

**Honorable President of the General Assembly,
Honorable Heads of State and Government,
Honorable Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a particular honor and pleasure to speak on behalf of the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia here in the heart of the United Nations, within the General Debate of the General Assembly.

At the outset, allow me to wish every success to H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the 78th United Nations General Assembly.

Every year at this time, the eyes of the world turn towards the largest gathering during which political leaders of nations elaborate on their visions for the future. This year the focus on all of us is perhaps greater than ever before, the reason for this being that the least common denominator of the emotional state of humanity today is - fear. Fear of wars, famine and poverty, environmental disasters; fear for the future of our next of kin. It is an undeniable fact that international order has been shaken to its core at various points of the world.

The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continues with an unabated ferocity, which is in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the principles of international law, and this in continuity. This would be the biggest security crisis after the Second World War, with global consequences that are felt, more or less, on all continents. With each passing day, the suffering of Ukrainian people becomes greater; material goods are destroyed and the danger of escalation becomes imminent.

We most strongly condemn the aggression against Ukraine, as was done by a great number of members of our Organization. We stand for unconditional withdrawal of Russian occupator troops and respect for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The Charter of this World Assembly is crystal clear in this sense - all open issues anywhere in the world must be resolved by peaceful means, with negotiations and dialogue and by renouncing the use of force.

The war in Ukraine is the most blatant, but unfortunately, not the only example of a threat against world peace and security. The planetary security architecture, the basis of which is this Organization, is especially shaken when a state, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, illegally attacks another Member State of that same Organization.

It was not by accident that recently the Secretary General warned that the risk of a nuclear disaster is today at the highest level since the end of the Cold War. This alert coming from the highest level of the Organization should be a wake up call for all reasonable political leaders, for a global mobilization to preserve peace - undoubtedly, the biggest value of humanity.

It is high time to silence the drums of war, to respect the Charter of the United Nations, led by independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states as the fundamental principles and the main *raison d'être* of the world organization.

Distinguished colleagues,

Peace is the fundament of everything - however, the world is facing challenges of various formats and their tackling requires not only peace among states, but also mutual trust and cooperation. It is certain that trust, built throughout decades and mostly in this

building, has been seriously undermined and we will need time, efforts and above all, political will to reinstate it.

Independently of all differences existing among us - whether they be political, economic or cultural - we must act together in the interest of peace, stability and prosperity of current and future generations. The alternatives to dialogue among nations are frightening, and each postponing will again lead us to the same threat, with the difference that the price to be paid then will be much higher.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The war in Ukraine creates a state of general unpredictability and a constant loop of crises, especially in food and energy supply. The shortage of food supplies endangers the poorest and threatens to provoke humanitarian disasters with unprecedented magnitude in many parts of the world.

We give our full support to the efforts of the Secretary General to restore the agreement for export of Ukrainian grain via the Black Sea, because we find it completely unacceptable to use food and energy as weapons for the realisation of military or political objectives.

In parallel with the efforts for peaceful resolution of conflicts, it is necessary to double the efforts for realization of the Millennium Development Goals 2030. The Summit held a few days ago in the framework of this year's General Debate is a step in the right direction, but it is crucial to turn words into actions.

It is beyond understanding that, in the third decade of the twenty-first century, millions of people are left without fulfilment of elementary human needs. What will our authority as political leaders be, when we discuss democracy, human rights and prosperity, while at the same time, millions of people do not have access to drinking water, food or education?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Global solidarity is not a novelty idea or a concept that needs special elaboration. I myself come from Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia which, exactly sixty years ago, was struck by a devastating earthquake. Skopje rose from the ashes, among other things, thanks to global solidarity.

We learned the hard way how precious a hand extended in times of trouble is. The devastating earthquake in Turkey in February of this year brought us back again to the very essence of humanism : vulnerability when faced with natural disasters, but also the primordial need of man to help the weak and the suffering.

