



VISION STATEMENT
BY
THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AMBASSADOR TIJJANI MUHAMMAD-BANDE
AS CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE 74TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has nominated me for the position of President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the African Union extended its support by endorsing me for this position. In support of my candidature, I am delighted to share with you my vision of how the Office of the PGA under my leadership will guide our collective efforts in tackling the global challenges we face today. On this journey, I shall require the support of all Member States.

THE UN TODAY AND THE OFFICE OF THE PGA

The importance of the presidency of the General Assembly is best understood within the context of the Organization's founding ideals and inestimable contributions to human progress. The global reach of the United Nations makes it not only the most representative intergovernmental body on earth, but also the world's best hope for peace and security, sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights and social progress. Its membership, drawn from all corners of the globe, gives it the legitimacy that enables it to speak authoritatively as the voice and conscience of the international community, and to take on complex and daunting global challenges, from intra- and inter-state armed conflicts to natural disasters and massive population displacement, in the service of humanity.

In accordance with the provisions of its Charter, the United Nations is committed to human progress and the preservation of the environment that is our collective home. As we all know, our primary mandate as prescribed in Article 1 of the Charter is to "maintain international peace and security, and to that end : to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace". In this noble undertaking, cooperation, collaboration, unity and solidarity must be the light we should seek and follow.

To its credit, the United Nations has championed human progress on many fronts, including peace operations, human rights, non-discrimination, decolonization, gender equality and sustainable development. It has also supported regional and sub-regional organisations on initiatives, such as the African Union Agenda 2063. The Organization also continues to collaborate with other intergovernmental organizations

and civil society in furtherance of its disarmament agenda and in tackling international terrorism, human trafficking, toxic waste dumping, and combating deadly diseases and health pandemics. The Sustainable Development Goals launched in 2015 as well as the Paris Climate Agreement capped the Organization's list of achievements in recent years.

Of course, tension over norms and methods and policy differences have also marked exchanges and deliberations in the Organization, sometimes blocking meaningful action when it is most critical. Indeed, some of the more difficult and long-lasting matters of war and peace play out here in the United Nations, quite often pitting countries against others and getting in the way of the coherent operation of the main organs and other UN entities.

As the most representative of the Organization's main organs, the General Assembly is a unique forum for promoting multilateralism on the full spectrum of international issues before the Organization. It must never relent in efforts to bridge gaps and act for the common good. No matter the gravity of the challenge, we are most likely to prevail when all parties work together. Facilitating this will be my foremost objective.

In particular, we must continue efforts to strengthen the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council and ECOSOC, based on the principle of mutual understanding and respect, in order to ensure the requisite synergy and coherence to better serve the Organization and the world.

NIGERIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

In submitting my candidature for this office, the Government of Nigeria takes into account the compatibility of its Constitution with the ideals and objectives of the United Nations. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria commits to, among other foreign policy objectives:

- "Promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations;
- Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and
- Promotion of a just world economic order."

Since joining the United Nations as its 99th Member in 1960, Nigeria has worked constructively with other Member States towards the achievement of the Organization's goals. It has served many times on the Security Council and is an active member of numerous Committees, including the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34). Today, Nigeria is among the most notable troop-contributing countries (TTCs) to UN peacekeeping missions.

In addition, through its membership of both ECOWAS and the African Union, Nigeria has vigorously promoted functional partnerships in Africa, as well as between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations. Nigeria has also sought and obtained, the Organization's support in tackling some of the tough challenges it has faced- including especially, the fight against international terrorism.

In submitting my candidature for the presidency of the General Assembly at its 74th Session, my country also took into account my successful stewardship in many leadership positions in Nigeria and beyond, in a career spanning four decades, as an academic and administrator, the head of a major intergovernmental African Centre, the Chief Executive of Nigeria's renowned policy and strategic Institute, and a diplomat. In all those positions, I worked with colleagues and stakeholders to achieve significant outcomes.

PRIORITIES

The 74th Session of the UN General Assembly will be convened in the context of an increasingly turbulent world, with serious challenges confronting us. Nonetheless, it also has the potential to prove a real turning point for the United Nations and its ability to tackle major global problems.

Indeed, the 74th Session will be an eventful year for the Sustainable Development Agenda, as the General Assembly will host in September 2019, a number of high-level events, including the High-Level Political Forum, the Climate Change Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, the High-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage, as well as the high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, which must all be seen as opportunities for further engagement at the highest level. All these important meetings will be happening at the same time as the General Debate of the 74th Session. I am aware of the challenge this will pose for Member States, especially small delegations and, as PGA, I shall pay close attention to this issue.

As PGA for the 74th Session, I will focus on the effective implementation of existing mandates, and make a contribution in all defined follow-up areas. In addition, I shall pay particular attention to the following:

1. Promoting international peace and security, in particular, conflict prevention, and on this, I fully agree with Secretary-General António Guterres that conflict prevention is key, rather than reacting to them at great cost to human life and resources. Conflict prevention is also the most meaningful way to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which was the central pledge of world leaders when they agreed the Charter of the United Nations. As we look forward to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Organization, it is important that we recommit to that ideal;
2. Strengthening global action to tackle climate change, which is integral to the effective implementation of the SDGs;

3. Accentuating inclusion, human rights, and the empowerment of youth and women, respectively. As we prepare for the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child later this year, and for Beijing+25 next year, we must build on the progress that has been made by the Organization and by several countries to empower youth and women, and maximize their contribution to human progress; and
4. Promoting partnerships for advancing the achievement of the SDGs, in particular Goals 1, 2 and 4 on poverty eradication, zero hunger and quality education, respectively. This calls for urgent concerted action, to which I shall devote special attention. When we say, "leave no one behind" within the context of SDG implementation, we must start by ensuring that the most vulnerable among us do not go hungry and have a fair chance to live meaningful, well-informed and dignified lives.

The presidency of the General Assembly and the good offices the holder of that office enjoys, is important in addressing the myriad of challenges that confront us all. Consequently, as PGA, I will work closely with all Member States and other stakeholders to promote synergy among the United Nations' Principal Organs and other UN offices in furtherance of the Organization's ideals and goals. I look forward to the kind support of all Member States, as we strive to make the world a better place.