

**STATEMENT of H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev,
President of the Republic of KAZAKHSTAN
at the General Debate of the 76th session of the UNGA**
“Building resilience through hope – to recover from COVID-19,
rebuild sustainability, respond to the needs of the planet,
respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations”
(September 2021, New York)

**Dear Mr. President,
Dear Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the Presidency of the seventy-sixth session.

I will focus today first and foremost on the **triple threat** we face together: **COVID-19 recovery**; the **Climate crisis**; and the humanitarian situation in **Afghanistan**.

In the last year, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has exploded from 32 million to 225 million confirmed cases.

We are **deeply grateful** to all **health workers, scientists and vaccine makers** who

produced in a remarkably short time safe and effective vaccines.

But the **economic and social repercussions** remain very difficult. Unemployment has risen sharply and hundreds of millions of people are losing their livelihoods. More than **130 million people** are now living in extreme poverty. Decades of development progress are being lost.

In many ways, the pandemic has exposed our vulnerability and underscored the critical importance of multilateralism and international solidarity. We must **“build back”** a more equitable, sustainable, and humane world.

We must begin with **universal and fair access to vaccines**. This matter must be resolved as a matter of global ethics and solidarity. The unjust “vaccine gap” is a “gap multiplier”.

The IMF notes that the global economic recovery is not “global” because of the widening gap between advanced “vaccinated” economies and emerging or developing “unvaccinated”

ones. The net effect will be to **wipe out \$4.5 trillion of cumulative global GDP by 2025.**

We must exponentially and urgently increase global access to vaccines. Kazakhstan has successfully produced its own **QazVac** vaccine. Two more vaccines are in development. We stand ready to share them bilaterally or under the COVAX facility.

The World Trade Organization is critical to ensuring supply chains for essential medical goods and equitable vaccine access. **As the Chair of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference** this November, Kazakhstan calls on WTO Members to deliver a meaningful outcome on WTO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also need more focused cooperation between governments and the pharmaceutical industry on **licenses, technology transfers and technical support.**

In the meantime, economic recovery is subject to many other “known unknowns”, including **technology tensions.** An “economic iron curtain”

scenario, in which different technologies and rules split the global economy, is becoming more likely.

Such a scenario would severely constrain those states who want to trade globally and secure tech-related supplies. Eager to avoid taking sides, they could be forced to form a **“Technological Non-Alignment Movement”** to mitigate risks at the intersection of technologies and geopolitics.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Carbon dioxide levels are at record highs. Wildfires, cyclones, floods and droughts have become the new normal, devastating populations and causing much preventable human suffering.

As a large landlocked country, Kazakhstan’s climate is warming faster than the global average and threatening our population and economy.

The median annual temperature has increased **2°C in the last 75 years with**

serious droughts now striking twice every five years.

In response, Kazakhstan intends to achieve **carbon neutrality by 2060**. We are launching a national **2050 low carbon development strategy** next month to reduce GDP energy intensity **by 50% from 2008 levels**.

Since almost **70%** of Kazakhstan's electricity generation depends on **coal**, the energy transition present significant challenges.

Access to **green financing and green technologies** will be critical to this transition, and we look to the upcoming **COP26 conference in Glasgow** for clear commitment on these issues. Without ambitious green financing, ambitious climate action is empty.

We also give great importance to the **COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming** in October 2021.

Turning to **Afghanistan**, we endorse the UN Security Council's call for the establishment, through negotiations, of a new Government that is **inclusive and representative**.

A consensus-based system must be put in place where groups of **different values, or ethnic, religious and gender background** can coexist in the same country.

In general, Kazakhstan envisions Afghanistan as a truly independent, sovereign nation living at peace with itself and its neighbors. Afghanistan must continue to adhere to its international obligations and ensure its territory is free of **terrorists, drugs, and human traffickers**.

Whatever our political affiliations or personal feelings, **we must not abandon the people of Afghanistan** now.

The **acute humanitarian situation** should be our first priority. UN agencies and other humanitarian actors must have immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

Kazakhstan has provided a temporary relocation for **UNAMA and other UN offices for Afghanistan**. We are ready to provide a **logistical platform for humanitarian aid** into Afghanistan, as well as to contribute our fair share.

The Kazakh initiative to establish a **UN Regional hub in Almaty** can serve this crucial mission. We are ready to work closely with the UN, regional neighbors and interested states and organizations.

The future stability of Afghanistan depends on **economic development**. Afghanistan is **not a threat but an opportunity**. If unified and stable, it can contribute to **Central Asia's development**.

Excellencies,

I turn to several other important UN issues, including the need to **revitalize disarmament**.

