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**ADDRESS TO THE 78th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**BY H.E. MR. RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE**

(19 SEPTEMBER 2023 – NEW YORK)

Esteemed President,

Honourable Heads of State and Government,

Esteemed Secretary General,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of myself, my country and my nation, I greet you with my most heartfelt feelings and respect.

I would like to congratulate Mr. KÖRÖSİ who has successfully completed his term as the President of the 77th General Assembly of the United Nations and wish every success to Mr. FRANCIS who took over this duty.

I hope that the 78th General Assembly, which convenes with a focus on the themes of trust and solidarity, will be beneficial to all humanity.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to draw a more optimistic picture of the future of our world, in comparison with the assessments we made here last year.

The snapshot before us reveals that we are facing more and more complex and dangerous challenges on a global scale.

There are many conflicts, wars, humanitarian crises, political strife and social tensions occurring in the south, north, east and west of my own country.

It becomes more and more difficult to deal with these ever-growing challenges compounded with global economic problems.

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The war on the eastern borders of Europe, in addition to the humanitarian tragedy which it triggered, has created serious problems in all areas, from economy to security, from energy to food security.

Terrorism, which has been turned into a tool for proxy wars in Syria, North Africa and the Sahel region, is causing irreparable damage to the international security climate, whose fragility is increasing rapidly.

The activity fields of terrorist organizations which grow by exploiting the ambitions of global powers, are spreading like an epidemic over wide geographies, taking also advantage of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions as well as technological developments.

The signs of xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia turning into a new crisis have reached alarming proportions in the last year.

No matter in which corner of the world we live, climate change and related natural disasters have now become a reality in the daily lives of all of us.

On the morning of February 6, 2023, Türkiye was struck, in the words of the Secretary General, with "one of the biggest natural disasters of the century", both in terms of its magnitude and the area it affected.

It is impossible for us to forget the sincerity of the prompt response given by the international community, including the United Nations, to our call for help, the devoted efforts which were displayed, and the generous support provided to our country.

The friendship extended to our country on this dark day, when more than 50 thousand people lost their lives, 850 thousand buildings were destroyed, and cities with millions of people were almost levelled to the ground, is an important source of consolation for us.

I thank on behalf of my country and my nation all our friends who heeded our call for help from more than 100 countries.

We continue our intensive efforts in order to heal the wounds of the earthquake and rebuild our cities as soon as possible.

A few days ago, Libya, with which we have strong historical ties, suffered heavy destruction and loss of life caused by storms and floods.

Following the disaster, Türkiye took immediate action to help Libya, where 10 thousand people lost their lives and thousands still remain unaccounted for.

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As a first step, with three ships and three planes, we provided aid to Libya consisting of hundreds of vehicles, thousands of tons of food, shelter and sanitary supplies, alongside 567 personnel.

Our non-governmental organizations are also participating in the activities in the region with their own means.

As a country which stands by the victims and the oppressed anywhere in the world, we have not left, and will not leave our Libyan brothers and sisters alone.

I am confident that friendly and brotherly countries will also mobilise in order to help Libyan people.

I extend my wishes of recovery to our Moroccan brothers who were struck by a strong earthquake like our country.

Distinguished delegates...

We are pleased to see that this year's theme for the General Assembly fully coincides with Türkiye's goals.

Our vision of the "Century of Türkiye", which we have started to bring to life on the 100th anniversary of our Republic, is the most concrete example of these coinciding goals.

Our call for the establishment of an international system,

which eliminates global injustices...

which addresses economic inequalities...

which generates peace, security, stability and prosperity...

which is efficient, inclusive and which embraces humanity...

which is, in sum, for the benefit of all humanity, reverberates more and more.

We agree with Secretary General GUTERRES' recent assessment that "the institutions established after the Second World War do not reflect today's world".

This assessment echoes our motto, "THE WORLD IS BIGGER THAN FIVE".

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The Security Council is no longer the guarantor of international security and has become a battleground where the political strategies of five countries clash.

We consider the recent events in Cyprus as another example of this hollow institutional structure which does not inspire justice and confidence.

As a country which has pioneered numerous initiatives to strengthen peace and stability, we attach importance to Secretary General GUTERRES' call for the establishment of a "New Agenda for Peace".

