



UN General Assembly 78th Session:
General Debate

23 September 2023

Statement by:
H.E. Ms. Anne Beathe Tvinnereim
Minister of International Development

President, Secretary-General, Excellencies,

The United Nations was founded on a simple, yet paradigmatic vision:

A world governed by law.

A world coming together to promote social progress, better standards of life.

A world respecting the dignity and worth of every human being.

A world where problems are solved through international cooperation.

The generation articulating this vision had just endured the Second World War.

They had, in the words of the UN Charter, experienced ‘untold sorrow’ – death and destruction on an unprecedented scale.

As we consider the multitude of challenges facing our generation, we can find inspiration in the visionary perspectives that led to the establishment of this organisation:

The pursuit of a better future, and the commitment to seek it together.

President,

Norway is a staunch supporter of the United Nations. The principles of the Charter are of fundamental importance to us.

They are the basis of our security.

They are a critical foundation for our prosperity.

They guide our approach to international problem-solving.

And for a small country like ours, there is no viable alternative;

Respect for international law is a core national interest for Norway.

President,

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is therefore of great concern to us.

Let me use this opportunity to explain why.

Russia is our neighbour.

It is responsible for a blatant breach of the UN Charter.

It has violated fundamental principles of international law.

It has created a grave international crisis.

A permanent member of the UN Security Council seeking to deny another UN member state's right to exist.

Launching an unprovoked and illegal war.

Conducting that war in the most brutal manner, with complete disregard for human life and the rules of war.

And occupying the largest nuclear power plant in Europe – thereby risking a grave nuclear incident.

Norway has spoken out against this war. We have provided extensive civilian, military and humanitarian support to Ukraine – and will do so for as long as it takes.

We are actively supporting President Zelensky's Peace Formula, in the understanding that the pursuit of peace is important, but on terms defined by Ukraine – the victim of illegal aggression.

At the same time, we are also maintaining our strong engagement at the global level. We are assisting countries that are affected by the repercussions of the war. And we will continue to do so.

President,

The war taking place on the European continent is a watershed moment – for Norway and for the rest of the world.

It is an attack on the basic principles of the UN Charter.

With global ramifications.

Food insecurity has increased dramatically.

Energy supplies are under pressure.

Inflation has soared.

Russia's war against Ukraine has exacerbated a global, negative economic spiral.

It is jeopardising the 2030 Agenda, while also diverting attention from other pressing issues.

This is deeply concerning.

This decade is of critical importance to humanity, our environment, and our planet.

We simply cannot fail to achieve the SDGs and the Paris Agreement targets. We cannot afford to let the window of opportunity close. We must act now.

Norway is doing its part.

- We have enhanced our climate target and will cut emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.
- We are increasing carbon taxes.
- We are expanding the uptake of zero emission technologies in the transport sector.
- We are investing heavily in offshore wind, carbon capture and storage and a green industrial future.
- We are participating actively in the climate negotiations, and will go to COP28 in Dubai with an aim to keep the 1.5 degree target alive.

In Glasgow, I announced that we would double our climate finance by 2026. I am pleased to report that we have already achieved this.

Over the last 15 years Norway has provided more than 5 billion dollars in support to tropical forest countries.

We will continue to provide a high level of funding under this initiative through 2030.

On Thursday this week my Prime Minister co-chaired a meeting of the Global Leadership Council for the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP).

Together with philanthropists, multilateral development banks and other partners we will work to unlock renewable energy access in emerging economies.

Creating an energy system for the future.

Reducing emissions, facilitating job creation, and not least, improving energy access for the 3.6 billion people currently living in energy poverty.

Through GEAPP, but also Norway's Climate Investment Fund, we have mobilised significant investments.

And in 2024 we will launch a dedicated guarantee instrument for developing countries to encourage further private investments in renewable energy.

President,

Food security is part and parcel of the climate agenda, and a defining challenge of our time. Achieving food security is essential to achieving the SDGs.

Too many people lack access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

In response Norway has geared up its efforts to combat food insecurity.

