

Check against delivery!

STATEMENT

BY H.E. MR. RUMEN RADEV, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

79TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

GENERAL DEBATE, 25 SEPTEMBER 2024

MR. PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

MR. SECRETARY-GENERAL,

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate H. E. Mr. *Philemon Yang* for his election as President of the 79th United Nations General Assembly Session. I believe, Mr. President, that under your leadership and through your vision, the international community will move forward on the agenda of strengthening the values of the UN Charter – an effort that the humanity now needs the most.

Our world faces a range of complex problems. From the unprecedented challenge to the global peace and security to the escalating climate crisis and the persistent inequalities. We are confronted with a complex array of issues that require our immediate attention and concerted effort. We need to light a spark that ignites change.

With this in mind, my country approaches the 79th session of the UN General Assembly with renewed determination to promote multilateral and workable solutions achieved through negotiations and based on the UN Charter. We must follow that path for the sake of the survival of humankind and the future generations.

Taking this in consideration, we praise **the Pact of the Future** as a move towards a vital transformation. It becomes increasingly clear that our success hinges on a firm commitment to upholding multilateralism and the respect for international law, which are the cornerstones of our global order. This order that has been forged in UN by you and your predecessors is now under severe threat. Bulgaria has been always committed to the values of multilateralism and will continue to be, using the accumulated experience from the successful Bulgarian presidency of the UN Economic and Social Council and our current mandate as a constructive member of the Human Rights Council.

Excellencies,

In 2015 all UN Member States adopted with unanimity 17 Sustainable Development Goals, providing a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for the whole planet. Nowadays they remain more than ever topical and requiring full mobilization of international efforts. However, we must admit that the **sheer deterioration of the international peace and security environment** in the last years is threatening the fulfillment of our sustainable development agenda, undermining the rules based international order. Restoring and preserving the peace must not be seen but as the ultimate goal of the international community and is a basic prerequisite for the SDG's fulfillment.

It has been two and a half years since the Russian Federation unleashed a full-scale invasion of **Ukraine**. From the very beginning, Bulgaria strongly condemns this war, which led to hundreds of thousands of victims, enormous suffering and destruction. Every single day of this war increases the risk of escalation in intensity and geographical scope, posing a substantial threat to the global peace and security. The side effects of the war are already gravely affecting the economies and social systems of many countries worldwide. That is why the international community should seek ways that lead to de-escalation and dialogue. We should support every diplomatic effort that pursues comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in conformity with the United Nations Charter and International law.

Since the last year UN General Debate, we have witnessed a significant increase in instability across the **Middle East**. The conflict between Israel and Hamas after the Hamas brutal attack on Israel triggered a major deterioration of the security in the region with global projections. We must not forget the consequences which followed – tens of thousands dead and injured civilians in Gaza, the total destruction of vital infrastructure and mass displacement of people. We call for immediate ceasefire, free access of the humanitarian convoys as well as release of all hostages held by Hamas. We are also deeply concerned about the recent development in **Lebanon**, bringing a qualitative new and dangerous dimension in the conflict and increasing the risk of its regional enlargement. We call for refraining from use of force, for wisdom and de-escalation. The spiral of violence and the human suffering must come to an end. The only way to achieve sustainable and lasting peace in this region with its very fragile security landscape is the two-state solution.

Amid the ongoing destabilization around different regions, the collective goal for a world without **nuclear threat** remains more critical than ever. In line with the New Agenda for Peace, Bulgaria will maintain its commitment to uphold, protect and strengthen the multilateral framework for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We remain dedicated to the universalization and full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, recognizing it

as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, which serves as the essential foundation for pursuing nuclear disarmament and plays a crucial role in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

As we address these challenges, prioritizing regional stability becomes vital. My country actively engages in political dialogue with **South-East European countries**, driven by the conviction that the region's security, stability, and prosperity are crucial for broader regional and international resilience. Bulgaria is a strong supporter of the European path of the Western Balkan countries. Our main priorities vis-à-vis the region are fostering good neighborliness, improving connectivity, protection of human rights and combating ethnic discrimination. However, a serious challenge on this path are the new outbursts of incitements of hatred. Fighting and curbing the aggressive nationalistic rhetoric all over the region and concentrating on positive agenda of strengthening multiethnic societies and the rights of the constituent communities, will prevent the evocation of the reminiscences of the troubled past of the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Progress on achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** is the greatest investment for the benefit of the present and future generations. Bulgaria keeps on contributing actively to these common efforts through the steady implementation of the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030 and of sustainable projects for development cooperation with partner countries through supporting projects in education, healthcare, public infrastructure and services, as well as renewable energy solutions.

We face a growing number of places around the globe where worrying dynamics in terms of governance, democracy and human rights emerge. As a present member to the Human Rights Council, we reaffirm our commitment to this noble cause. Bulgaria has never looked the other way, and this speaks up through our domestic policies, our membership in the Human Rights Council, our work as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and Sustainable Development Goals, Vice-President of UNICEF Bureau, member of the Executive Board of UN-Women and through our support for initiatives, that empower the General Assembly and aim at accountability. Our advocacy for meaningful participation of civil society, youth, and women in decision-making processes across the United Nations system and domestically have already yielded results and our Youth Delegate Program inspires more young people to choose the path of active citizens.

Bulgaria advocates for a human rights-based approach to sustainable development and looks forward to the inclusion of all stakeholders at the upcoming World Social Summit.

Excellencies,

We've focused on peace among nations, but it's equally important to reconcile with nature. **Climate change** is a threat multiplier for the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals. We urge enhanced action based on the Global Stocktake, more ambitious climate objectives, including the new finance goal at 29th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 29). Earlier this year Bulgaria hosted the 61st session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which gave impetus to the Panel's 7th assessment cycle, including the production of the Special Report on Climate Change and Cities. Through various parallel events we were able to invigorate the science discussion paying due attention to the Climate Risks in the Black Sea Region as well as to the urban environment, the role of the cities and the need to adapt to a changing climate.

Another challenge, that brings a lot of opportunities as well, is the need for an effective **digital governance**, based on a multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach, aiming for a human-centric digital transformation and a safe and open digital future.

In light of growing challenges to the principles of international law and the rules-based order established by the United Nations Charter, Bulgaria remains committed to strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of the **United Nations Security Council**. We support efforts to enhance transparency and accountability within this body, co-sponsoring the key UN General Assembly resolution on veto use. Bulgaria emphasizes the need for greater effectiveness and prioritizes securing an additional non-permanent seat for the Group of Eastern European States in a reformed Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us reaffirm our commitment to addressing these global challenges with firmness and determination. The actions we take today will define the future, and with courage and unity, we will rise to meet the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you for your attention.