With this understanding, we have been striving to keep both our Russian and Ukrainian friends at the table since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, with the motto "there are no winners in war and no losers in peace".

We will continue to increase our efforts to end the war through diplomacy and dialogue, on the basis of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

Through the Black Sea Initiative, which we launched together with the United Nations, we prevented the threat of a global hunger crisis by ensuring the shipment of 33 million tons of grain products to world markets.

The Initiative has been extended three times thanks to our personal efforts.

However, the impasse regarding the Initiative as of 17 July has left the world with a new crisis.

We pursue our contacts to maintain this humanitarian bridge which reaches out to areas where the threat of global hunger persists.

We attach importance to the plan that envisages the transfer of 1 million ton of grain to African countries.

Faced with conflicts and disputes around us, our aim is to make the greatest possible contributions to world peace and prosperity.

The humanitarian tragedy in Syria, now in its 13th year, is making living conditions more and more difficult for everyone in the region, regardless of origin and faith.

We are the only country to have displayed a principled, constructive and fair attitude vis-à-vis the developments which are threatening Syria's political unity, as well as its social integrity and economic structure.

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It is becoming increasingly important to end the crisis in the south of our country through a comprehensive, permanent and sustainable solution, which will meet the legitimate expectations of Syrian people.

The devastating impact of the February 6 earthquakes, which affected 14 million people in our country, also took its toll on Syria.

The already dire humanitarian situation, particularly in northwest Syria, has worsened.

It is an unfortunate development that the United Nations cross-border humanitarian assistance in the region has been interrupted at such a time.

Türkiye will certainly not abandon more than 4 million people in northern Syria, who are struggling to survive in difficult conditions, to their fate.

As the construction of settlements beyond our borders, which we are pioneering, are completed, we will continue to encourage the return of refugees to these places.

However, the biggest threat to Syria's territorial integrity and political unity is the overt support given to terrorist organizations under the direction of the powers which harbour designs on this country.

The Syrian people, overwhelmed by the PKK-PYD terrorist organization on the one hand, and the radical groups organized on the basis of sectarian divisions on the other, have reached the point of revolt.

Indeed, as a result, various consequences began to emerge recently.

Iraq, our other neighbour, is also displaying genuine efforts to overcome the internal and external challenges it faces.

We act with an understanding geared at strengthening Iraq's political unity, territorial integrity and reconstruction efforts, and which does not discriminate between the constituent elements of that country.

With the Development Road project that we will implement as the countries of the region, we will further strengthen regional integration.

The tricks of those who refer to DAESH as a pretext every time they are in trouble in the region, have now been exposed.

As the leader of the country who has given the biggest struggle against DAESH in deed, inflicted the greatest losses on this organization, and who knows very well the overt and background facts of the problem, I would like to speak openly:

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We are fed up with the hypocrisy of those who use DAESH and similar organizations as a cover for their own political and economic interests, first and foremost in Syria and Iraq, but also in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel.

DAESH is not the only threat in these regions.

The real threat consists of the terrorist organizations, paramilitary groups, mercenaries and some local elements working for the highest bidder which are nurtured and strengthened to be used as tools of proxy wars.

The countries which continue to work with terrorist organizations despite this reality, purely for their own political and economic interests, have no right to complain about terrorism and related issues.

In such a world, no one is safe, whether they live right next to a conflict zone or far away on a land surrounded by oceans.

That is why we argue that we must rapidly restructure the institutions responsible for ensuring security, peace and prosperity in the world, under the leadership of the United Nations.

We must build a global governance architecture which has the capacity to represent people of all origins, faiths and cultures in the world, from every geography and demographics.

In conclusion, we wholeheartedly say once again:

“THE WORLD IS BIGGER THAN FIVE”, “A FAIRER WORLD IS POSSIBLE”.

Distinguished delegates...

Now, I would like to briefly share with you my country's approach with regard to various hotspots, starting with our own region.

The transformation of the Eastern Mediterranean into a region where peace, prosperity and stability reign will only be possible if the rights of all parties are respected.

We do not infringe upon anyone's rights; nor do we allow, or will allow anyone to ignore our rights.

It is now the 60th anniversary of the emergence of the Cyprus issue.