By providing 500 million dollars this year for developing countries to offset the global ramifications of the war in Ukraine.

And by placing food security at the heart of our development policy.

We are investing in small-scale producers.

We have increased our efforts to combat food loss and waste.

These are important steps, not just because they will improve food security, but because we must transform the food system if we are to reach our climate goals.

President,

Sustainable use of the oceans is part of the Norwegian DNA.

Norway's Prime Minister is co-chair of the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. I am pleased to report that the panel's 18 member states will develop Sustainable Ocean Plans by the UN Ocean Conference in 2025.

I am also encouraged that so far more than 75 states, with Norway as one of them, has signed the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).

This is an important step towards improving ocean governance and cooperation.

It shows that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea can adapt to meet evolving challenges.

And it demonstrates the continuing strength and promise of multilateralism, despite geopolitical tensions.

President,

The COVID-19 pandemic had devastating consequences for people, communities, health systems and economies across the world.

It was a global wake-up call. We must prepare better for the next pandemic.

Safeguarding global public health requires close, broad-based international collaboration. It requires financing as well as investments in universal health coverage.

We support the development of a pandemic accord at the WHO, and call for rapid agreement on an interim mechanism on medical countermeasures.

President,

We are all familiar with the dividends of peace, yet – as a community – we have long underestimated the value of conflict prevention.

I would therefore like to thank the Secretary General for setting out his “New Agenda for Peace”.

We agree wholeheartedly with the emphasis on preventive diplomacy.

In a fractured world, with rising geopolitical tensions, it is critical that we seek common ground where we can find it.

That we invest in dialogue.

That we strive to understand each other, however deep disagreements may seem.

Dialogue is essential.

Without dialogue, we have fewer opportunities to influence, to encourage or to simply explore political solutions in situations of conflict.

Dialogue is at the heart of diplomacy.

It is a basic tool for solving problems, and for realising the vision on which the United Nations is built.

We welcome renewed regional dialogue in the Middle East. Signs of de-escalation and intensified diplomatic activity among the countries in the region is very welcome.

We remain committed to seeking peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, despite concerning developments, and – in this 30th anniversary of the Oslo Accords – encourage much greater efforts towards creating a viable Palestinian state.

As guarantor in Colombia, we support the peace agreement with FARC and the ongoing negotiations between the Government and the ELN.

We are maintaining our engagement in the Horn of Africa, by providing substantial humanitarian support and a standing offer to assist parties looking for political solutions.

In Afghanistan we engage the de facto authorities in Kabul. If this can help to address the dire humanitarian situation, especially for women and girls, who are being deprived of education and a future, it is worth the attempt.

President,

Human rights are at the core of this organisation.

They articulate a binding agenda for fulfilling human potential.

They are integral to the Sustainable Development Goals.

They are instrumental in realising almost any policy objective.

- Societies prosper when women and girls participate on an equal footing, and are free to exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Good solutions are identified where ideas can be articulated freely.
- Sustainable economic growth requires the rule of law.

The point is: the case for human rights is solid, whether approached from values, from the law, or more instrumentally.

We should therefore all be concerned that standards are slipping in many places.

This has to stop.

As governments, human potential is our most precious resource. We cannot afford to waste it.

And let me say to those who are taking risks and are standing up for human rights and democracy.

To civil society, to lawyers, to journalists – to human rights defenders.

You are making the world a better place.

You have our support.

President,

I began by referencing the establishment of this organisation.

A critical moment in world history, it was the beginning of an era of institutionalised international cooperation.

Of rights and responsibilities.

Of a shared agenda to improve the human condition.

That agenda is as important as ever, and it is our task – as member states – to find ways to make progress.

We listen attentively to proposals for renewal.

For innovation.

For creativity.

The UN General Assembly is the world's most important forum for dialogue and discussion.

We are thankful that it exists.

So let's get to work.

Finding common ground.

Solving problems across borders.

Revitalising the 2030 Agenda.

Honouring our international obligations and commitments.

Thank you.