

87th plenary meeting Tuesday, 4 June 2019, 10 a.m. New York

Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-fourth session

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite members, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-fourth session. I would like to recall that in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session should be elected from among the African States.

In that connection, the Chair of the Group of African States for the month of April 2019 has informed the Secretariat that the Group has endorsed His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, for the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande of Nigeria elected by acclamation as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

On behalf of the Assembly, I wholeheartedly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. Ambassador Muhammad Bande's career and experience, both as a scholar and as a diplomat, should serve him and the General Assembly well in a session that promises to be pivotal.

From the many positions he occupied as Vice-Chancellor at the Usmanu Danfodiyo University of Nigeria, Director-General of the Centre Africain de Formation et de Recherche Administratives pour le Développement and Director-General of Nigeria's National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, to his current stint as Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad Bande is well seasoned to provide the strong and creative leadership our Assembly requires as it positions itself to be relevant in a world in rapid change.

Ambassador Muhammad Bande's presidency comes at a very critical moment for the United Nations and multilateralism. I am confident, however, that under his able leadership we will make meaningful progress in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in sustaining peace and

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conflict prevention, as well as the promotion of human rights and the empowerment of women and girls.

As we have already affirmed, I and my Cabinet are at his disposal as he moves forward with his preparations for the seventy-fourth session. I am committed to providing him with the support he needs to ensure the smoothest possible transition. I am certain that all delegations are equally ready to give him all the support necessary for maintaining an effective presidency, which is key to the authority and effectiveness of the most representative and democratic organ of our United Nations.

I thank and congratulate him once again.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, to take the floor.

Mr. Muhammad Bande (Nigeria): I am honoured by the trust the Assembly has placed in me through my election by acclamation to the position of President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. I am grateful to the Federal Republic of Nigeria for nominating me for this position, the Group of African States for endorsing my candidacy and all Member States for extending their invaluable support.

I congratulate President Espinosa Garcés on her tireless efforts in guiding our work throughout the current session and thank the Secretary-General for his leadership at this critical moment for the United Nations.

As I announced in my vision statement and during the interactive dialogue on 13 May, the implementation of the existing mandates for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a particular focus on peace and security, poverty eradication, zero hunger, quality education, climate action and inclusion, will constitute the major priorities of my presidency. Accordingly, the high-level political forum to be convened during the Assembly's seventy-fourth session, the Secretary-General's climate summit in September, the high-level events on universal health coverage, financing for development and the Small Island Developing States (SAMOA) Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway, the second United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to be

2/8 19-16224 held in Lisbon, the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and all the other important meetings during the seventy-fourth session will provide major opportunities to promote the implementation of our goals and targets. We must seize all of those opportunities to galvanize political momentum and action at the highest level. I am committed to promoting the necessary partnerships with all stakeholders to achieve our objectives and, ultimately, doing our best to ensure peace and prosperity, particularly for the most vulnerable.

We must continue to invest in sustaining peace and conflict prevention. Given that our Organization strives to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", and that the United Nations has not met the expectations of its founding fathers in terms of preventing many violent conflicts and mass atrocities, we must take on the collective responsibility for making the world a better, safer and more peaceful place. The promotion of human rights and the employment of women and young people deserve special attention, and I will devote myself to the promotion of gender parity throughout the United Nations system, starting with my own Office.

We will commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations next year. That presents us with a unique opportunity to reduce the trust deficit among nations, as we all share the same aspirations and have no choice but to work together. If we are to achieve the visions of our founding fathers, we must ensure that indifference and indecision do not creep into our Organization. The General Assembly must play its role in bridging the gaps and promoting collective action to address all international issues that deserve attention, in close coordination and collaboration with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

In the coming weeks and during my presidency, I will count on the support and solidarity of all States Members of the United Nations, as well as the Secretariat. I will explore the robust potential of the convening platform of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and use its advocacy tools to promote a multilateral approach to finding workable solutions to the issues confronting us. I will work with Member States to streamline our work and improve the way we do business at the United Nations. As most of us have drawn attention to the growing number of

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events, with the attendant risks of undermining genuine dialogue and overstretching delegations, I will work with all members on appropriate solutions, because I believe that we must make the United Nations more efficient and effective and more accountable to the people we serve.

