



The President

**Address by
His Excellency President of the Republic of Cabo Verde,
Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves,
at the General Debate of the
77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the theme:**

**"A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking
Challenges"**

New York, 21 September 2022

Excellencies. Heads of State, Government and Delegations. Mr. President of the General Assembly. Mr. Secretary General. Dear Delegates. Ladies and Gentlemen

The Republic of Cabo Verde encompasses the inhabitants of the 10 islands that make up the national territory, located in the Mid-Atlantic, off the West African coast, and an immense diaspora, our 11th island, scattered throughout the four corners of the world.

As President of the Republic and Highest Representative of this global Nation, I have the enormous privilege of extending my greetings to all of you and, from the pulpit of this august assembly, to bring *mantenhas* - *greetings* in the Mother tongue of Cabo Verde - from Caboverdeans to the Peoples of the World, represented here by their highest dignitaries, auguring the best wishes for prosperity and happiness shared by all.

We look forward, with hope, to the Summit of the Future in 2023, as foreseen in the Secretary General's proposal of *Our Common Agenda*, so that it may effectively help “forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like, and what we can do today to secure it”.

With this in mind, Cabo Verde reiterates before this August Assembly its firm purpose of continuing to be an active and useful Member of the United Nations System, acting and articulating its action on four major fronts, from more specific to broader: to fully own up to its responsibility in the framework of national governance; to value its specificity and grow from its status as a Small Island State in Development; to be a spokesperson in the context of the diversity and the designs of Africa, the continent to which it belongs and, *ultimately, continue to be a champion* of Multilateralism for the advancement of the causes of progress and well-being of Humanity.

In their journey, SIDS face structural limitations such as geographical remoteness and isolation, their small economic dimension, dependence on imports and high costs, on the one hand, and exports of sector-concentrated services, on the other, which more frequently and intensely expose them and make them vulnerable to the impact of external shocks, whether climate, economic, or of other nature, such as pandemics and geopolitical conflicts.

My country, Cabo Verde, for example, in the past 15 years, between 2007 and 2022, has suffered the economic and social impact of multiple crises: the economic and financial crisis of 2007 – 2008, at the very moment of our graduation from the list of LDCs, the COVID 19 pandemic, which caused a recession in 2020 of 14.6%, the ongoing inflationary impact, as well as, in the last five years, one of the most profound and most serious droughts in recent history of the country.

But like the other Small Island Developing States, Cabo Verde has the ambition to become a Small Island Developed State.

In order to achieve this, Cabo Verde will have to progressively overcome its vulnerabilities and increase its resilience, and for this, it is imperative to be able to count on external solidarity in terms of sustainable financing and indebtedness, albeit always in a process and in a logic of gradual reduction of the need for external support.

Although this is not a new narrative, it is, nevertheless urgent that it be implemented, since with less than eight years to go before the 2030 Agenda target, all signs show that the indicators are not at the desirable pace toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by that date.

It is also pressing because less than two years before the Fourth SIDS Conference in 2024, it is certainly legitimate and expected that the Conference may make a

transformative decision on the best evaluation indicators and on the policy modalities that will best support SIDS in meeting the Samoa Pathway goals.

Cabo Verde has already submitted its application to host, in 2023, the regional preparatory meeting of the AIS – the SIDS region of the Atlantic and Indic oceans and the South China Sea, to which it belongs, and is also prepared to monitor and support the whole process up to the conclusion of the General Conference in 2024.

It is within this context of emergency that we welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation and the decision of the President of the General Assembly to establish a United Nations High-Level Expert Panel to conduct the works, including the completion and use of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI). We look forward to a satisfactory conclusion of the works of the High-Level Panel, in particular that the General Assembly may adopt its MVI proposal which we hope shall be accepted and used in a consensual manner both inside and outside the United Nations.

After all, we, the Small Island Developing States, also want to free ourselves from the dependence on external support, which necessarily entails reducing our vulnerabilities, while also being aware of the duty to do our homework, to be competitive and resilient, and to achieve inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth.

Since 2015, Africa's cultural and natural, material and immaterial heritage has been celebrated around the world to raise awareness and sensibility on the importance of its preservation. Hence, the African Union proposed as the theme for the year 2021 “Arts, Culture, and Heritage: Levers to build the Africa we Want”. However, in this regard, there are still concerns about the urgencies and the measures to be taken.

In my capacity as President, and counting on my African counterparts, I propose to invest in the Preservation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the whole of Africa, and to reflect on how to promote climate justice and equity in Africa and for Africa. It is a question of seeking to reach consensus on a more flexible and less abstract notion of climate equity that places common but differentiated responsibilities at the heart of a public and global debate, and to create a common platform for Africa with view to a transfer of responsibilities on an intergenerational basis.

On this occasion, I must refer to the worldwide movement of the candidacy of Creolization and Creole cultures as World Heritage, for which I have accepted to be Sponsor and Spokesperson, were it not for Cabo Verde being the first Creole society in the world.

This is a civil society-led initiative, which wants *creole countries* to be able to position themselves, under one voice, regarding their intangible heritage, promoting peace, friendship between peoples and development cooperation, based on the values that Creolization has brought to civilization: a new *ethos* based on tolerance, diversity, and fusion of cultures. We therefore call for strong political support and engagement from dignitaries from Creole countries and their Heads of State.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs was a high point for Multilateralism, and its progressive implementation and realization should continue to benefit from the impetus of an increasingly renewed, reinvigorated Multilateralism anchored on the United Nations System.

This has not happened at the desired level on the various fronts where, unfortunately, global challenges remain, while at the same time crises have emerged and which have constituted genuine obstacles to progress, endangering the desired reinvigorating of Multilateralism adapted and prepared to deal with the scale and complexity of the new challenges.

In this sense, Cabo Verde advocates for an effective, inclusive, preventive, dissuasive and cooperative Multilateralism, which could, as has already been stated, establish, “a new global agreement between States”, as well as "a new global governance" of the international system.

A Multilateralism that calls for less confrontation between blocs and more cooperation among Member States in the construction and delivery of global public goods to all, such as Peace and Security, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

Ultimately, a Multilateralism that is useful and a facilitator of an appeased international context, which opens the doors for countries, such as Cabo Verde, to more external funding and more and better integration in the regional and global value chains.

In concluding, I wish you fruitful deliberations during this 77th Session of the General Assembly, the results of which we hope may pave the way and prepare the Summits of the Future and of SIDS in 2023 and 2024.

The Future lies in each day that lays ahead, but also in the solutions we take and that we make possible in each of these days. Our best wishes to the United Nations.

Thank you, very much!