

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**ADDRESS BY DR. S JAISHANKAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER OF INDIA AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 77TH
SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Sat, 24 Sep 2022

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Members of the General Assembly,

I bring to you the greetings of 1.3 billion plus people from the world's largest democracy. They join me in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to chair the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly. They follow closely developments at the UN, reflecting the increasingly globalized nature of our existence.

We meet at a challenging time for the world order. This session's theme - *"A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges"* – seeks to capture its seriousness.

Excellencies,

The year 2022 is an important milestone in India's journey towards growth, development and prosperity.

India is celebrating 75 years of its independence, what we call "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav". The story of that period has been one of toil, determination, innovation and enterprise of millions of ordinary Indians. They are rejuvenating a society pillaged by centuries of foreign attacks and colonialism.

And they are doing so in a democratic framework, whose steady progress is reflected in more authentic voices and grounded leadership.

This 'New India', under the visionary and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a confident and resurgent society. Its agenda for our centenary will be achieved through the five pledges that we committed to on Independence Day.

One, we are resolved to make India a developed country in the next 25 years. For the world, that creates more capacities for global good.

Two, we will liberate ourselves from a colonial mindset. Externally, this means reformed multilateralism and more contemporary global governance.

Three, our rich civilizational heritage will be a source of pride and strength. This includes care and concern for the environment, so ingrained in our traditional ethos.

Four, we will promote greater unity and solidarity. This expresses a coming together on global issues, such as terrorism, pandemics or the environment.

And five, instilling consciousness of duties and responsibilities. This applies to nations, as much as it does to citizens.

These five pledges affirm our age-old outlook that sees the world as one family. We believe that national good and global good can be entirely in harmony.

It is this conviction that led us to supply vaccines to over 100 nations. Similarly, our evacuation operations in HADR

(Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) situations always have had room for other nationals in distress.

Even as we meet our own development targets, India offers partnerships to our brothers and sisters in Asia, Africa and Latin America. And we do so based on their needs and priorities.

Today, that focus is on green growth, better connectivity, digital delivery and accessible health. Our solidarity is not just words; you can see them in 700 projects across the world.

Mr. President,

Even while India contributes to global betterment, we recognize the sharp deterioration in the international landscape. The world is already struggling with challenges of post pandemic economic recovery. The debt situation of the developing is precarious.

To this, is now added the rising costs and shrinking availability of fuel, food and fertilizers. These, along with trade disruptions and diversions, are among the many consequences of the Ukraine conflict.

The Indo-Pacific too witnesses fresh concerns about its stability and security. And climate events have added an overlay on these mounting anxieties.

As we saw in the case of the Covid pandemic, the South will be most impacted, even if the immediate causes are well beyond. It is imperative that global conversations recognize this unfairness. The inequity of vaccine distribution should not be replicated in other domains.

Mr. President,

As the Ukraine conflict continues to rage, we are often asked whose side we are on.

And our answer, each time, is straight and honest.

India is on the side of peace and will remain firmly there.

We are on the side that respects the UN Charter and its founding principles.

We are on the side that calls for dialogue and diplomacy as the only way out.

We are on the side of those struggling to make ends meet, even as they stare at escalating costs of food, fuel and fertilizers.

It is therefore in our collective interest to work constructively, both within the United Nations and outside, in finding an early resolution to this conflict.

Excellencies,

While the global attention has been on Ukraine, India has also had to contend with other challenges, especially in its own neighbourhood.

Some of them may be aggravated by the Covid pandemic and ongoing conflicts; but they speak too of a deeper malaise. The accumulation of debt in fragile economies is of particular concern.

We believe that in such times, the international community must rise above narrow national agendas. India, for its part, is taking exceptional measures in exceptional times.

We do so, when we sent 50,000 metric tons of wheat and multiple tranches of medicines and vaccines to Afghanistan.

When we extend credits of 3.8 billion dollars to Sri Lanka for fuel, essential commodities and trade settlement.

When we supplied 10,000 metric tons of food aid and vaccine shipments to Myanmar.

When we fill the gap in humanitarian needs left unaddressed by political complexity.

