

President, Excellencies,

We are contending with three crises at the same time: a climate crisis, a health crisis, and an economic crisis. All of them call for a coordinated response. All of them underline why we need international cooperation.

We need to remind ourselves of our collective strength. The United Nations was born out of crisis. Because crises have the potential to increase unity and resolve. We must harness the momentum created and take action.

(Climate) President,

We know the path we need to take – and we have a plan: The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are the roadmap to the world we want.

Let me start with climate change.

We are already living with the impacts. Just ask the many people who have witnessed devastating famine, floods and forest fires. Together, we will work to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees, in line with the goal of the Paris Agreement.

The transition to a low-emission society will require profound change. But it will also create opportunities for employment and growth. To ensure a fair and just transition, we must cut emissions – not jobs. We must invest in renewables and new technology. We must put a price on carbon. Investors and businesses will rise to the challenge once the right incentives are in place.

Many countries have enhanced their targets. More countries, especially large economies, need to raise their ambition level ahead of COP26.

We are doing our part. Norway's new target is to cut emissions by at least 50 % - and towards 55 % - by 2030.

We will also continue to partner with developing countries in their efforts to achieve climate-resilient and sustainable development.

(Ocean) President,

To tackle climate change, we urgently need to restore the health of the ocean. Healthy and productive oceans can help us achieve the SDGs. We know what has to be done.

The High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy has presented an ambitious action agenda. This should form the basis for discussions on the oceans moving forward. Effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity must go hand in hand. Without healthy oceans, we all face an uncertain future.

The Ocean Panel members have made a commitment to sustainably manage all of their ocean areas by 2025. That is one third of the world's exclusive economic zones. This is a bold target. But our ambition is even bolder: We call on all ocean and coastal states to make a similar commitment by 2030.

(Global health)

President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us – yet again – that global problems require global solutions. It has also shown us what we can achieve together: effective vaccines developed in record time. We must not stop there:

We need to reform and strengthen the global health architecture to prevent, detect, and respond to future threats. And we need a fully financed WHO playing a central, coordinating role.

We must invest in health. We must build robust national health systems and ensure universal health coverage.

There is a glaring inequity in vaccine distribution. Some countries have vaccinated their populations, and are on the path to recovery. For others, the lack of vaccines and weak health systems pose a serious problem. In Africa, fewer than 1 in 20 people are fully vaccinated. In Europe, one in two are fully vaccinated. This inequity is clearly unfair.

In some countries, the mindset seems to be that the pandemic is over – whilst others are facing huge waves of infection. The result is a disconnected world. It is unacceptable and dangerous. The truth is: The pandemic is not over, and it will not be over anywhere until it's over everywhere. We need to accelerate the vaccination rollout across the world.

Norway is proud to co-chair the ACT-Accelerator. It was set up to promote equitable access to tests, treatments, and vaccines. Public-private partnerships such as CEPI and Gavi are also part of the solution. Let us all agree: Financing pandemic preparedness is a sound investment – and we all benefit from the returns.

We need to finance a sustainable recovery. We have an opportunity to do things right: We must align our efforts with our roadmap, the 2030 Agenda. We must invest in the green transition. We must invest in people, women and girls in particular. And we must fulfil the promise of the SDGs, to leave no one behind.

We must secure the future welfare of a rapidly growing population. Domestic resource mobilisation is crucial to build back better and to reach the SDGs. Fair and effective tax systems are needed – not only to generate revenue, but also to build trust in government. The agreement reached in the OECD on a new framework for international tax reform is an important step forward.

Without global trade and investments, we cannot solve the challenges we are facing. This will require job creation, openness, rules-based trade and fewer trade barriers. Free trade creates win-win solutions. Protectionism does not.

(Peace and security, human rights)

President,

Respect for human rights is essential to build prosperous and free societies. It is also the basis for equitable and stable societies. Everyone who believes in democracy must now defend its core values.

On a personal note, I stand here as a Prime Minister who lost an election last week. After eight years, my Government will step down and hand over to a new team. I hope they will succeed in taking our country forward. I am mentioning this because orderly transitions cannot be taken for granted. And because democracy at work can help reduce the mistrust in and between countries. The kind of mistrust that the Secretary-General points to in 'Our Common Agenda'.

The decline in democracy and respect for human rights should be of concern to us all. We are seeing grave human rights violations in many parts of the world. In Venezuela. The atrocities and conflict in Tigray. The deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Myanmar, including for the Rohingyas. To mention a few. We count on the Security Council and regional organisations to play a proactive role.

And we are alarmed and saddened by recent developments in Afghanistan. In the past two decades, Afghans have seen a significant progress in the human rights situation. Health care systems have been improved and millions of children have received an education. These hard-won gains must be protected.

We are now particularly concerned about the rights of women and girls, and people belonging to religious, ethnic, sexual and gender minorities.

We fear for those who are at risk because of their work to advance fundamental freedoms. We will continue to support them, and the rest of the Afghan people.

We will judge the Taliban by their actions, not but by their words. The composition of the interim government is discouraging.

President,

Global challenges have a major impact on international peace and security.

Twice this year, the Security Council has discussed the security implications of climate change.

To reach the SDGs, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and disarmament are vital.

We must safeguard and strengthen the norms and structures that maintain peace.

We must make sure that progress in this area is not reversed. We need to protect and promote the framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation – first and foremost, the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Great power rivalry can threaten strategic stability. Dialogue and cooperation are essential. The extension of the New START Treaty is a welcome step forward.

The international norm against the use of weapons of mass destruction must be upheld.

The increased threat from chemical weapons must be countered.

President,

Durable peace is crucial to long-term security. In our work in the Security Council, we promote dialogue, partnerships, and preventive diplomacy.

To remain relevant, the Council must respond to threats to international peace and security. It must not shy away from challenging situations.

The adoption of the resolution extending the mandate for delivering cross-border humanitarian aid into Syria was encouraging. It offers hope of finding a political solution to the long-lasting conflict.

UN peace operations play a key role throughout the world. Norway is a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

This includes financial support to enhance the capacity of UN peace operations to carry out their mandate. Especially their mandate to facilitate political processes, protect civilians and implement the women, peace, and security agenda.

Another challenge is maritime security and piracy. We need an integrated global response to make the oceans safe.

Some 90 % of piracy incidents take place in the Gulf of Guinea. Norway is seeking to advance this issue in the Security Council, in close cooperation with the countries in the region.

President,

In closing, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for the realistic assessment he presents in 'Our Common Agenda'. We are given a choice between breakdown and breakthrough. I remain optimistic.

NORWAY – Prime Minister – Mrs. Erna Solberg

We must take the crises we are now facing as our call to action. We must focus all there is to gain from acting together. There is a way forward. We have already charted our course; the 2030 agenda is our roadmap. Let's not hesitate. Let's join forces and get started right away.

Thank you.