

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. KHURELSUKH UKHNAA, PRESIDENT OF MONGOLIA,
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 77th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 21 September 2022)

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to convey my heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on your unanimous election as the President of the UN General Assembly and wish every success in the work of the 77th session.

We have no doubt that the 77th session of the General Assembly will play an important role in intensifying social and economic recovery of the countries of the world in the post pandemic epoque, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, combating climate change and desertification, and determining ways to resolve international crises and conflicts through dialogue and peaceful means.

Last year, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of Mongolia's full pledged membership to the United Nations, and this year, we are observing the 30th anniversary of Mongolia's declaration of its territory as a nuclear weapon free zone, and the 20th anniversary of Mongolia's participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

Therefore, on behalf of my country and people, it is a great privilege for me to state from this honorable podium that during these six decades, Mongolia has been a responsible member of the United Nations actively participating in multilateral cooperation of the international community and making tangible contribution to global peace and security, as well as wellbeing and development of mankind.

Mr. President,

The whole world is going through hard times of difficult ordeals and challenges, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, pandemic and the pandemic-driven difficulties to customs, transport and logistics, price increase, inflation, as well as geostrategic and geopolitical tensions.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute report, even in the difficult times, when the countries of the world were closing their borders, imposing restrictions and quarantines to protect lives and health of their citizens from the COVID-19 pandemic, and

running into economic crises, the world military expenditure continued to grow in 2021, reaching an all-time high of USD 2.1 trillion.

If this huge budget and funds spent on the military and armaments were dedicated to the least developed and developing countries, how many millions of children's future would have been brighter, how many millions would have been lifted out of poverty, how many millions would have been freed from hunger and disease, how many millions would have had food, and opportunities for education, employment, and places to live.

It is time for all of us to ponder and reflect on what progress could have been achieved if this huge amount of money had been spent on the pressing issues of combating global warming and climate change.

It is truly regrettable that the situation in the world is deteriorating, and mistrust and misunderstanding are deepening even though in the XX century the mankind has had enough sufferings, such as the scourge of the two World Wars, the Cold War divide, interreligious conflicts, and terrorism.

Therefore, in today's complex reality, we should always strive to learn from the mistakes of the past, uphold mutual trust, understanding, and respect, and make every effort to resolve any misunderstanding, conflict or war by peaceful means and dialogue.

Eight centuries ago, our ancestor - the Great Chinggis Khaan, united all Mongolian dwellers, founded the Great Mongolian State under the power of the Eternal Blue Sky, put an end to the centuries-long wars and conflicts, pacified West and East under the statehood rule of justice, and established the "Pax Mongolica" in the vast terrain of Eurasia.

Scholars and researchers around the world view the establishment of the "Pax Mongolica" as an important contribution of Mongols to the world history and the advancement of humankind and emphasize that the "Pax Mongolica" played an important role in the development of free trade between countries, laid the foundation for diplomacy and exchange of envoys, as well as proclaimed the ideas of religious freedom and the rule of law without imposing one's culture and religion on others.

The UN General Assembly resolution entitled "Eight Hundred Years of Mongolian Statehood", adopted in 2005, highly appreciated the contribution of Mongols to the history of mankind and *recognized* that "nomadic civilization influenced, inter alia, societies across Asia and Europe and, in turn, absorbed influences from both East and West in a true interchange of human values, *further recognized* the important role played by a strong and persistent nomadic culture in the development of extensive trade networks and the creation of large administrative, cultural, religious and commercial centres, and *likewise acknowledged* the ever-increasing significance and relevance of a culture of living in harmony with nature, which is inherent in nomadic civilization, in today's world".

This indicates that the “Pax Mongolica” contained progressive ideas, which could form the basis of the collective efforts of the international community to maintain peace and stability in the modern world.

Therefore, we, the descendants of the founders of the “Pax Mongolica”, call on the international community to understand each other, cooperate, and manage any conflict through peaceful dialogue, so that our blue planet will be at peace, and a “Pax Globalica” will be established. We further call on people of the world to combine efforts to achieve this noble goal.

Mongolia has consistently pursued a peace-loving, open, multi-pillar and independent foreign policy. A clear recognition of this policy by the international community was expressed by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres as “a symbol of peace in a troubled world” during his official visit to Mongolia in August 2022.

Mongolia has been actively participating in the promotion of international peace and security and peacekeeping efforts has put forward numbers of proposals and initiatives in the past. A notable example of which is the declaration of its territory as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In his statement at the opening of the 10th Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held last August, the UN Secretary-General warned that humanity is just “one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation”.

In this connection, I urge not only States Parties to the treaty, but also all UN Member States to exert political will and courage to build a world free of nuclear weapons, unite and work together wholeheartedly and faithfully for the sake of our Mother Earth, peace, and future generations.

Mongolia considers that nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, complete elimination of nuclear weapons and establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones are the best and effective means of building a world free of nuclear weapons.

Therefore, we consider that international recognition of Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status is our tangible contribution and effort to this cause.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Mongolia’s participation in the UN Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO). During this period, more than 20 thousand Mongolian military personnel have served in the UN PKO and other international peacekeeping operations in hot spots around the world.

Since 2006, when Mongolia sent its first female officer to the UN Peacekeeping Operations, by the number of female peacekeepers, we are among the top 20 countries in the ranking of 120 troop contributing countries.

Mongolia is firmly committed to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the call by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to increase the number of women serving in the UN Peacekeeping Operations to 15 percent by 2027.

Within the framework of this objective, at the initiative of Mongolia, we have hosted an international conference on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Peacekeeping” last June. The conference, which brought together female peacekeepers from more than 30 countries and representatives of international organizations, became a notable event for sharing and exchanging knowledge, experience and lessons learned.