Last month, on 29 August, we marked the 30th anniversary of the decision to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and relinquish the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world.

Kazakhstan again urges the nuclear-weapon States to commit themselves to the **complete elimination of nuclear weapons by 2045, the Centennial of the United Nations**.

Similarly, there is more work to be done against existential **biological threats**. I proposed last year an **International Agency for Biological Safety**. This is a bold and ambitious idea, but we believe it is timely. Open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders is ongoing.

Implementation of **the 2030 Agenda and SDGs** has suffered a considerable setback.

Least Developed countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States – some 91 countries in total – are disproportionately affected by the pandemic given their limited means to respond to shocks and vulnerability to a debt crisis.

As the **Global Chair of the LLDCs**, Kazakhstan appeals to all UN agencies to work together to deliver on the 2024 Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Program of Action.

The 2030 Agenda will remain unattainable until all countries have the financial capacity to invest in a sustainable and inclusive future. In this regard, we specifically call on all development partners to jointly address international liquidity and debt vulnerabilities.

The World Food Program estimates that 270 million people will face **food shortages** this year.

Kazakhstan is a **major grain producer and exporter** and a founding member of the **Islamic Organization for Food Security**, whose fourth General Assembly was held last month in our capital.

We invite foreign investors to join us in shaping a better, brighter future for **sustainable agriculture**.

Sustainable development depends not only on economic growth, but also on social and political development.

At 30 years old, Kazakhstan is already a **mature and accomplished nation**. Over the last few years, we have started shifting **from top-down nation-building** – which proved extremely efficient during early statehood – to **more bottom-up democracy-nurturing**. We aim to consolidate our democratic commitment and promote wider citizen engagement in governance.

For example, we have introduced **direct election of rural mayors** for the first time. This will place far more power and control in the hands of more than 40% of Kazakh citizens. We will do the same for district mayors in 2024.

In line with the concept of **a state that listens and responds to its citizens**, since 2019, my Administration has launched **four blocks of essential democratic reforms** to strengthen human rights, the rule of law, and anti-corruption.

For example, I recently proposed applying the recent **30 percent quota for women and youth** in electoral party lists to the final parliamentary composition.

There is no room for complacency. Our goal is to further improve the efficiency of the state, transparency, and competitiveness of the political process. **Political reforms will have a dynamic follow-up.**

In January of this year, Kazakhstan ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, abolishing the **death penalty**.

In June, the Government approved a **Comprehensive Plan for Human Rights Protection**, laying down a long-term institutional framework.

In close collaboration with our international partners, we are working hard to eliminate **human trafficking**, which requires extraordinary global cooperation.

We are a candidate for membership on the **UN Human Rights Council for 2022 -2024**. If elected, Kazakhstan will strive to make a real contribution to the Council.

We also aim to advance the “**democracy – religion – development nexus**” during the seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions next April in Kazakhstan.

Turning to **Central Asia**, despite challenges to stability and security, we see a gradual strengthening of political and economic cooperation. Three Central Asian informal summits – the latest one held last month – are leading to a more cooperative and resilient region.

Our regional policy aims to gradually replace the **zero-sum politics** and “**might makes right**” of the “**Great Game**” with genuine cooperation and a people-centered **Great Gain** in the Heart of Asia.

This creates opportunities for greater global community engagement with **Kazakhstan and Central Asia**. We place great hope in the regional “**C5+**” **dialogue frameworks** with major extra-regional actors.

In such partnerships, we emphasize Central Asia’s **water-related challenges**, including water scarcity, degrading quality and inefficient use. Our region’s water security is inextricably linked with energy, food and environment.

Despite the diverging interests of riparian states, Kazakhstan remains committed to a **regional water-and-hydropower consortium** to coordinate different policies towards mutual goals.

**Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Situated at the Eurasian crossroad of civilizations, Kazakhstan remains committed to its **well-balanced, constructive foreign policy**. We enjoy good relations with all our immediate neighbours, the Western countries, the EU, Asian and Middle Eastern states.

This is the spirit of the **Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia**. Next year Kazakhstan, which chairs CICA, will host a summit to mark the 30th Anniversary of the Conference.

Our world is both interconnected and fragile. We desperately need a **meaningful multilateralism** that gives **results to people** and **effective expression to global solidarity**.

We need far greater engagement and genuine cooperation from international organizations, financial institutions, civil society, business, local and regional authorities, all **in service of the common good**.

Nothing else will secure our common future. No nation can succeed or prosper alone – **there is no vaccine or wall for that**.

This moment presents a collective opportunity to change the world for the better.

Thank you!