

**Statement by the President of the Republic of Poland  
H. E. Andrzej Duda  
General debate of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the  
United Nations General Assembly  
New York, 24 September 2024**

*Distinguished Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Delegates,*

I would like to express my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Philémon Yang on his election to the honorable position of President of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Poland fully supports your mission, Sir, and wishes you every success. I also extend my thanks to His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis for his effective presidency during the previous, 78th session.

*Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am honored to address the United Nations General Assembly for the tenth time as President of Poland. All the more so because today we are facing huge global challenges that require our solidarity, cooperation and determination. Our presence here reminds us of the mission for the fulfilment of which the United Nations was established after the terrible tragedy of World War II - to prevent further conflicts and ensure world peace.

This year marks the 85th anniversary of the beginning of that massive conflict. The conflict which claimed millions of lives. It was Poland which became its first victim. On September the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, Nazi Germany attacked my Homeland, starting World War II. Two weeks later, on September the 17<sup>th</sup>, the Soviet Union also invaded our country – as the ally of Nazi Germany fulfilling the agreement

between Hitler and Stalin, so called Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. Both aggressors deprived us of our independence.

Poland found itself in the midst of a brutal occupation of two totalitarianisms, becoming a witness and victim of war crimes that forever left a mark on our nation's and world's history.

In my country we know very well what war is, and we know what drama and suffering it brings. That is why Poland has always been a strong advocate of measures which aim at preventing conflicts and ensuring peace in the world. Our history and experiences incline us to constantly recall the need to respect international law and protect the sovereignty of states.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Today we are facing, yet again, an extremely serious threat to global security. For the past two and a half years, we have seen Russia's brutal aggression against neighboring Ukraine. This is a flagrant violation of fundamental norms of international law, such as the prohibition of the use of force in international relations. This unprovoked aggression is destabilizing the region and posing a direct threat to the global order and security. We cannot allow this war to turn into another frozen conflict. This is the most important task for the future.

That is why it is so important today to stop the Russian war in Ukraine. Not only to end the suffering of the people and punish the aggressor, but also to prevent such heinous actions from becoming a model for others to follow. Ukraine's territorial integrity must be restored within its internationally recognized borders.

The logic of conquest and disregard for international law must be stopped. Unless we agree to live in a world where any country can

become a victim of aggression, regardless of its size and geographic location.

Poland is following, with equal concern, the situation in the Middle East, where due to the brutal Hamas attacks of October the 7th, 2023 the conflict has escalated. Israel, like any other state, has the right to self-defense. However, these actions must follow international humanitarian law.

Poland has consistently supported a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict that will guarantee both Palestinians and Israelis the right to live in peace and security, in correct relations with all the neighbors.

As proponents of the principles of equality and the right of nations to self-determination, we believe that the emergence of an independent Palestine will not contradict Israel's interests, whereas the right of Israel to exist cannot be questioned. The two nations are united by space and time, which will remain their common destiny.

The current situation in Yemen is also of deep concern to us. The ongoing humanitarian crisis affects millions of people, and the struggle for control in the country poses a threat to regional security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. The international community must do everything possible to ease the suffering of the Yemeni people and restore stability in their country.

And we all see how the ongoing wars, conflicts and terrorist actions in Africa undermine people's efforts to live and develop in safe and fair conditions. The world must stand with all those affected by insecurity and help them to restore peace through reconciliation and social cohesion.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Peace and security in the world will not be possible to achieve without respect for the law. As President of Poland, I consistently repeat the phrase "Peace through law," always emphasizing the fundamental role of international law in maintaining global order. Our history, our experiences teach us that only adherence to international norms and the protection of the rights of every human being can ensure stability and development.

Poland, as a country of freedom and solidarity, will always demand respect for human rights, regardless of geographic location. Therefore, Poland has decided to apply for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council for 2029-2031. Our candidacy is an expression of our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. We believe that human rights are the foundation of peace and security - their violation leads to conflicts, while their protection results in stability and development.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Poles perfectly understand the perspective of countries that experienced colonialism. Our history - from losing our statehood in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to World War II, to the fall of communism - has taught us how precious freedom, sovereignty and human dignity are. It is a part of our DNA and therefore we stand together with the developing countries in their quest for prosperity, equal treatment and self-reliance.

That is why Poland will not stop supporting African societies, as I had the opportunity to personally assure my friends during this year's visits to Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania, as well as in recent years during my earlier visits to the continent, which is so important for Poland, Europe and the whole world in building a common, safer and more prosperous future. We believe that Africa has the potential to develop its own solutions to its challenges.

However, we recognize that global development in many parts of the world currently is facing serious obstacles. We note with concern that halfway through the deadline set by Agenda 2030 for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, progress made in realization of its ambitions is still insufficient.

During this session, Poland will serve as Vice President of the UN Economic and Social Council. The motto of our mandate in the ECOSOC is "Developing in Solidarity" which summarizes well our vision of progress we need.

With its presidency of the Council of the European Union starting on January the 1st, 2025, Poland will seek to give new impetus to relations with developing partners. There is a need for better cooperation, real partnership, more solidarity!

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Next year we will celebrate the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. Despite its imperfections, the UN remains the foundation of the world order, allowing us to work together for peace, development and human dignity. We believe that the *Summit for the Future* has given us an opportunity to reflect on the

effectiveness of our work and the possibility of improving the UN structures to make them more responsive to contemporary challenges.

Poland is ready to discuss reforms to the Security Council, other key UN bodies as well as international financial institutions. The world is changing, and our system must change as well, in order to better serve the global community.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Our common commitment, enshrined in the UN Charter, sounds: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Poland will remain faithful to this mission, and will support efforts for peace, human rights and sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention and I wish us all fruitful deliberations.