moment for human rights as it faces numerous challenges in this regard. Neither peace, nor prosperity, can be meaningful concepts without the full respect for human rights and human dignity. We are a staunch supporter of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Being an active member of the Human Rights Council in 2019-2021, Bulgaria firmly promoted the rights of the child, of women and girls, as well as their empowerment. Gender equality and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities are also key priorities for my country. Strongly committed to further advancing the human rights agenda worldwide, Bulgaria has presented its candidature for HRC membership during the period 2024-2026.

Education is a basic human right with a transformative power to foster a fairer and more inclusive world. Education is a solid foundation for future peace, tolerance and sustainable development. Over the last couple of years, the

COVID-19 pandemic further limited the access of children to education in the developing world. This motivated my country to play an active role in the preparation of the Transforming Education Summit and we are encouraged by the successful outcome of the Summit.

Let me now briefly turn to the UN reform in the three closely interrelated areas: governance, peace and security, and sustainable development. We cannot be complacent with the pace of reform so far and we must seize the historic wave of opportunity to make strides in the process. Therefore Bulgaria supports acceleration of the reform efforts in line with the proposals in the Report of the Secretary-General "Our Common Agenda", aimed at reaching a new global consensus on our future and stepping up the multilateral cooperation to achieve it.

We support the comprehensive reform of the Security Council. We have come to a critical juncture where further keeping the status quo is untenable. The present situation when this highest UN body fails to play its key role under the Charter cannot be tolerated by the international community and this is a duty we owe to the future generations.

Allocating at least one additional non-permanent seat in the reformed Security Council to the Eastern European Regional Group remains a priority for my country.

During the 77th session, Bulgaria is strongly committed to its financial obligations to the United Nations and is concerned about the persisting liquidity challenges, which undermine the ability of the Organization to

implement its mandates and to carry out its approved program of work. We will continue to support the Secretary-General's policies to improve the financial situation of the United Nations. Bulgaria consistently ranks among the Member States that have contributed on time and in full to both the regular and UN peacekeeping budgets.

EXCELLENCIES,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Allow me to conclude by sharing with you our vision of the way ahead. We will have to navigate through uncharted waters. If we build upon the consolidated and unanimous approach of upholding the principles and the provisions of the UN Charter, we may exit the present crises, but a long way to the reestablishment of the security and the economic stability will follow after the war. The world of tomorrow will be very different from what we expected it to be just not so long ago. Whether we will be up to the challenge will depend on our unity, on our ability to act together and as one. To mitigate the negative side effects and re-adjust our lives to the new realities in the world, and withstand the rules-based multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core.

Thank you!