None of us know what tomorrow will bring, but we do know that we will face all challenges far more efficiently if we use the mechanisms we have already built. Along these lines, it is necessary to address the issue of climate change far more resolutely. Those changes do not acknowledge or recognize borders - therefore, an efficient response absolutely requires - joint action.

The region of Southeast Europe where I come from is facing phenomena unbeknownst so far: the so-called supercell storms verging on tornadoes, which are a direct consequence of climate change. Global warming, as the Secretary General said, is now becoming global boiling. There is no doubt whatsoever that the world finds itself before an existential challenge, and the only successful counter-response is possible only if we rally around a single, global platform.

The necessary instruments, such as the Climate Solidarity Pact, whereby developed economies provide financial and technical support to those in development have already been set: an equitable transition towards a green economy is possible, but only through their adequate implementation. According to the Climate Action Acceleration Agenda, developed countries should not only achieve a level of zero net emissions by 2040, but also keep their promises to the countries in development, by doubling the resources for adaptation and funding of the Green Climate Fund.

Excellencies,

The greatest threats of the present: geo-political turbulences, wars, terrorism, climate change of massive migration waves, happen at a time when international organizations and the entire multilateral system are going through an identity or a functionality crisis, and most often, through both. The only real answer can be renewed and reinforced multilateralism that will value the individual needs of every country, but will also offer a clear vision of the big picture, of the things relating us, of the greater good.

There is no better place for that joint endeavor than the United Nations.

An urgent need of humanity today is to bring back predictability, early warning and prevention in international relations. It is certain that a prerequisite to this are internal reforms of the United Nations system, with respect to the principle of greater representation and inclusiveness in order to reflect the reality of the world today.

Moreover, it is necessary to establish mechanisms for better functionality while also reducing the options for paralysing the work of the Organization. In this context, we do provide our full support to the Ministerial meeting convened in preparation for the Summit of the Future to be held in 2024.

Of course, the need remains to solve old problems while addressing new challenges, although some of them, like fake news and cyber threats have already become part of our lives. Some others, although newly dated, such as artificial intelligence, are already causing major changes in our lives.

There should be no doubt in our minds that without a joint pact for the future, no country or a group of countries will have the potential to offer or implement responses to these challenges alone.

Excellencies, Dear Friends,

Since day one of our independence, more than thirty years ago, my country has been manifesting, in the best possible way, its attachment to the principles of peace, profound regional cooperation and resolution of open issues by means of dialogue. In 1991, we started a process of internal democratic maturation, through affirmation of the rights of ethnic communities to the highest degree possible and fostering a culture of dialogue when resolving internal issues, but also in the relations with our neighbors.

We accepted compromise as a way of solving problems - not as an expression of weakness, but on the contrary, as an expression of self-confidence in our ability to protect our own interests without damaging the interests of others.

Respecting the principles that we believe in, we continue to provide an active contribution to peace, stability, democratic values, sustainable development and economic prosperity. This year, we hold the chairmanship of the OSCE, the largest regional security organization, in a time filled with unprecedented challenges - even in

such conditions, we strive to maintain the relevance of the Organization, led by the fundamental principles of the UN charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

We remain amongst the biggest promoters of regional cooperation in Southeast Europe, working at the same time on the fulfillment of the criteria for membership in the European Union, not later than 2030. There is no dilemma in our mind that strengthening the democratic institutions, in continuity and with a guaranteed equity of all citizens is the only possible way to a greater cohesion in a multiethnic society.

Distinguished colleagues,

At the beginning, I mentioned that fear of the future is perhaps the predominant feeling today. However, this must not be accepted as normal. Before us, the political leaders gathered here today, there is a responsibility to substitute that feeling of fear with one of hope and faith in a more just world.

A precondition to this is to achieve, as soon as possible, a renewed agreement for respecting the fundamental values and humanistic ideals for which this very organization was established seventy - eight years ago.

Thank you for your attention.