

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
H. E. PRESIDENT ADAMA BARROW
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
77TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK
22ND SEPTEMBER 2022**

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Your Majesties,
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings from the People of The Gambia and wish that we have a successful and fruitful 77th Session.

It is regrettable that we could not convene a proper general summit over the last two years due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Allow me, therefore, to pay a special tribute to the millions of people who succumbed to the pandemic worldwide. In their memory, we must commit ourselves to better pandemic preparedness and response.

Mr. President, my delegation congratulates you on your efficient role as President of the General Assembly, and I assure you of The Gambia's support during your tenure. We also felicitate the Secretary-General for ably steering the affairs of the UN during what has become one of the most challenging times of the century.

Mr. President,

The numerous interlocking global challenges requiring coordinated global action make it most pressing for us to rise to the occasion. This makes the theme “**A Watershed Moment: transformative challenges to interlocking challenges**” quite appropriate.

In the thick of all the complexities confronting world leaders, we must underscore the centrality of the United Nation's unique role and potential to make a huge difference in the lives of the people. Durable solutions that match the magnitude and intensity of the never-ending challenges remain the Assembly's greatest challenge.

The situation calls for new perceptions, new approaches, new partnerships, renewed commitments, and increased resource levels equal to the scale of both current and emerging challenges. To recover as a global family, we must muster the requisite courage and political will, and take advantage of the opportunities that go with the global crises.

Mr. President,

The current cost-of-living crisis across the world is a wake-up call for immediate global response to alleviate the suffering and poverty that hold our nations to ransom. The global inflationary trends, food insecurity, and the energy crisis compound the natural disasters that continue to cause havoc around the world. The need for relief grows by the day, yet global efforts appear to be less and less effective.

In this connection, my delegation fully welcomes the establishment of the Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group, and eagerly looks forward to concrete action-oriented recommendations and solutions. As one of the hard-hit developing countries, The Gambia stands ready to cooperate with the Group to find real solutions for immediate relief.

Mr. President,

We have come to this Summit with gratitude for the partnerships and support extended to us from 2016 to date.

Mr. Secretary General, we thank you personally and the entire UN Body for the continued support of our peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. The Gambia has come a long way from dictatorship and has transitioned into a true multiparty democracy.

Following the 2021 Presidential Election and the Legislative Elections this year, the consolidation process is gaining momentum. We will step up reforming and strengthening our national institutions to sustain a robust democracy where human rights and fundamental freedoms underpin our national policies, programmes and development efforts.

As we prepare to end the current electoral cycle with the 2023 Local Government Elections, we are proud that The Gambia now has multiple political parties and vibrant civil society organisations, with a sharp rise in public participation in national affairs.

Amid the socio-economic challenges that beset our nation, characterised by reduced tourism engagements, inflation, food and energy insecurity, and modest economic growth, we are developing a new National Development Plan (NDP) 2022-2026, to succeed the current NDP.

With this new Plan, we seek to advance the pursuit of our national priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. We, therefore, solicit the support of the UN system, as well as our friends and development partners.

Our goal is to recover and grow our economy, transform digitally, and consolidate our democratic gains. Our resolve is to uplift our people from poverty, secure their livelihoods, and create new avenues to transition into a prosperous, peaceful, and stable nation.

Because the youth and women form the greater majority of our population, the Government will continue to empower them.

Like all other genuine nations, we are committed to the global consensus that no country should be left behind in this Decade of Action.

Despite its size and economic status, The Gambia is at the forefront of fighting climate change through ambitious national action plans, and we look forward to participating effectively in COP27 in Egypt and the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Develop Countries (LDCs) in Qatar.

Mr. President,

Accelerating development in Africa hinges on addressing the underlying causes of insecurity and underdevelopment. As a continent, our collective goal is to have a peaceful Africa where the people enjoy the dividends of peace, stability, and prosperity.