Finally, as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, I want to reiterate that openness, inclusivity and transparency will guide all the actions of the Office of the President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande of Nigeria, President-elect of the General Assembly.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: It is my pleasure to congratulate Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande on his election as President

of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

Mr. Muhammad Bande brings many important and admirable qualifications to the job. From his years as Permanent Representative of Nigeria, he knows the United Nations well. Thanks to his wide-ranging academic pursuits, he is an expert in political science and public administration. And as a Nigerian and an African, he has invaluable insights into the continent's challenges, such as those in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, and more broadly into the challenges that our world faces across the three pillars of our work — peace, sustainable development and human rights. We wish him well in his preparations for this role in the months ahead. He will have a full agenda. September will see a crucially important series of meetings, including the climate summit, the sustainable development summit and high-level meetings on universal health coverage, small island developing States and financing for sustainable development. He will be in office as we gear up to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, an occasion that I hope we can use to reaffirm the value of international cooperation and the vision of the Charter of the United Nations. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Her Excellency Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés for her outstanding work as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. There will be ample time to express appreciation for her achievements, but I can already say that I am most

19-16224 3/8 grateful for her support, especially of United Nations reform, and for her overall stewardship of this body. We all look forward to working with the President- elect, and he can count on my full support as we strive to reach our shared goals and uphold universal values.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): I have the singular duty and honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on this auspicious occasion of the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, and to wholeheartedly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations, on his election by acclamation to preside over the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

Ambassador Muhammad Bande, whose candidature was endorsed by the African Union Summit, brings us a wealth of leadership and diplomatic experience, having served four decades at the helm of Nigeria's policy and strategic institutions. As an active member of the African Group, he has demonstrated astute diplomatic skills and sound political wisdom, attributes that we are confident will serve him well as President of the Assembly.

Ambassador Muhammad Bande is assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at a juncture that is both critical and historic, just ahead of some extremely important milestones — the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The excellent manner in which the President- elect rolled out his vision for his presidency during the informal interactive dialogue held on 13 May gave assurances of the strategic focus of his priorities in paving the way for an effective stewardship that leaves no one behind.

I want to take this opportunity to express the African Group's deep appreciation to Her Excellency

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Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés for her brilliant performance at the helm of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, and to thank her for her personal commitment to consolidating the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations and for the close working relationship that the Group enjoyed with her during her leadership, in the pursuit of our common quest to uphold the ideals of multilateralism, the *raison d'être* of our global Organization. The African Group believes firmly that you will continue to build on this and other achievements, Madam President. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing to work constructively in supporting you in the discharge of your mandate, and we wish you success in all of your endeavours.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I now give the floor to the representative of Tuvalu, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Laloniu (Tuvalu): I am honoured and privileged to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States and to extend our Group's sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande on his

successful election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy- fourth session.

Today, as we celebrate his election, we are mindful of the great challenges that he will face in ensuring the effective implementation of the Assembly's existing mandates and, in particular, expediting the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to make sure that no one is left behind. We are encouraged by his desire to make a priority in his work of promoting international peace and security, strengthening global action to tackle climate change, accentuating inclusivity, human rights and the empowerment of youth and women, and promoting partnerships for advancing poverty eradication, zero hunger and quality education. We all agree that much needs to be done and we are looking forward to actively engaging with him and supporting him as he leads us through our seventy-fourth session.

We would also like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your committed leadership in successfully charting the course of the Assembly at its seventy-third session. The prominent and productive progress you have made in pursuing gender equality, empowering women, young people and persons with disabilities, protecting migrants and refugees and advancing environmental action and peace and security are a testament to your

4/8 19-16224 presidency. You dared to do better and sought to make the United Nations able to deliver and be accountable, to be more relevant, efficient and inclusive and, most importantly, to leave no one behind. We would like to express our appreciation for your excellent work and we look forward to continuing to work with you during the remaining tenure of your presidency.

