

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev,
President of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the General Debate of the 77th session of the UNGA
(20 September, 2022, New York)

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

First of all, I congratulate **Mr. Körösi (Көрөши)** on his election as President of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

We meet here at UN headquarters at a critical time for humanity.

The world of today appears to have entered a new, increasingly bitter, period of **geopolitical confrontation.**

The long-standing international system - based on order and responsibility is giving way to a new, **more chaotic and unpredictable one.**

The **global system of checks and balances** has failed to maintain peace and stability.

The security architecture is eroding.

Mutual distrust between global powers is dangerously deepening.

The world is falling prey to a new set of military conflicts.

For the first time in two generations, we face the prospect of the **use of nuclear weapons**, and not even as a last resort.

New fault lines are creating artificial barriers and economic isolation.

Economic and political sanctions have become “a new norm” that erodes the supply chains that ensure **food security**, threatening millions, especially in vulnerable communities.

These problems contribute to the mounting challenges of soaring **inflation, job losses**, and fears of a worldwide **recession, especially for developing nations.**

Finally, these crises severely hamper the urgent action we all agreed to combat **climate change** and enhance **sustainable development**.

Some 77 years ago, the founding members placed within the **UN Charter the principles and norms of international law** that have successfully guided us ever since.

There is nothing more important now than to **return to the foundational principles** that lie at the root of this universal organization. In particular, we must rethink the **linkages between three primordial principles: the sovereign equality of states, the territorial integrity of states, and peaceful coexistence between states.**

These three principles are inter-dependent. To respect one is to respect the other two. To undermine one is to undermine the other two.

When the **global disarmament regime** – both conventional and nuclear – weakens, these three principles are threatened.

Conversely, as these three principles are respected, they grow in strength.

Together **they become the basis for greater inter-state cooperation** at every level: sub-regional, regional, and global.

This is the global prosperity dividend.

This system of values, embodied in the UN, remains a beacon of hope for millions of people in different parts of our planet.

We must staunchly defend these values, the UN as its core, and the spirit of cooperation which underpins it.

In other words, we cannot simply shrug our shoulders and agree with **polarization and division.**

We cannot afford indecision or narrow interests detrimental to this common heritage and our collective good.

Too much is at stake.

Therefore, Kazakhstan stands ready to cooperate with all relevant actors in a spirit of **inclusiveness, multilateralism and goodwill.**

I am convinced that the challenges of our time can only be overcome by countries acting together.

To achieve our shared goals, **we must go forward in the following directions.**

The multiple and often interconnected crises of recent years have exposed **significant gaps in global governance.**

They have highlighted the need **to modernize and reform the United Nations.**

The UN must be better prepared for future challenges and opportunities. In this respect, Kazakhstan welcomed the proposals in the **report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda.”**

This is an important opportunity to reaffirm the Charter of the United Nations, **reinvigorate multilateralism, boost**

implementation of existing commitments, agree on concrete solutions to new challenges, and restore trust among Member States.

We look forward to contributing to the consultations at the **ministerial meeting** next year and to the holding of the **2024 Summit of the Future**.

We must move from simply responding to global challenges and crises to **preventing and better predicting emerging trends** and integrating our assessments into strategic planning and policymaking.

For this very purpose, Kazakhstan proposed 30 years ago the idea of convening the **Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)**.

In the context of new challenges and threats we hope to **transform CICA into a full-fledged international organization** at the upcoming summit in October to contribute to global mediation and peace-making.

With only eight years until 2030, the **Sustainable Development Goals** are hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, a “**triple planetary crisis**” (*climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution*) and conflicts around the world.

We need to get back on track before it's too late.

Our top priority must be to build resilience to future turmoil and ensure a sustainable, equitable and inclusive recovery.

To this end, we need a **frank dialogue between East and West** and a **new global security paradigm based on the principles of mutual trust and multifaceted cooperation.**

Given the current crisis and increased geopolitical tensions, **there is an acute need for a process under UN auspices that can lead to détente and conflict prevention.**

Kazakhstan has suffered terribly from past **nuclear weapons** testing, so we understand

very clearly the dangers of **escalating tensions between nuclear powers.**

For this reason, **nuclear disarmament has become a key part of Kazakh foreign policy** and we will be continuously struggling for a world free of nuclear arsenals.

Despite some progress in this area, unfortunately, the whole record is not that positive. We are alarmed by the increased rivalry and rhetoric of Nuclear States.

We are also concerned at the **lack of progress made by the NPT review conferences.**

Elaborating new mechanisms to ensure disarmament and nonproliferation is a daunting task ahead.

Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need to manage and reduce **biological risks and dangers.**

It should be of universal concern that we still rely on the Biological Weapons Convention – now 50 years old – without any effort to create

an agency or body for international cooperation.

In this context, I would like to reiterate my earlier proposal to establish an **International Agency for Biological Safety**.

Along with threats to international security, **climate change** requires greater international cooperation and solidarity as well.

Around the world, people are facing existential threats from weather and environmental change.

If we are to turn this tide, **we need more action, and we need it fast.**

Many of us have taken bold steps already. In Kazakhstan, we have pledged the total transformation of the **oil- and coal-dependent energy sector into a Net Zero economy by 2060.**

To save our planet, we need investment at greater levels than we have ever seen.

However, **climate action cannot come at the expense of development or modernization.**

Therefore, at **COP27** later this year, member states, as well as the global business community, must once again scale up their commitment to greater climate finance.