The Turkish Cypriot side has always made sincere efforts for a just, lasting and sustainable settlement of the Cyprus issue.

-Courtesy Translation-

It is a fact acknowledged by everyone that such a settlement can no longer be reached on the basis of a federation model.

We invite the international community to accept this fact, to recognize the independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and to establish diplomatic, political and economic ties with this country.

We also expect the United Nations Peacekeeping Force on the Island to meticulously observe the impartiality it is obliged to demonstrate.

We do not want this Force, whose reputation has already been tarnished, to experience yet another loss of credibility in Cyprus.

We are deeply saddened by the situation in Yemen, with which we share deep-rooted historical ties and heartfelt bonds.

It is our biggest wish that this problem be solved as soon as possible within the national unity and territorial integrity of Yemen.

With Egypt, we have entered a period in which we have started to develop our relations in all fields which were stagnant for a while.

We are determined to advance our cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit in this new period.

Permanent peace in the Middle East is only possible through a lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

We will continue to support the Palestinian people and State in their struggle for their legitimate rights on the basis of international law.

To reiterate once again, without the creation of an independent and contiguous Palestinian State, based on 1967 borders, it is also difficult for Israel to find the peace and security it seeks.

In this context, we will pursue our efforts, so that the historic status of Jerusalem, especially Al-Haram Al-Sharif is respected.

We have strong political, economic and humanitarian ties with the Balkans, which are rooted in history.

We are displaying intensive efforts at bilateral, regional and international platforms to ensure stability, and to resolve conflicts through dialogue, in this critical region of Europe.

We actively support the processes aimed at normalizing the recently strained relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

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The increasingly complex nature of regional and global challenges indicates that there is a need, now more than ever, to advance Türkiye-European Union relations on a healthy basis.

We expect the European Union to swiftly start fulfilling its long-neglected obligations towards our country.

Especially the ambivalent attitudes towards Türkiye have to come to an end.

Latin America and the Caribbean is another region where we mobilize all the elements of our humanitarian foreign policy, and where our ties of friendship are strengthening day by day.

In the coming period, we aim at transforming these relations into a Türkiye-Latin America and the Caribbean Partnership Policy.

On the 60th anniversary of its establishment, the African Union remains a monumental symbol of the continent taking its destiny into its own hands and standing up.

This process, which started with the will to find "African solutions to African problems", has turned into one of the most important development projects in the world.

To accompany Africa on this journey, we have crowned our ties of friendship with the continent with a strategic partnership.

We welcomed the G20 membership of the African Union, which we also strongly supported.

However, it is a fact that the Sahel region faces serious political, economic, social and security challenges.

We hope that Niger, which has been going through troubled times recently, reaches a constitutional order and a democratic governance as soon as possible.

Any military intervention in Niger risks plunging this country and the entire region into deeper instability.

Our Asia Anew Initiative has become a symbol of our will to further advance our relations with Asia, our ancestral homeland, on the basis of mutual benefit and common priorities.

There is an historic opportunity before us to build peace, tranquillity and cooperation in the South Caucasus.

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To seize this opportunity, we have launched a process with Armenia, aiming at good neighbourly relations and full normalization.

From the very outset, we have supported the negotiation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

However, we see that Armenia has not taken sufficient advantage of this historic opportunity.

We expect Armenia to fulfill its promises, first and foremost with regard to the opening of the Zangezur corridor.

As everybody now accepts, Karabakh is Azerbaijani territory.

The imposition of any other status will never be accepted.

Our priority target must be everybody living side by side, in peace, in the territory of Azerbaijan, including Armenians.

We act with the motto "ONE PEOPLE, TWO STATES", and we support the steps taken by Azerbaijan to protect its territorial integrity.

We are strengthening our cooperation with the countries of Central Asia, where the roots of our ancient civilization lie and with which we share the same culture.

We welcome the fact that the Organization of Turkic States is becoming an increasingly effective actor on a regional and global level.

The Afghan people, who have been going through difficult times for half a century, are in serious need of humanitarian aid and support, regardless of political motives.

The transformation of the country's Interim Government into an inclusive administration, in which all segments of society are fairly represented, will pave the way for Afghanistan and will be reciprocated positively at the international level.

