

Mr President, Excellencies,

We are gathered in this Assembly while the world, and this organisation, are facing major and existential challenges.

We are gathered while we are witnessing an unprecedented number of armed conflicts. From Ukraine to Sudan, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gaza.

We are gathered while we are failing at our collective goal of maintaining international peace and security, of saving future generations from the horrors of war and from the disastrous consequences of underdevelopment and climate change.

Mr President,

The UN Charter – the sovereign equality of all states, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the prohibition of the threat or use of force against any state – is being challenged. We must stand by the Charter.

Sweden's strong defence of international law, including the UN Charter, is based on the understanding that both our own security and that of other countries depends on it.

Ensuring respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states – both large and small – is in our common interest. At its core lies the need for a global system that is open, predictable and applies equally to all.

In too many places around the world, including in Sweden's immediate neighbourhood, we are witnessing the consequences of violations of the rules and principles we have all agreed to.

Since the start of **Russia's aggression against Ukraine** in 2014, and with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has brutally invaded the territory of another UN Member State. This Assembly has strongly and repeatedly condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine as a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter.

If a member of the Security Council is allowed to reap the fruits of aggression, the harmful impact will not stop with Ukraine.

Russia's leadership will continue its attempts to impose its rule on neighbouring countries.

The territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states must serve as a basis for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

This was confirmed at the Peace Summit in Switzerland in June, which gathered some 100 delegations from all continents.

Ukraine has made clear from the start that it wants a peaceful settlement based on the UN Charter. As President Zelensky rightfully said in his speech before this assembly yesterday:

“There can be no just peace without Ukraine.” Sweden's steadfast support for Ukraine's efforts to restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity will continue for as long as it takes.

As a direct response to Russia's full-scale invasion, Sweden and Finland chose to join **NATO**. For Sweden's part, this represents a truly historic change, ending 200 years of military non-alignment. This was our decision to take, because it is the right of each state to choose its own security policy path.

Sweden's NATO membership gives us a new, crucial platform to defend the fundamental values of our foreign and security policy. We will apply the same principled approach in NATO as we do in the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. In other words, we will continue to defend international law, democracy, individual freedoms, human rights and gender equality.

Mr President,

Sweden has always defended the universal principles of sovereignty and the right to self-determination. In fact, Sweden has consistently supported countries struggling for liberty, independence and democracy – not least in **Africa**. And we continue to be an engaged partner of African countries.

To take just one example, I am deeply concerned about the situation in **Sudan**. More than 10 million people have been displaced, which roughly corresponds to the entire population of my own country. Safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, an immediate ceasefire and negotiations ensuring a return to civilian rule are urgently required.

Therefore, Sudan is among the countries receiving the most humanitarian support from Sweden this year. Sweden remains a key partner and donor of UN humanitarian assistance, as well as of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Similarly, Sweden supports the ongoing peace efforts by the United Nations in Yemen, where we will continue to work with our partners for a principled and inclusive humanitarian response. The people of Yemen are looking to the international community for hope, for a way out of humanitarian despair. We must answer that call.

Mr President,

We are also faced with the threat of a regional war, the consequences of which no one can predict. My country's longstanding commitment to peace efforts in the **Middle East** dates back to 1948 and the efforts of UN mediator Folke Bernadotte. Today, Sweden is one of the largest core donors to UN agencies and other organisations working to mitigate the immense suffering of the civilian population in **Gaza**. At the same time, Sweden stands up for Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law and demands that the hostages be released.

Israel is being threatened by Iran and its allies simultaneously on several fronts. Hezbollah's repeated attacks since October 8th has led to a dangerous military escalation. Sweden fully supports the efforts by the United States, France and others to reach a diplomatic solution. A ceasefire would provide space for reaching a diplomatic settlement consistent with UN Security Council resolution 1701 as well as the implementation of UN Security Council 2735 on a ceasefire in Gaza.

In the longer term, Sweden – like the EU and the United States – believes in the idea of a two-state solution in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace, freedom and democracy.

Mr President,

In order to address global challenges, we need to ensure that our aid helps to mobilise additional resources, not least private capital.

