

Address by Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Dear President of the General Assembly,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting at a critical moment. Before our eyes, political, economic and cultural divisions are deepening. Conflicts, instability and civil unrest are erupting around the globe. Disruption of the world order based on international rules threatens the world we all know and cherish.

The time for decisive action is now.

We must rise to the challenges and work together to preserve peace, prosperity and stability. To safeguard the rules-based order, democracy and the universality of human rights. To save our home, Planet Earth, from the effects of disastrous climate change. To fight hard against global poverty and inequality.

For sure, this will not be easy. Global trust will have to be restored. Sustainable Development Goals implemented. Meaningful Pact for the Future negotiated and signed.

I stand here to express my great concern about the devastating impact of climate change and to share the Lithuanian experience.

Today, green transformation is no longer a matter of choice. We need decisive actions to keep the goals – and the spirit – of the Paris Agreement alive.

Lithuania is resolutely committed to averting, minimizing and addressing climate change. We aim to achieve a 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and become climate-neutral in 2050.

The central role in our strategy will be played by renewable energy. Our ambition is to turn Lithuania from a net importer of electricity to a self-sufficient green energy producer by 2030. The development of solar energy,

as well as onshore and offshore wind parks, should substantially increase the installed capacity of renewable electricity generation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There can be no sustainable development amidst a war. Wherever we look – be it Europe, Asia, Africa, or the Americas – peace is an all-important condition for humanity to thrive and to create.

An old-style colonial war is back in Europe. Russia's aggression against Ukraine aggravates the global situation across many areas, such as food and energy security, finance, climate, global health, and migration.

Established international norms, and the whole vision of an open and cooperative world order, are currently being held hostage to Russia's imperialist ambitions. The very framework of multilateral cooperation, which sustained peace, stability and prosperity in the post-Cold War era, is being threatened. The integrity of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules-based international system is put at serious risk.

The international community can no longer allow Russia to manipulate and abuse global rules. Its numerous crimes, such as the wholesale destruction of Ukrainian cities and towns, murder of thousands of innocent civilians and displacement of millions, bring disgrace upon the UN Security Council, where Russia still sits as a permanent member with the power of veto.

The international community should put more pressure on Russia to stop deliberate attacks on Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure. An unprecedented ecological catastrophe caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam should not be replicated in new, even more dangerous, forms.

This war of aggression must stop, with an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of troops and military equipment from Ukrainian territory. And what I mean here is ALL territory – within the internationally recognized borders and territorial waters of 1991.

Lithuania strongly endorses President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula. It is a robust foundation for attaining peace, aligned with the universal principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

Meanwhile, Lithuania calls on all United Nations Member States to provide substantial humanitarian, military, economic, and diplomatic assistance to Ukraine.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Working for sustainable peace, we should ensure the accountability of those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. While contemplating the issue of justice, we should also address the actions of the regime in Belarus which participates in this aggressive war by providing military assistance and facilitating the offensive from its territory.

Specifically, we should all support Ukraine's efforts in the International Court of Justice and endorse the Court's provisional measures, ordering Russia to immediately cease its military actions in the territory of Ukraine.

Another institution, the International Criminal Court, plays a crucial role in prosecuting war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

Lithuania supports the ICC arrest warrants for Russia's President and the ombudswoman. These mark a promising step towards accountability for targeting children in military conflict. To bring back the Ukrainian children who were forcibly deported to Russia and Belarus is a necessary next step.

The initiative to persecute sexual crimes perpetrated by Russian forces in Ukraine also deserves our united support. Lithuania commends the unwavering dedication of the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in addressing this critical issue.

What is still lacking is a tribunal specifically designed to prosecute the very crime of aggression committed by Russia's top political and military leadership.

Lithuania calls for the establishment of such an international tribunal, supported by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. Failure to

do so would mean further damage to the credibility of the entire global justice system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the very beginning, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has been a truly global issue. It affects global food security as well as nuclear safety.

Russia is currently holding the world hostage, blocking Ukrainian grain exports, looting occupied Ukrainian territories, and devastating local agricultural infrastructure.

Unilateral actions, such as Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, endangering at least 82 countries and 350 million people currently on the food insecurity frontline, should be universally condemned. But the solution is NOT to lift sanctions on Russia.

To reinforce vulnerable economies, we must search for geopolitical solutions. One possibility could be the opening of more Solidarity Lanes by offering alternative transportation for Ukrainian food products, for example, through the trusted Baltic Sea ports. Local food production and fertilizer availability in vulnerable regions could also be boosted by international support.

Looking into the issue of nuclear safety, Lithuania expects more active cooperation by Russia in protecting the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant according to the recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is also with greatest concern that we follow recent decisions by Russia on arms control.

Last year, Russia broke the emerging consensus in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review conference. Later, Belarus announced agreement to deploy Russia's nuclear weapons on its territory, which goes against the international commitments under the same Treaty.

Finally, Russia officially announced its withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It means Russia is preparing for more war – not to settle for peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The only way for us to turn back the tide of destabilization that threatens us all is to join forces in building a better world. We need a collective effort to rebuild trust among nations. Violations of international law and universal human rights cannot be normalized.

Neither justice nor peace is free. We must stand for peace. We must stand for justice.

Accountability and the rules-based international order will be vital in forging a world that is fair and secure. It is our responsibility for the future generations.

Today, I expect this Assembly to remain steadfast and condemn all kinds of aggression which clearly violate the Charter of the United Nations.

However, to condemn is not enough. Decisive action must be taken.

The politics of fear and coercion on a global scale must be stopped once and for all. We must resolutely defend the equality of sovereign nations, both large and small. We must remain true to the Charter's fundamental principles, including respect for international law and arms control.

These principles must guide our path forward. Each and every nation is important. We must stand together against the power of fear. Together we can change the world!

Thank you.