Finally, we are confident that the President-elect will build on the good work of his predecessors and take the Office of the President of the General Assembly to new heights. He can count on the unwavering support of the Asia-Pacific Group to ensure that we all remain united, since multilateralism is now more important than ever as we work together to find solutions to global challenges and as he steers us through the seventy- fourth session.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I have the honour and pleasure to extend our warmest and most sincere congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad Bande on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. We also congratulate the Government of Nigeria on that important achievement, recalling that Ambassador Muhammad Bande will become the second Nigerian to be elected to that position, after former Foreign Minister Joseph Nanven Garba in 1989.

A post as prominent as that of President of the General Assembly is crucially important to addressing many of the challenges facing the United Nations. We are confident that based on his professional qualities as a scholar and diplomat, and his vast experience in the United Nations arena and abroad — particularly his service as a Vice-President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session and Chair of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — he will significantly contribute to the success of the Assembly's upcoming session.

I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to President Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés for the excellent work and leadership she has provided so far. Her personal involvement in many matters, particularly those pertaining to multilateralism, sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment

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of women and girls, has been an invaluable asset in strengthening the work of the General Assembly and its capacity to deliver on its mandate. You can count on the support of the Eastern European Group, Madam President, until the end of your tenure as President of the Assembly at its current session. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Let me conclude by once again reaffirming the full support of the members of the Group of Eastern European States to the newly elected President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad Bande, during his upcoming tenure. We fully share his intention to work closely with all States Members of the United Nations in acting for the common good and achieving our collective goals in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We wish him every success in fulfilling his forthcoming mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Dominican Republic, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Cortorreal (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean

States (GRULAC), I have the honour to take the floor to extend our warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, on his election by acclamation as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. We believe that the fact that one of our most respected colleagues, a renowned academic, researcher and statesman, has been chosen to preside over the Assembly at its upcoming session will contribute to advancing an agenda with a universal vision, as a space for the inclusive and sustainable growth of peace, security, political stability and respect for human rights, a vision shared not just by Africa but by the entire community of nations represented in the General Assembly.

The members of GRULAC believe that the election of a colleague and representative of the vast African continent, strengthens the democratic character of this principal organ of the United Nations system. We are sure that under his presidency, the General Assembly will continue to play its role as guarantor in the consideration of the agenda items related to international peace and security, climate change,

19-16224 5/8 poverty, gender equality, the targets for meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the strengthening of the organizational reform process and especially reform of the Security Council, sustainable development, international cooperation and human rights, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Ambassador Muhammad Bande can rest assured that he will have the full support, cooperation and readiness of GRULAC in the implementation of the Assembly's agenda at its forthcoming seventy-fourth regular session.

I would like to conclude by expressing our appreciation to you, Madam President, for your effective leadership of the Assembly throughout its seventy-third session, which has been a period of development and great accomplishments. On behalf of the GRULAC member countries, I thank you for having represented our region in such an exemplary manner.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to express our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. As the current Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, he brings to the office a wealth of experience, including an impressive and distinguished career in academia and diplomacy. There can be no doubt that he will make full use of his vast skills and knowledge to lead the General Assembly capably and efficiently.

The Charter of the United Nations calls for friendly relations among nations and international cooperation to solve international problems. It is the basis for the efficient and strong multilateralism that we support, with the United Nations at its core. At a time when items on the General Assembly's agenda may divide us, we are counting on Ambassador Muhammad Bande to bridge the gaps between delegations, and we look forward to working under his leadership during the Assembly's seventy-fourth session. We particularly welcome his commitment to addressing climate change, working to achieve international peace and security, preventing conflict, promoting human rights, empowering young people and women and achieving gender equality.

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During the Assembly's forthcoming session of the General Assembly, all members will continue to work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDG summit, to be held in September, will be a crucial milestone in our joint efforts to continue to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The year 2020 will also mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, which will be an important occasion and an opportunity to strengthen and renew the collective commitment of Member States and the General Assembly to the United Nations. We look forward to working with Ambassador Muhammad Bande in preparation for those commemorations through an inclusive process, taking into account the hopes and expectations that people all over the world have for the United Nations. We wish the President-elect every success. He can count on the full support of the Western European and other States Group.