African Governments are committed to silencing the guns on the continent as a strategic objective. For this

reason, we ask the United Nations and the international community to shoulder their fair share of the burden of the African Union peace endeavours.

Our experience with keeping the peace in Africa is marked by isolated efforts in many instances. Africa must be provided with adequate equipment and the

means to fully play its peace enforcement role on behalf of the international community.

As a longstanding troop-and-police contributing country, The Gambia will continue to support the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping

Initiative, and we welcome its reinforcement through the Action for Peacekeeping Strategy.

We are committed to improving the capacity of our officers through increased pre-deployment training, innovative partnerships, and more gender balanced peacekeeping deployment approaches.

We must, however, review and do more to address the frequent deadly attacks against peacekeepers in Mission areas by giving them realistic mandates. As

a sitting member of the African Union Peace and Security Council, The Gambia's commitment to peace and security in Africa and beyond remains unwavering.

Mr. President,

We have ongoing conflicts on our continent that need urgent international attention. The complexity of the challenges in the Sahel dictates multipronged

approaches and interventions that would ensure sustainable peace and stability. So, we must reconsider our assumptions on this region and seek forward-looking solutions that empower the citizens.

The current security and governance situation in Libya equally deserves a fresh thrust from the international community. We call on the contending

parties on the ground to give the people a chance to live and coexist in peace.

Mr. President,

Moroccan sovereignty and territorial rights over its Sahara region should be recognised by all. In this regard, The Government of The Gambia reaffirms its strong support for the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative,

which convincingly serves as a realistic compromise in accordance with UN resolutions.

Developments in the Horn of Africa also continue to be a source of serious concern. We request the leaders of the region and the international community to explore new options to restore peace in the area.

We must equally come together to jointly assist the region to combat terrorism through greater cooperation and intelligence sharing.

The humanitarian crisis is enormous and calls for considerable international emergency aid.

Mr. President,

Reverting to other important matters of global concern, we entreat the United States to end the longstanding embargo imposed on Cuba.

The reason is that global solidarity and friendly cooperation should define relations between Member States of the United Nations.

In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict needs a new impetus for lasting peace. As a people, the Palestinians deserve a state of their own, hence we

call for a fresh peace initiative that includes the revival of the Arab Peace Initiative.

Mr. President,

We remain deeply disturbed by the horrors and humanitarian catastrophe arising from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The destabilising global economic conditions imposed on the rest of the world are unbearable.

In Africa and elsewhere, the cost-of-living crisis and the biting inflation, with food and energy insecurity, are devastating our economies and continue to frustrate pandemic recovery efforts. Additionally, the debt burden has reached crisis levels. We call for general debt relief.

We implore Russia and Ukraine to heed the global plea for political dialogue and end the war. Africa is simply asking for global peace and friendly relations. Our survival and progress depend on global peace and stability.

Mr. President,

The plight of the Rohingya remain a matter of grave concern to The Gambia. We call on the Myanmar Government to comply with the rulings of the International Court of Justice and end all human rights violations against the Rohingya. The Gambia will continue to defend their rights.

Mr. President,

As a responsible member of the international community, The Gambia considers Taiwan as part of the Peoples Republic of China, and we advocate the adoption of the One-China policy.

We urge the international community, therefore, to fully respect China's sovereignty over Taiwan and avoid actions that undermine global peace.

The Gambia fully supports the Secretary-General's call for transformation and global solidarity in the landmark report "**Our Common Agenda**". In the same vein, we support his efforts to convene the **Summit of the Future and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit** next year.

The renewal of global solidarity and regard for the less fortunate necessitate that we commit ourselves, once again, to leaving no one behind.

Mr. President,

Africa will continue to demand its rightful place in the permanent membership category of the Security Council; thus, the negotiations must produce tangible results.

Finally, let me emphasise that genuine commitment and substantially increased resources should now accompany the transformation of our institutions, systems, mechanisms, and state of preparedness, and the developing world must not be left behind.

I pray that we have a successful 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
