

**Speech by
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**at the 78th General Debate of the United Nations
General Assembly**

New York, 19 September 2023

Translation of advance text

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Mr President/Madam President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Fifty years ago, almost to the day, two German states joined the United Nations: the then German Democratic Republic as the 133rd member and the Federal Republic of Germany as the 134th member.

This step is of great importance to us Germans to this very day.

For membership of the United Nations enabled my country – the instigator of terrible wars and horrific crimes – to return to the family of peace-loving nations.

We are profoundly grateful for this chance.

This return was not free of requirements.

The accession of the two German states was preceded by a visionary policy of détente. The aim, as my predecessor – Federal Chancellor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Willy Brandt – said here in New York 50 years ago was to “fill in the rifts of the Cold War”.

Three things were essential for this.

First of all, the clear commitment of both German states to resolve conflicts without force. This was laid down in the Basic Treaty between Bonn and East Berlin as well as in the treaties which the Federal Republic of Germany concluded with its eastern neighbours.

The second prerequisite was the renunciation of any form of revisionism – by recognising Germany’s new borders drawn after the Second World War as inviolable. At the time, many people in West Germany were opposed to this. In retrospect, however, it proved to be the right decision.

Finally, the third prerequisite was a foreign policy that did not ignore the realities of the Cold War. And which, at the same time, always remained focused on overcoming the status quo – that is to say, the confrontation between the blocs and thus also the unnatural division of Germany.

When I look back here today at the beginnings of our membership of the United Nations, I am doing so not only out of historical interest.

Rather, it is because the prohibition of the use of force still remains the unfulfilled core pledge of our United Nations.

Because the inviolability of borders and the sovereign equality of states also have to be defended in our multipolar world – by us all.

And because we today – especially today – need the courage, creative energy and will to fill in the rifts. Rifts which are deeper than ever.

Germany is strongly committed to these three ideals – the renunciation of the use of force as a political instrument, the rejection of any kind of revisionism and the determination to engage in cooperation beyond any dividing factors.

It is to these ideals that we Germans owe the great fortune of living in a unified country today – in peace with our neighbours, friends and partners around the world.

At the same time, what Willy Brandt stated here 50 years ago is all the more true today: “In a world in which we are all increasingly dependent on each other, a policy for peace must not stop on our own doorstep.”

German policy can and never will be limited to pursuing our interests with no consideration for others. Because we know that our freedom, our democracy and our prosperity are deeply rooted in the well-being of Europe and the world.

That is why the order of the day is not less cooperation – perhaps packaged today as de-coupling or as “cooperation only among the like-minded”. Instead, we need more

cooperation: existing alliances must be strengthened and new partners sought. For this is the only way to reduce the risks of excessively one-sided dependencies.

This is all the more true in a world which – in contrast to 50 years ago – no longer has only two centres of power. Rather, it has many.

Multipolarity is not a new order. Anyone who assumes that smaller countries are the backyard of larger ones is mistaken.

Multipolarity is not a normative category but a description of today's reality.

Anyone seeking order in a multipolar world has to start here at the United Nations. That is why Germany supports the UN system – and, as the second-largest contributor after the United States, pays its regular budget assessment with full conviction.

Only the United Nations – on the basis of the values enshrined in its Charter – can fully realise the aspirations of universal representation and sovereign equality for all. (That cannot be said of either the G7 or the G20 – as important as they are for achieving international consensus – or of BRICS or other groups.)

I know that some will counter by asking: is the United Nations not all too often unable to take action, paralysed by the antagonisms of its heterogeneous membership?

My response to them is: the obstruction of a few – no matter how influential they are – should not lead us to forget that we, the overwhelming majority of states, agree on many things.

All of us, almost all of us, want force as a political instrument to remain banned.

All of us have an interest in ensuring that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of our countries are respected.

And all of us should know what this requires: namely, that we also grant others these rights.

These golden rules are universal – even if many of us were not yet sitting around the table when the UN Charter was adopted in 1945.

Yet only ten years later – in Bandung, Indonesia – it was the African and Asian states liberated from colonialism that raised their voices to call for self-determination, territorial integrity, the sovereign equality of all states and a world without colonialism and imperialism.

This seems more relevant today than ever before.

It is by these principles that we – whether large or small – will all be judged.

These principles must also form the basis when it comes to reshaping our multipolar world!

Only then can the global challenges of our time be mastered. The greatest challenge of all is anthropogenic climate change.

Of course, the traditional industrialised countries have a very special responsibility in the fight against the climate crisis. However, many other countries are among the biggest emitters today.

Instead of waiting for others, we all have to do more together to achieve the Paris climate goals.

Each and every one of us must have the opportunity to gain the same level of prosperity as people in Europe, North America or in countries such as Japan or Australia.

However, our planet will not survive if this economic development is attained with the technologies and production processes of the 19th or 20th centuries – with combustion engines and coal-fired power plants.

This leads us to one conclusion: we have to de-couple economic development from CO₂ emissions.

This is already happening in many countries, for we have the solutions and technologies.

As a key nation in the field of technology, we are offering to cooperate here for the common good. If producers of renewable energies and their industrial users come together across continents, we will create new prosperity together – in many places around the world.