Whether it is disaster response or humanitarian assistance, India has stood strong, contributing particularly to those nearest to us.

Excellencies,

The world, as we knew it, is poised for transformational changes.

It has been impacted in recent times by a succession of shocks, each of them significant by itself.

The Covid pandemic called into question the over-centralized nature of globalization and has led all of us to seek greater resilience and reliability of supply chains.

The repercussions of the ongoing Ukraine conflict have further heightened economic stresses, especially on food and energy.

Climate events have added to the disruption that the world is already facing.

As for the promise of technology, it has certainly multiplied our capabilities but also added to vulnerabilities.

Trust and transparency are legitimate expectations of a more digitized world.

The quest to create a better global order would necessarily have to address all these issues. Among them, some are clearly more existential in nature and necessitate intense coordination by the international community.

Climate action and climate justice are particularly noteworthy in this respect. In their pursuit, India has worked with partners on the International Solar Alliance, the One Sun-One World-One Grid initiative and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

We stand ready to support any collective and equitable endeavor to protect our environment and to further global wellness. “Lifestyle for Environment” or LiFE, as declared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Glasgow on the sidelines of COP26 is our homage to Mother Nature.

India remains deeply committed to fighting climate change under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and the Paris Agreement. We do so on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances. We have announced our updated Nationally Determined Contributions after COP26.

Excellencies,

India’s steadfast commitment to South-South Cooperation is well established. Our approach is based on principles of mutual respect and national ownership with a commitment to sustainable development for all.

As we begin the G-20 presidency this December, we are sensitive to the challenges faced by developing countries. India will work

with other G-20 members to address serious issues of debt, economic growth, food and energy security and particularly, environment. The reform of governance of multilateral financial institutions will continue to be one of our core priorities.

Excellencies,

India would be completing its tenure as a member of the Security Council this year. In our term, we have acted as a bridge on some serious but divisive issues confronting the Council. We have also focused on concerns such as maritime security, peacekeeping and counter terrorism. Our contributions range from providing technology with a human touch to ensuring the safety and security of UN Peacekeepers.

As the Chair of the Counter Terrorism Committee this year, India would be hosting its special meeting in Mumbai and New Delhi. I invite all member states to participate in it. We need to create a global architecture that responds to the new tech tools deployed against open, diverse and pluralistic societies.

Having borne the brunt of cross border terrorism for decades, India firmly advocates a ‘zero-tolerance’ approach. In our view, there is no justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of motivation. And no rhetoric, however sanctimonious can ever hide blood-stained hands.

The United Nations responds to terrorism by sanctioning its perpetrators. Those who politicize the UNSC 1267 Sanctions regime, sometimes to the extent of defending proclaimed terrorists, do so at their own peril. Believe me, they advance neither their own interests nor indeed their reputation.

India has always espoused a cooperative, inclusive, and consultative approach to international relations.

We believe that multipolarity, rebalancing, fair globalization and reformed multilateralism cannot be kept in abeyance.

The call for reformed multilateralism – with reforms of the Security Council at its core – enjoys considerable support among UN members.

It does so because of the widespread recognition that the current architecture is anachronistic and ineffective. It is also perceived

as deeply unfair, denying entire continents and regions a voice in a forum that deliberates their future.

India is prepared to take up greater responsibilities. But it seeks at the same time to ensure that the injustice faced by the Global South is decisively addressed.

Our call is to allow serious negotiations on such a critical matter to proceed sincerely. They must not be blocked by procedural tactics. Naysayers cannot hold the IGN process hostage in perpetuity.

In these turbulent times, it is essential that the world listens to more voices of reason. And experiences more acts of goodwill. India is willing and able on both counts.

We believe and advocate that this is not an era of war and conflict. On the contrary, it is a time for development and cooperation.

Mr. President,

In the past, this august assembly has served as a meeting point of views and a catalyst for action.

It is vital that we continue to believe in the promise of diplomacy and the need for international cooperation.

Therefore, Mr. President, let us strive to return to the course of seeking peace, progress and prosperity.

I thank you.