Mr. President, Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates,

I find it meaningful to take part in the High-Level Meeting to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, where we will reflect on the crucial journey taken by the UN during the past 75 years and prepare for a new future.

I would like to thank you especially for granting me the opportunity to speak on behalf of MIKTA, which is composed of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia, for the first time at the Head of State level at the United Nations.

The five countries that comprise MIKTA are cross-regional powers that have developed upon the foundation of a ‘multilateral international order’ the UN has cultivated, and have been steadfast in supporting the UN.

Seventy-five years ago, the United Nations was born out of humanity’s common resolve to never repeat the devastation of war. Since then, it has promoted peace and safety in conflict zones around the world by establishing international norms such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It has also pooled the wisdom of all humanity to address global issues including sustainable development and climate action. Indeed, it has been under the communal umbrella of the United Nations that we have achieved peace and progress.

Nevertheless, there is still much to be done in the face of new challenges. The current COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to undermine the spirit of multilateralism embodied by the UN and the five MIKTA countries.

The five countries of MIKTA share the common understanding that the key to overcoming COVID-19 is unity, solidarity and cooperation. As a cross-regional and innovative partnership, we agreed to play a bridging role between developed and developing countries, as well as among regions, and also promote multilateral cooperation.

Indonesia called for solidarity to better respond to the novel coronavirus and took the lead in proposing the first UN General Assembly Resolution on COVID-19, while Mexico drafted the UNGA resolution on enhancing global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment.

Australia, working closely with key partners, especially the European Union, secured the adoption of the WHA resolution establishing an impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation of the experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19. Ambassador Volkan Bozkır from Turkey is
demonstrating his leadership to promote global solidarity as the President of the UNGA during this critical time. The Republic of Korea has also done its part by forming various Friends Groups to strengthen cooperation in healthcare at the UN, WHO and UNESCO.

All of these efforts culminated in the adoption of the Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the UN today, which represents the yearning and the pledge of 193 Member States to resolve global problems through international solidarity.

The five MIKTA countries welcome its adoption. With the UN at the core, we will relentlessly strive to tackle global challenges facing humanity, including but not limited to overcoming the COVID-19 crisis, addressing climate change, maintaining international peace and security, and reducing inequalities.

In particular, as a cross-regional and innovative partnership, MIKTA pledges to play a leading role in facilitating recovery in a way that reduces disparity, building back better and realizing an inclusive community that leaves no one behind.

Mr. President, Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates,

The spread of COVID-19 was an extraordinarily difficult challenge for Korea as well. However, at a time of crisis, the Korean people chose the path that leads to ‘freedom for all’.

The Korean Government kept our people fully informed every step of the way, and in return, the people voluntarily put on face masks and actively practiced social distancing, based on the belief that ‘I’ can be safe only when ‘my neighbors’ are safe.

Moreover, we extended the scope of ‘neighbors’ beyond our borders. By sharing infectious disease prevention equipment with other countries without closing borders and shutting down certain regions, we were able to keep our country and economy intact.

Korea’s story is a tale of how, in the face of crisis, the people put into practice the universal values of humankind that the UN has championed – from freedom and democracy to multilateralism and humanitarianism.

Solidarity and cooperation is a power unique to humans that a virus can never match. At the same time, it is the most potent weapon at our disposal that can defeat the coronavirus.

In order to achieve this goal, I would like to propose three ideas. First, we should guarantee equitable access to vaccines and therapeutics. Through global funding, we should facilitate advance purchase of sufficient doses of vaccines for international organizations to ensure that developing countries can also share in the benefits. Korea is home to the headquarters of the International Vaccine Institute, and we will provide active support to various activities geared
towards developing and distributing affordable vaccines for developing countries.

Second, we must restore multilateralism to the international order. Together with infectious disease prevention measures, this will be the driving force of global economic recovery. At the Virtual G20 Summit, Korea called for countries to allow the essential cross-border movement of people including business people, instead of resorting to a lockdown, and this proposal was duly adopted. Korea will also actively participate in multilateral cooperation led by the UN.

Third, we should pursue the path of ‘Green Recovery’. September 7 was the ‘International Day of Clean Air for blue skies’, which was proposed by Korea and subsequently adopted at the United Nations. As blue skies re-emerged once human activities came to a halt, we came to reflect once again on the question of how humans and nature can co-exist. I hope more countries will participate in the Global Green New Deal Solidarity which seeks to address the climate crisis while creating jobs and enhance inclusiveness at the same time. I hope to see major progress be made in this regard at the P4G Summit that will be held in Korea next year.

Thank you.