We have also has put forward an initiative to host this conference every 5 years and it is our hope that the relevant UN entities and troop-contributing countries will support this proposal.

At the same time, it is my pleasure to underscore that the UN and its leadership have been greatly appreciating the genuine contribution of peace-loving Mongolia to the UN PKO and the sacred cause of strengthening international peace and security and rendering full support to our proposals and initiatives.

Mr. President,

Mongolia has consistently proposed the establishment of a dialogue mechanism, with a view to contribute to the peace and security in the Northeast Asian region and the efforts of the international community to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

In this context, in 2013, Mongolia has launched the initiative to organize the international conference “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security”.

Last June, we organized the 7th international conference of the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security” and discussed a broad range of issues, including regional security, power grid, green development, opportunities for humanitarian cooperation, and the post-COVID economic recovery.

The results of the conference demonstrate that the significance of the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue initiative has grown, and it is transforming into an open and inclusive mechanism gathering government officials and the academia from countries in the sub-region and beyond and representatives of international organizations.

In the face of frequent natural disasters and communicable diseases, the creation of an integrated regional infrastructure for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance is becoming one of the most pressing security issues in Northeast Asia.

With this in mind, we put forward an initiative to establish an integrated platform for disaster risk reduction for the Northeast Asian region in Mongolia in 2018, and now we bring forward a proposal to establish a regional humanitarian hub or warehouse based on the Ulaanbaatar International Airport affiliated facilities.

I am confident that these initiatives will be supported and assisted by other countries in the region and the UN system and specialized organizations.

Mr. President,

Broad scale economic restrictions and sanctions, caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, have hit hard the national economies. The global market prices of food, fuel, agricultural and energy raw materials have increased sharply like never before, causing fluctuation in the global economy and financial markets and creating major risks.

With the immediate support of the UN and its system organizations and development partners to Mongolia's efforts against COVID-19, as of today, 70 percent of the population are fully vaccinated, domestic restrictions removed and borders opened.

Though we are going through an uneasy period, the Government of Mongolia is implementing the New Recovery Policy developed in coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals. The policy focuses on improvement of road, railway, and border point infrastructure, increase of energy sources, intensification of industrialization, as well as urban and rural development, and enhancement of public-private partnership, and productivity.

Furthermore, despite tough times of the pandemic and new normalcy, Mongolia is putting efforts to accelerate digital transition, and adopted a package of new laws on digital development. We have introduced the e-Mongolia platform to streamline public service delivery to citizens and entities, to reduce corruption and bureaucracy, to increase information security, and to promote good governance. Moreover, we are working to expand and develop our multilateral cooperation in these fields at regional and international levels.

Mongolia fully supports major initiatives put forward in the UN Secretary-General's report "Our Common Agenda" and is sparing no efforts to implement them in close coordination with the Sustainable Development Goals, the national "Vision-2050" long-term development policy and the "New Recovery Policy".

Mr. President,

We must not forget that serious challenges we are facing, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, land degradation, shortages of water resources and droughts, are still awaiting solutions.

Mongolia is one of the countries most affected by climate change.

Therefore, with a view to combat climate change, desertification, and dust storms, and to increase forest and water resources, Mongolia launched the "Billion Trees" national movement to plant, grow and protect billions of trees.

Mongolian people, the Government and development partners welcomed the initiative, and now the "Billion Trees" national movement is being successfully implemented throughout the country. I am pleased to inform that the UN Secretary-General personally joined and supported the movement.

In addition, Mongolia reiterates its position to actively cooperate and make a real contribution to reduce the negative impact of climate change and protecting the environment at regional and international levels.

In this context, it is my pleasure to inform you that Mongolia will be hosting the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17) in 2026.

Another issue, which should be brought to the attention, is the scarcity of pastures, as the space for nomadic livestock, is shrinking day by day, and nomadic civilization is facing a danger of extinction.

We, Mongolians, are nomadic and pastoralist people. Lives of over 200 million people, raising livestock and living in harmony with the nature like us, are at risk now due to climate change, land degradation, desertification, drought and extreme winter calamities. In order to protect their interests, improve pasture management and use, preserve ecosystem balance, and provide global food security and supply, Mongolia initiated a UNGA resolution proclaiming the year of 2026 as the "International year of Rangelands and Pastoralists", and it was adopted on March 15, 2022.

We launched the "Billion trees" national movement along with the national programs on "Food Supply and Security" and "Healthy Mongolia" to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and create a healthy environment, where people would live a healthy life consuming healthy food. We highly appreciate the support and cooperation of the countries in the region and international organizations extended to these endeavors.

Mr. President,

Nowadays, with the drastic change of the international order and norms, established after the World War II, the importance of multilateralism and the role of international community are growing ever more.

For this reason, we are of the view that it is important for every Member State to take an active part in the process of the UN reforms and constructively contribute to strengthening the position and role of the organization.

Mongolia views that the key to the reform of the UN is the reform of the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since 2009, Mongolia has been regularly participating in the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the UN Security Council reform, expressing its principled position.

Developments in recent years have proven that the UN General Assembly is the most important platform for discussing global peace, security, human rights, and development issues. So, we deem that strengthening the role of the UN General Assembly is important to ensure the balance of power among countries and bring out voices of small and developing countries more vividly.

Lastly, I wish to call upon the Member States to support the UN "Quintet of change" outlined in the Secretary-General's report "Our Common Agenda" for a more effective UN 2.0 and let us collectively exert our efforts to ensure global peace, security, and development and prosperity.

May the Eternal Blue Sky bless the mankind forever!

Thank you for your attention.