Another development which will pave the way for regional serenity, stability and prosperity in South Asia will be the establishment of a just and lasting peace in Kashmir through dialogue and cooperation between India and Pakistan.

Türkiye will continue to support the steps to be taken in this direction.

On every occasion, we underline that we respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China.

-Courtesy Translation-

However, we will continue to express, and keep on the agenda, our sensitivity regarding the protection of the rights and freedoms of Uyghur Turks, with whom we have strong historical and human ties.

We are a country which has extended a helping hand from the very first day to the Rohingya Muslims living in difficult conditions in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Our support to the displaced Rohingyas will continue until their safe, voluntary, dignified and permanent return to their homeland.

Distinguished delegates...

Another crucial global challenge on our agenda is energy security.

Türkiye has covered a long distance towards ensuring its own energy security, thanks to its investments in the field of energy over the last 20 years.

We have intensified our efforts towards preventing energy from being an element of conflict and promoting its use on the basis of common interests.

To this end, we are striving to extend the spirit of cooperation and solidarity in the field of energy in a wide geography, ranging from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Caspian Basin, from the Black Sea to the Balkans.

Also in the field of transport, Türkiye is at a geopolitical position which allows it to support all the projects that will pass through or around it.

Technological innovations should be seen as an opportunity to solve global and regional challenges rather than a means to increase competitiveness.

Unfortunately, we are gradually moving away from the motto "zero hunger by 2030", which is among the most essential United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In fact, we find it difficult to accept that hunger still remains an unsolved problem in the 21st century.

There is no explanation that 735 million people still struggle with hunger at a time when the world has developed and prosperity has increased to such an extent.

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None of us can feel safe, if millions of people from Africa to Asia cannot find a bit of bread, while hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent for touristic space travel.

We call upon all countries to display a strong will for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As one of the most generous countries in the world in terms of development aid, we believe that Türkiye has every right to issue this call.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to limit the climate change-related global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

One of the requirements for this is to provide financial and technological support to the efforts of developing countries.

"Food security" is one of the main areas affected by climate change.

We must develop and implement the right policies and investments for the sustainable use of water and land resources.

We cannot let our children inherit a world polluted by irresponsible consumption, and with depleted natural resources.

In line with this understanding, we have elevated the Zero Waste Movement that we have launched in our country, under the patronage of my Spouse Emine Erdoğan, with a vision of a more liveable and fairer world, to a global dimension through the resolution co-sponsored by 105 countries, adopted at the United Nations.

Yesterday, we signed the "Declaration of Good Will for Global Commitment to Zero Waste" at Turkish House.

We hope that our Zero Waste goals will also contribute significantly to combating climate change and achieving sustainable development efforts.

Hereby, I invite all countries, international institutions and civil society to support the Zero Waste Movement.

Racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia, which spread like a virus especially in developed countries, have reached intolerable levels.

Hate speech, polarization and discrimination against innocent people hurt every conscience in all corners of the world.

Unfortunately, populist politicians in many countries continue to play with fire by encouraging these dangerous trends.

-Courtesy Translation-

The mentality which encourages the heinous attacks against the Holy Quran in Europe by allowing them under the guise of freedom of expression, is in fact darkening its own future.

Türkiye will continue to support initiatives to combat Islamophobia on all platforms, in particular the United Nations, OSCE and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Regardless of their faith, I call upon all our friends who reject attacks on sacred values to support our struggle.

Distinguished Delegates...

It is our common responsibility to tackle all these challenges that I have tried to address in a few sentences.

We can only fulfill this responsibility through effective cooperation, solidarity and embracing human values.

Unfortunately, human values are under very heavy attack lately.

Family is the primary target of these attacks directly threatening human being, human nature, future of humanity and social fabric.

In this regard, embracing the family itself and the institution of family means embracing human being and the future of whole humanity.

I call upon all our friends to display sensitivity to protect the institution of family in the face of increasing global impositions.

Celebrating its centenary this year, the Republic of Türkiye will continue to work towards peace,

prosperity and security for all.

I wish the work of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly to strengthen the spirit of global cooperation and solidarity.

I once again salute you all with affection and respect.

May you all remain in good health.