



**OPENING REMARKS OF H.E. VOLKAN BOZKIR
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HIGH LEVEL MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNITED NATIONS
(21 SEPTEMBER 2020, GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL)**

Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Ministers and delegates,

I would like to start this meeting by thanking every individual and institution who have supported this organization over the past 75 years.

That includes first and foremost all of you, Member States. Without your continued commitment to multilateralism, we would not be sitting here today.

I would also like to thank all the UN personnel, especially those in the field, whose efforts have made this organization a success and life better for all of humanity.

Today, at the end of this segment we will adopt the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations.

I want to congratulate you for reaching a consensus on this landmark Declaration and for your strong commitment to work together to strengthen coordination and global governance for the common future of present and coming generations.



I would also like to thank the co-facilitators Qatar and Sweden for their stewardship of this text through the General Assembly, especially during the pandemic.

Excellencies,

When our founders established this organization 75 years ago, they did so in the smoldering wreckage of war. World War Two, the deadliest in history, demonstrated the clear need for a forum that could be “a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.”

The founders recognized that the three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development, and human rights – are equally important, interrelated, and interdependent. One cannot advance without the other.

And that is what the UN has been striving for over the past 75 years with the support of you, the Member States.

We should not overlook our achievements. Membership has increased from 51 to 193 today, reflecting, in significant part, countries gaining their cherished independence and committing to the United Nations and its Charter as sovereign states.

Quiet diplomacy and the development of arms control regimes prevented the decades long cold war from turning into a nuclear conflict. Peacekeeping Missions have kept the peace and protected civilians. UN special political missions have helped defuse crises and promote lasting solutions to conflict. Electoral assistance has reinforced public trust in democracy, including in crucial transition periods.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, set out fundamental human rights to be universally protected for the first time.

The UN has worked tirelessly to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the equal rights of women and men.

In the past 75 years, the UN has also shaped the norms for international development.

In 2000, we adopted the Millennium Development Goals, to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women.

Now, as we enter the Decade of Action, we have recognized that implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – which is universal – provides a coherent blueprint for a better world.

This has become even more pressing in the context of the threats posed by climate change, disruptions caused by technological developments and the current pandemic.

Excellencies,

Multilateralism is not an option but a necessity as we build back better and greener for a more equal, more resilient, and more sustainable world.

The United Nations must be at the centre of our efforts.

Since the UN was established, the world has changed in unimaginable ways.



An upgraded UN must respond to these changes to stay relevant and effective. It must be inclusive and consult widely with all relevant stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, and parliamentarians to ensure an effective response to our common challenges.

We must support the United Nations to evolve into a more agile, effective and accountable organization, so it is fit for purpose and can deliver the future we want.

Excellencies,

As you have made clear in the declaration, there is no other global organization with the legitimacy, convening power and normative impact as the United Nations. No other global organization gives hope to so many people for a better world.

As we enter the seventy-fifth Session it is now time to act. I am taking the call for renewed global action seriously. The United Nations is only as strong as its members' commitment to its ideals and each other.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to make a strong call on the Member States. It is now time to mobilize your resources, strengthen your efforts and show unprecedented political will and leadership, to ensure the future we want, and the United Nations we need.

The time for action is now.

Thank you.