We would also like to express to you, Madam President, our deep appreciation of your excellent work throughout the Assembly's current session. Your unwavering commitment and leadership — particularly the emphasis you have placed on bringing the United Nations closer to the people, but also your work on conflict prevention, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting human rights and fostering gender equality — have helped all Member

States to focus our joint efforts and make meaningful headway. We look forward to working with you during the remainder of your term in office.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, as host country of the United Nations, we extend our sincere congratulations to Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad Bande on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. Many of us have come to know Ambassador Muhammad Bande over the past two years in his role as the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations. We have seen first-hand the integrity, collegiality and effectiveness he has brought to that work. With his election today, the public service and leadership he exhibited on behalf of Nigeria will soon serve all 193 States Members of the United Nations. He has outlined an ambitious agenda for his tenure, including focuses on conflict prevention, 6/8 19-16224 human rights, inclusion and the empowerment of young people and women. We look forward to working with him on those worthy goals.

The President-elect is assuming his role at a critical juncture. As he has already highlighted, next year's seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations provides an opportunity to reflect on its contributions and role with respect to global peace and security, development, the promotion of human rights, the prevention and resolution of humanitarian crises and other areas of work that are within the Organization's responsibility. It will also represent an opening to make the United Nations more effective in achieving its goals and efficient at using its resources, to continue to implement needed reforms and ensure that Member State and Secretariat responsibilities are allocated fairly. The inauguration of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, three short months from now, will mark a very busy year in this organ's history, and the United States stands ready to work with the President-elect in that important undertaking.

On this occasion, we would also like to recognize the leadership of President Espinosa Garcés over the course of the seventy-third session. Madam President, we sincerely thank you for your service.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to remind members that, in accordance with resolution 70/305, of 13 September 2016, the President-elect of the General Assembly will take an oath of office at the moment of handing over the gavel in the final plenary meeting of the seventy-third session.

I would also like to remind members that there will be an opportunity for representatives to congratulate the President-elect in the Indonesian Lounge immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the seventy-fourth regular session

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-fourth session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing

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the names of the States members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name has been drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, Ghana was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-fourth session.

Agenda item 6

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the seventy-fourth session

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should now like to consult members with a view to proceeding to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

“The Vice-Presidents shall be elected after the election of the Chairmen of the six Main Committees referred to in rule 98, in such a way as to ensure the representative character of the General Committee”.

It is my understanding that, since the elections of the Chairpersons of the Main Committees will conform with paragraph 48 of resolution 72/313, of 17 September 2018, on the pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees from the seventy-fourth to the eighty-third sessions of the General Assembly, it will not have an impact on the geographical distribution of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the representative character of the General Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly therefore agrees to proceed to elect the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly?

There being no objection, it was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the 21 Vice-Presidents

19-16224 7/8 of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session shall be elected according to the following pattern: five representatives from African States; five representatives from Asia-Pacific States; one representative from an Eastern European State; three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States; two representatives from Western European and other States; and five representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read out the names of the slate of candidates:

African States:

Cabo Verde, Congo, Ethiopia, Tunisia and Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific States:

Indonesia, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Uzbekistan

Eastern European States:

Croatia

Latin American and Caribbean States:

Argentina and Trinidad and Tobago, with one seat remaining to be filled from the region

Western European and other States:

Malta and Turkey

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the five representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have therefore been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly for the seventy-fourth session: Argentina, Cabo Verde, China, the Congo, Croatia, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Malta, Oman, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.

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The one seat remaining for Latin American and Caribbean States will be filled at a later date to be announced.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the States that have just been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

I wish to inform members that immediately after the adjournment of this meeting, consecutive meetings of the First Committee, the Special Political and

8/8 19-16224 Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Second, Third and Sixth Committees will be held in this Hall to elect their respective Bureau members.

The Fifth Committee will hold its elections at a later date to be announced.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 6.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.