

PGA SPEECH ON THE CLOSING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

*Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

One week ago, I stood before you, your Heads of State and Government, your Ministers and representatives, and I spoke of the need to ‘unite the nations’.

I made a call to action for all States to find within themselves the will to act together, in solidarity.

I am encouraged by the progress I have seen over this past week.

136 Heads of State and Government, as well as **40** Ministers, spoke at this rostrum, a record in recent times. Hundreds of voices of civil society, and public and private stakeholders, were heard at Headquarters.

There were only **20 women** leaders who spoke during the General Debate, down from 23 last year.

During High-Level Week, I had the privilege of reconvening the **Platform of Women Leaders** – following in the footsteps of my predecessors.

I spoke to many leaders of the need to recognize that women’s voices, aspirations, and rights matter at **every** level, from the grassroots to the global stage.

And it begins with investing in education, particularly for girls.

Let us be resolute in our commitment to inclusivity and ensure that no woman, no man – and indeed, **no one** – is ever left behind.

(BRIEF PAUSE)

Excellencies,

The General Assembly held seven high-level meetings, and we delivered no less than four major political declarations, covering universal healthcare; work to end tuberculosis; pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response; and the need to urgently, ambitiously scale up sustainable development progress.

This last-mentioned declaration – a result of the **SDG Summit** – is a particularly remarkable win. It is recognition of the promise we made in 2015 to drive sustainable development, as well as a commitment to push harder and close the gaps.

This speaks to the continued relevance of the General Assembly and the commitment by the United Nations to deliver **peace, prosperity, progress, and sustainability** to the peoples of our world.

These developments are a welcome reminder that the United Nations remains focused on the collective challenges of our time.

But declarations in and of themselves are not enough.

We need to maintain this momentum and to build on it with tangible, concrete actions.

On this point, I commend the Member States for their active involvement in the **High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development**, as well as discussions around the urgent need for reform of the international financial architecture.

We cannot rest until there is accessibility, equity, and justice in development finance.

This is the key to accelerating progress on the SDGs.

(PAUSE)

Excellencies,

Of the topics raised during the High-Level Week, few were as frequent, consistent, or as charged as that of **the Ukraine war**.

The international community is clear that political independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity must be respected, and violence must end.

These are calls grounded in the UN Charter.

That this war is being perpetrated by a permanent member of the Security Council is unconscionable; that it has rekindled decades-old fears of the use of nuclear weapons is unthinkable.

As discussed today, we must redouble efforts to entirely and absolutely end nuclear proliferation and promote full and total denuclearization.

Calls to also give undivided attention to other raging conflicts across the globe – from **Africa** to the **Middle East**, as well as the deteriorating situation in **Haiti** – were also echoed loud and clear

As President of the General Assembly – **representing the best interests of all Member States of the United Nations** – I recommit to do my part to shine a spotlight on the urgent need to resolve these situations of deep concern.

In that regard, as President of the General Assembly, I will make myself available if any nation or leader desires my assistance in facilitating a peace and friendship dialogue between any nations or groups in conflict. Be assured that I am at your service.

(PAUSE)

Excellencies,

One call resonated across the General Assembly Hall this week: our planet is under siege, with the intensifying effects of climate change becoming increasingly evident.

We see this in the extreme weather events, rising sea levels, pollution and biodiversity loss that are becoming more prevalent – and more destructive by the day.

Embracing climate action means safeguarding the Earth's natural resources, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring equitable access to clean air and water for all.

It means looking closely at our own carbon footprints.
It means assisting vulnerable communities in building resilience.

It means moving **Beyond GDP** to a metric that captures a country's true vulnerability to shocks.

Tackling these questions is a moral imperative, a scientific imperative, and a social imperative.

I urge the Member States to approach the COP28 climate conference in the spirit of **unity** and **solidarity**, and deliver a transformative, bold plan of action.

And I welcome the recent summit of Pacific Island leaders and President Biden, which builds on recent High-level events I co-hosted on climate mobility and sea-level rise.

The United Nations must, as a matter of principle and of responsibility, safeguard the inalienability of the affected countries' sovereignty and statehood amidst the climate crisis. This challenge cannot rest solely on the shoulders of frontline communities.

(BRIEF PAUSE)

Excellencies,

Whether on climate or conflict, poverty or peace, justice or strong institutions, these are not just global calls, they are existential calls.

Calls measured in lives lost, homes destroyed, rights violated, inequalities persisted, and accesses denied.

All these challenges demand that we reach further; that we engage fully in preparations of the **Summit of the Future** and define the future of international cooperation amid multidimensional risks.

That we refocus our energies towards creating a world that grows sustainably, for the people **and** planet, and that gives **every** child an equal chance at success.

We hear so often that the clock is ticking.

We have it within us **today** to heal our divisions, find integrated solutions that reflect our universal values and commitments, and usher in a brighter tomorrow.

I am confident that we can – together, as one United Nations.

As we come to the end of this High-Level Week and the General Debate, let us reach out further.

I thank you.