That agenda relates directly to the **global food security crisis.** My country, as the **world's seventh largest grain producer,** is the breadbasket of Central Asia. We are committed to **utilizing this agricultural potential** to fight global food insecurity.

Kazakhstan will continue to act as a reliable supplier of grain and other food-staples. It also intends to grow its cooperation with the **Islamic Food Security Organization,** located in Kazakhstan, as well as UN agencies.

It is imperative in this connection **to exclude food and fertilizers from any sanctions and restrictions whatsoever.**

Once again, **current economic and social upheavals require a collective effort.**

Commitment to the 2030 Agenda remains an integral part of our national and global agenda.

In addition, **fair trade regimes** are crucial to global economic recovery.

In this context, I would like to commend the constructive decisions coming out of the **12th WTO Ministerial Conference**, chaired by Kazakhstan.

The current geopolitical situation also highlights the importance of a **reliable and diversified global transit and transport infrastructure**.

We are seeing this in our own region. Kazakhstan, **the largest landlocked developing country**, is becoming a vital **Asian land corridor to Europe**.

The **Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, or Middle Corridor** has received a new impetus. We expect cargo volume through Kazakhstan to increase significantly in the years ahead.

We must ensure that the **Caspian Sea becomes a sea of peace and new opportunities.**

In the months ahead, Kazakhstan will help mitigate the most immediate impacts of limited access to **energy and critical raw materials** caused by trade and supply chain disruptions.

In the long-term, we aim to diversify our sources of energy, with a particular focus on **green hydrogen and renewables.**

Speaking about **Central Asia**, we should bear in mind that it has already become a **region of vast opportunities for international cooperation.**

Together with our Central Asian partners, we are committed to strengthening political interaction and deepening economic ties to move our region forward.

We agreed to coexist **as good neighbors and diversify our cooperation.**

This credo is based on our significant natural and agricultural resources, human capital, transport and transit potential. We are

a "**buffer market**" between East and West, South and North.

We intend to work together with all stakeholders to address a **pressing regional agenda** that includes climate change, the Aral Sea, rational use of water resources, border delimitation, combating extremism, and expanding intra-regional trade.

That is why we consider it important to establish the **UN Regional Centre for SDGs for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty.**

Kazakhstan sees the future **Afghanistan** as a truly independent, neutral, united, prosperous state, living in peace with its neighbors.

Therefore, **we support the difficult process of nation-building in that country, including life-saving humanitarian assistance.**

Dear colleagues,

As President of Kazakhstan I am absolutely committed to build a **Just Kazakhstan**, one in which every citizen has the same opportunities, rights, and protections.

Justice in my country must prevail. Law and order will become pillars of our society.

The most important part of this path is **transformative political reform**.

Presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in Kazakhstan over the coming months. According to my proposal the presidential mandate has been limited to one **seven-year term**. It is a **real breakthrough** in developing democracy in Kazakhstan.

At the same time, we will be firmly adhering to my formula of a **“Strong President – Authoritative Parliament – Accountable Government”**. I am convinced, this formula excellently serves the national interests of Kazakhstan.

We also aim to de-monopolize the economy.

We are taking steps to ensure that **the wealthiest in our society play their part** in our quest for a Just Kazakhstan, along with **diversifying our economy** and increasing investments in **human capital**.

Recently, I initiated the creation of a **National Fund for Children**. Starting in 2024, **50% of the investment income** from the National Welfare Fund will be allocated to special savings accounts for children until their adulthood. These funds could be used for education or housing purposes.

A special **private charity fund “For the people of Kazakhstan”** also now provides assistance to ordinary citizens for healthcare, education and social security aims.

We aim to further expand the **empowerment and participation of women** in economic and public life.

Comprehensive national transformation is not a simple process, and **there will certainly be pitfalls and bumps in the road**.

But, if we are firmly to meet the expectations of Kazakh citizens, **we cannot deviate from this strategic path!**

Over the past three years we have carried out substantial transformations through **four packages of political reforms.**

For example, **new laws** passed by the Parliament **simplified political parties' registration** and **reduced the threshold for parties to enter Parliament from 7% to 5%.**

To promote a wider involvement of citizens in governance, **there is now a mandatory 30 % quota for women and young people** in electoral party legislative lists.

To make local administration more accountable, local mayors are now directly elected.

To foster a **more open culture** between society and government, we have **changed the law on peaceful assembly:** government authorization is no longer required.

Following its international commitments on the fundamental right to life and human dignity, **Kazakhstan abolished the death penalty.**

A Just Kazakhstan depends on our **multi-ethnic and multi-confessional solidarity.** The “**Unity in Diversity**” principle will be preserved at all costs.

Last week, the **7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions** was successfully held in Kazakhstan.

The Congress once again highlighted the importance of **religious tolerance, dialogue, and mediation.** We are ready to build bridges and provide platforms for dialogue wherever needed.

Dear friends,

This year marks **30 years of Kazakhstan – United Nations partnership.**

The Organization has contributed strongly to the formation and strengthening of independent Kazakhstan.

Over that period, we have worked for the aims of the Charter in all major UN organs, **from ECOSOC to the Human Rights Council to the Security Council.**

Kazakhstan will remain at the forefront of advancing a more modern, efficient, transparent, and accountable Organization.

Never in history have we had such a need for responsible leadership for the next generations.

Remembering our past makes us responsible for our future.

Together with you, we will spare no effort toward building a safer, more sustainable and prosperous global community.

Thank you!