Development assistance alone is not enough to build long-term wealth and welfare.

It must go hand in hand with democracy, the rule of law, market development, trade, investments and technology transfer. We see that clearly in the countries now leaving poverty behind.

We must also redouble our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Sweden is one of the world's most generous donors of

**development assistance.** Through our development assistance,

we are accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable

Development Goals. To achieve this, strong national ownership in

partner countries and a broader approach to development

cooperation among donors is needed.

We must also step up the fight against corruption so that

economic growth benefits the whole of society, not just the few.



Mr President,

I can only note that women have been underrepresented as speakers this week at the General Debate. Women make up 50 percent of the world's population, yet less than 10 percent of speakers this week are women. There is a lot of room for improvement in this regard.

I agree with the Secretary-General that global opposition to gender equality is on the rise. That is why gender equality is a core value in Sweden's foreign policy.

So let me say this: countries that stand up for **women's and girls' rights** are not only champions of freedom and human rights. They also benefit from broad labour market participation and economic growth.

Respect for **human rights**, providing sexual and reproductive health and rights services, and empowering young girls and women are tangible contributions to advancing gender equality. This is what I want for the future of my daughter and for the daughters of others, too.

Simply put, our free society must stand up against those who wish to exploit our freedom to restrict the freedom of others. Everyone must be able to live safely and freely, regardless of religious beliefs or personal convictions, regardless of skin colour and regardless of whom they love. To my government, this is of such importance that we have begun work on an action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQI people.

**The green and digital transition** offers vast opportunities in terms of new jobs, increased growth and improved livelihoods. Sweden aims to become climate-neutral by 2045, at the latest. As early movers, we want to show that it's possible to reduce emissions while maintaining economic growth. At the same time, global ambitions on climate action and climate financing must be raised. Here as well, we are increasing our support even further and enhancing its effect, advancing innovative financial models to mobilise more private capital.

Mr President,

The many crises in our world today have shed a harsh light on the need for reforms of our multilateral system. We need **global governance structures** that can withstand the challenges of our time and that are resilient against malevolent attempts to undermine the UN Charter.

Action – implementation and follow-up – must be our approach as we look forward and take stock of the **Summit of the Future** and the Pact adopted there.

The **UN Security Council** – the body entrusted with the ultimate responsibility to maintain international peace and security – must be effective, transparent and accountable.

Sweden supports a balanced expansion of the Security Council to better reflect current global political and economic realities. This can be achieved by such means as adding new permanent and non-permanent seats, including for African countries.

Sweden also supports the ongoing reform processes in **multilateral development banks** to increase the effectiveness and scale of financing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the Paris Agreement.

Another area where strengthened global governance is essential is **outer space**. Modern societies are becoming more and more dependent on space services and the space environment is becoming increasingly congested and contested.

Sweden is strongly committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and safeguarding the use of space for peaceful purposes.

This includes all states' full compliance with existing international law, including the Outer Space Treaty. We will continue to promote the development of norms and rules for responsible behaviour in space.

Together with Zambia, Sweden is proud to have co-facilitated the **Global Digital Compact**. Through this framework, all Member States have committed to strengthen international cooperation to close digital divides between and within countries and to establish the governance required for a sustainable digital future, including on Artificial Intelligence.

Rest assured, Sweden will continue to fulfil its responsibility and be an active, engaged and constructive multilateral actor. We will continue to be a close – and demanding – partner to the UN. We will constructively demand more.

More efficiency, more coherence, more impact, more innovation. This is how we will achieve our shared ambitions for the future, together.

Mr President,

This is a moment of major existential challenges. But we must not allow anything to stop us from defending the fundamental principles that form the foundation of this organisation.

It is true that there are areas where international law needs to be developed to meet new challenges. However, it is equally true that hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty based on the norms, purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

Global health and well-being have reached unprecedented levels.

People across the globe are enjoying justice, peace, freedom and prosperity at levels unimaginable to previous generations.

It is a legacy to be proud of. One that we must **all** do everything we can to uphold.

Thank you.