And I am pleased to announce to you today that Germany is honouring its pledges on international climate financing. From two billion euro in 2014 and more than four billion euro in 2020, we tripled our contribution last year to six billion euro. We have therefore kept our word.

As will the industrialised countries as a whole, which will hit their target of 100 billion euro for international climate financing for the first time this year.

That is an important, an overdue signal before we take stock in Dubai this December and negotiate new climate action plans for the period after 2030.

I believe it is important that we are as concrete and as binding as possible. That is why I advocate that we set clear targets in Dubai for the expansion of renewable energies and for greater energy efficiency.

We will be equally ambitious when it comes to achieving the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals.

Climate action or development – this trade-off will not work!

Our summit yesterday brought home to me how urgent it is that we make up for lost time when it comes to the SDGs, too.

We therefore want to use next year's Summit of the Future, which we are currently preparing with our friends from Namibia, to pick up the pace and push ahead with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

It is important to me in this context that we ensure more private investment in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Let me give you just one example: the entire world is currently talking about the diversification of supply chains and raw materials security. Would it not be a start if at least the first production step were to take place on-site where the raw material deposits are to be found?

Certainly, Germany and German business are open to entering into partnerships of this very nature.

Of course, in the coming years we will all face the challenge of leading our economies, our energy supplies and our infrastructure to a resource-efficient, climate-neutral future. That will require major investment.

To create the right conditions to bring about this investment, we have to address the debt crisis in many countries and modernise the international financial architecture. I said at the start that Germany is not clinging on to the status quo – not in this issue either. We want something to change.

I have been calling – most recently at the G20 Summit in Delhi – for the multilateral development banks to reform. So that they can contribute more to financing the protection of global public goods such as the climate and biodiversity or the prevention of pandemics. That is what the G20 decided in Delhi.

Germany is also providing financial support for this reform. We will be the first country to invest hybrid capital to the tune of 305 million euro in the World Bank. It is

estimated that this capital will enable the World Bank to provide more than two billion euro in additional loans.

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Our United Nations itself must not cling to the status quo, ladies and gentlemen.

And by that I mean two things:

Firstly, the United Nations must tackle the challenges of the future, just as Secretary-General António Guterres has proposed.

One of the major issues, in my view, is how we can ensure that innovation and technological advances can be used by humanity as a whole.

Artificial intelligence, for example, offers tremendous opportunities. And, at the same time, it can cement the division of the world if only a few benefit from it, if algorithms only take into account part of the reality, if access is limited to richer countries.

That is why Germany is actively fostering the exchange on the Global Digital Compact. We should also talk about common rules for the possible use of generative artificial intelligence as a weapon.

Another question that will define our future is how the United Nations itself represents the reality of a multipolar world.

To date, it does not do that sufficiently.

That is most evident in the composition of the Security Council.

I am therefore delighted that a growing number of partners – including three of the permanent members – have stated that they want to see progress on reform.

However, one thing is clear. Africa deserves greater representation, as do Asia and Latin America.

Under this premise, we can negotiate a text with various options. No country should obstruct these open-ended negotiations with excessively high demands.

Germany will not do that, either.

Ultimately, it is up to the General Assembly to decide on a reform of the Security Council.

Until then, Germany would like to shoulder responsibility as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. And I ask you to support our candidacy for 2027/28.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When I speak these days and before this Assembly of peace, then my thoughts are with those for whom peace is a distant dream.

My thoughts are with the Sudanese, who have become victims of a brutal power struggle between two warlords.

With the men and women in eastern Congo and in so many other places.

And, of course, with the Ukrainians, who are fighting for their lives and their freedom, for independence and their country's territorial integrity in order to safeguard those very principles to which we all committed ourselves in the UN Charter.

But Russia's war of aggression has caused immense suffering not only in Ukraine. People around the world are suffering as a result of inflation, growing debts, the scarcity of fertilisers, hunger and increasing poverty.

Precisely because this war is having unbearable consequences around the world, it is right and proper that the world is involved in the quest for peace.

At the same time we should beware of phoney solutions which represent “peace” in name only.

For peace without freedom is called oppression.

Peace without justice is called dictatorship.

Moscow, too, must finally understand that.

For let us not forget that Russia is responsible for this war. And it is Russia’s President who can end it at any time with one single order.

But for him to do that, he has to understand that we – the states of the United Nations – are serious about our principles.

That in the multipolar world of the 21st century, we do not see a place for revisionism and imperialism.

No one here in New York has expressed this as aptly as our colleague, the Ambassador of Kenya. After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, he said this in the Security Council:

[In English in the original text] “Rather than form nations that looked ever backward into history with a dangerous nostalgia, we chose to look forward to a greatness none of our many nations and peoples had ever known.”

Fellow delegates,

Germany’s history holds many lessons about the dangers of such nostalgia.

That is why we chose a different path when we joined the United Nations 50 years ago.

The path of peace and reconciliation,
the path of recognising existing borders,

the path of cooperation with all of you in the pursuit of a better, a more equitable world.

It started with a solemn promise that we made 50 years ago. A promise every one of us made upon joining the United Nations, namely "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security."

Let us all do our best to live up to that promise.

Thank you very much!