



Newsletter

H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır



2021 has been a deciding year and I have been immensely proud of what the General Assembly has accomplished thus far. From 15 December 2020 until the end of March, we have adopted 138 resolutions and 45 decisions, and held 33 plenary meetings.

In the first trimester of 2021, the General Assembly continued to fully function and lead on the world stage. We have worked together to build consensus, and we have exercised prudence and flexibility at a critical time in history.

The General Assembly has demonstrated that, even under the most difficult of circumstances, we can deliver on behalf of the people we serve.

I thank all Member States, the Secretariat and my Office, for all your hard work. I am delighted to share with you a newsletter covering some of my activities from the first trimester of 2021.

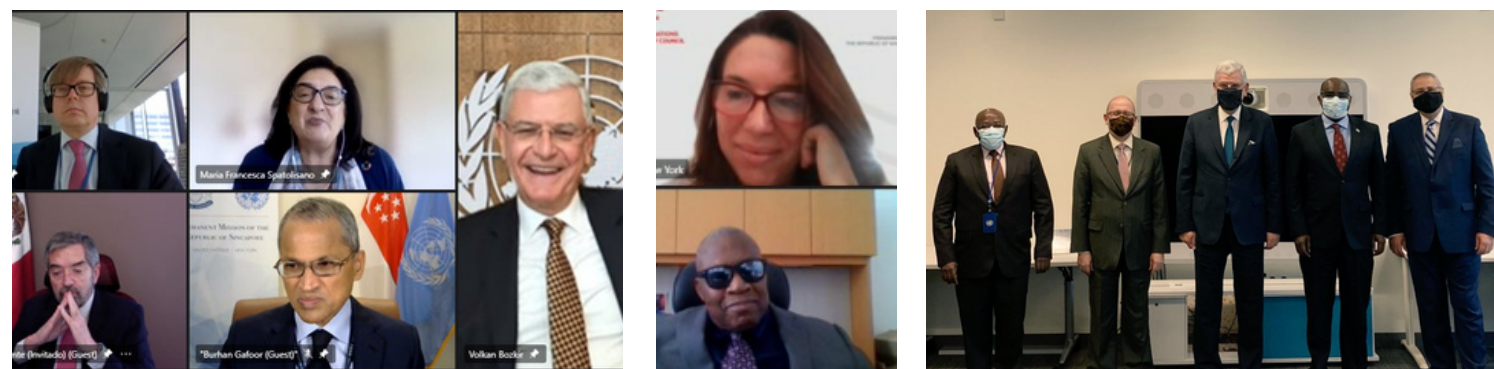
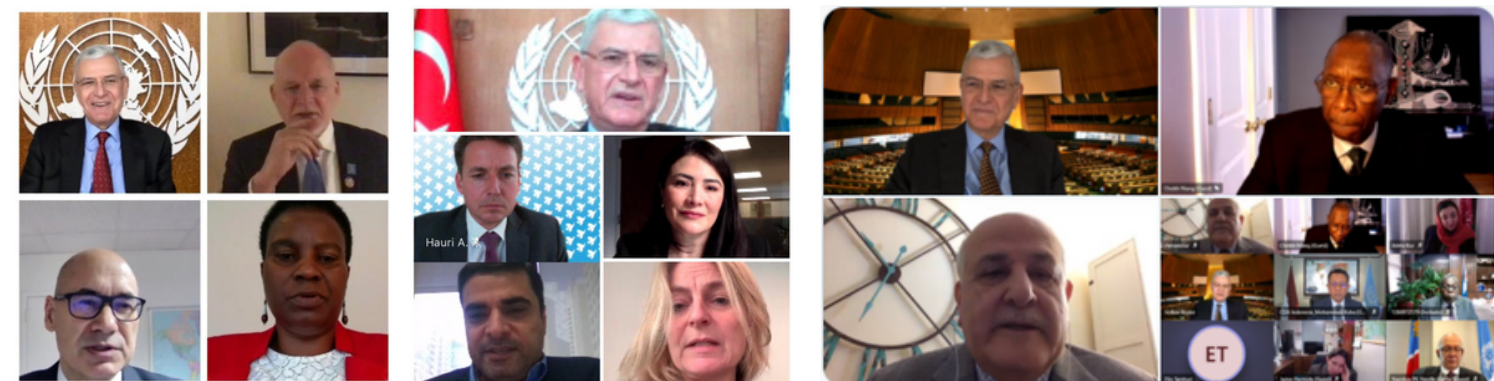
ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBER STATES

I met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia and the Permanent Representatives of: Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Malta, Mexico, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.



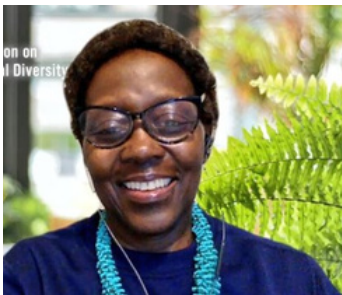
ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBER STATES

I also held meetings with the Group of Friends of SDG Financing, Group of Friends on Water, Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States, Group of Francophone Ambassadors, Co-Facilitators of the Alignment process, MIKTA Ambassadors, Group of Friends on Digital Technologies, Group of Friends of Gender Parity, Group of Friends on Desertification Land Degradation and Drought, African Union Committee of Ten Governments, the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and others.



ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY FIGURES

I also met with: the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed; the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Michael Lodge; Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema; Special Envoy for the Oceans, Peter Thomson; CEO of the Global Partnership for Education, Alice Albright; Special Envoy for the 2021 UN Food System Summit, Agnes Kalibata; Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice W. Nderitu; Member of the Lancet Commission on COVID-19/Vaccines, Jeffrey Sachs; President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Francesco Rocca; Chair of the UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Abdallah Bachar Bong; and Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Ibrahim Thiaw.



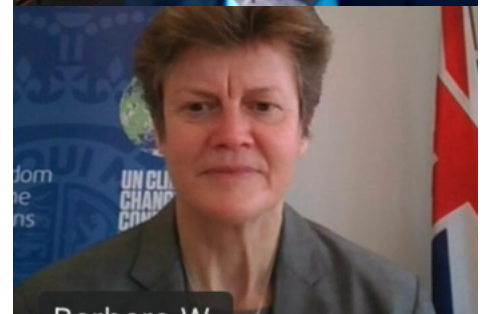
COORDINATION MEETINGS

In January and in March, I held coordination meetings with the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). I also met with the Presidents of the Security Council, as well as with the Secretary-General to ensure coherence and complementarity. Together, we are streamlining the work of the UN's principal organs and ensuring mutually reinforcing efforts.

In January, I held a coordination meeting with the Permanent Representative of Tunisia and President of the Security Council for January, H.E. Mr. Tarek Ladeb, where we discussed the priorities of the Council for that month and the upcoming meetings during the resumed session of the General Assembly.

In February, we held our periodic coordination meeting with the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for that month, H.E. Dame Barbara Woodward, as part of our continued efforts to strengthen relations between the principal organs of the UN and increase collaboration.

I also met the Permanent Representative of the United States and President of the Security Council for March, H.E. Linda Thomas-Greenfield. We discussed issues of common interest and re-affirmed our commitment to working together throughout the United States' Security Council presidency and the seventy-fifth session.



INTER-GOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

I appointed the Deputy Permanent Representatives of Honduras and the Netherlands as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. I also appointed the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the Philippines as Co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the modalities for a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

ADVISORY BOARDS

Gender equality and the most vulnerable countries are priority areas for me. I remain committed to ensuring that the views and concerns of women, girls, and people from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), continue to be reflected throughout this session.

On 16 February, I held a meeting with my Gender Advisory Group. The discussion centered on the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women; leveraging the private sector to accelerate gender equality in the context of the women's empowerment principles; and on possible side events in the margins of the CSW65 with a focus on women's political leadership and eliminating violence against women and girls.

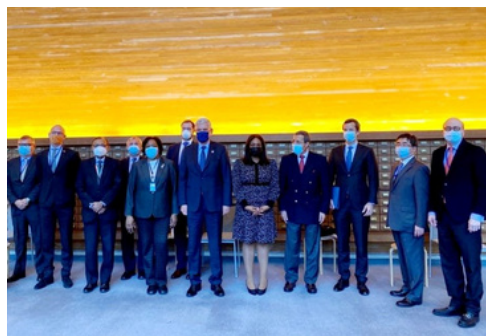
On 17 February, I held a meeting with the Board of Advisers on LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. We shared perspectives on the role of partnerships including public-private partnerships, and private sector contributions on programmes of action and the 2030 Agenda.



MORNING DIALOGUES

I am pleased that we have continued the tradition of hosting Morning Dialogues. These dialogues offer a space for Member States to discuss, openly and frankly, the most topical issues of our time.

On 22 January, I held a Morning Dialogue under the theme: “Galvanizing Action on Energy For All” with special guests: Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All; and Alexander Trepelkov, from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ Division for the SDGs. This Morning Dialogue aimed to galvanize Member States in the lead up to the High-Level Dialogue on Energy and COP26 and was an opportunity to share experiences, learn about, and scale up ambitions for Energy Compacts and Global Champion roles.



On 10 March, I held a Morning Dialogue on an extremely important topic: “The Risk of Famine”. We heard from Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on how to advance the humanitarian agenda with a focus on the most vulnerable and the need to adopt a preventive approach to growing challenges we are facing due to COVID-19.



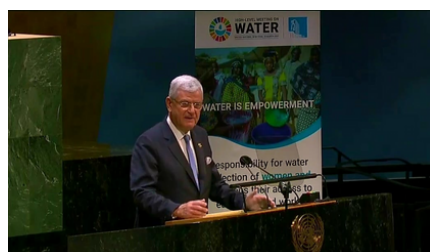
HIGH-LEVEL AND PLENARY MEETINGS

I am particularly proud of the high-level and plenary meetings we organized during this period. I am encouraged by the continued support to multilateralism and the sentiments I hear, echoed time and again, for a General Assembly that is fit for purpose and effective.

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON WATER

On 18 and 22 March, I convened the High-level Meeting on the “Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda”, under the theme: “Scaling-up multilateral cooperation and accelerating concrete actions to meet the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The meeting was designed to demonstrate clear political support and to highlight priority areas for accelerated action.

With representation from some 92 Heads of State and Government, Ministers and other high-level representatives in the plenary, and the two interactive panels, the meeting focused on the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework which seeks to mobilize action across governments, civil society, the private sector and the UN, and to better align efforts, optimize financing and enhance capacity and governance.



ANNUAL INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION HEARING

On 16 and 17 February, we held the Annual Inter-Parliamentary Union Hearing at the United Nations on “Fighting Corruption to Restore Trust in Government and Improve Development Prospects”. This year’s theme was extremely timely, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 200 parliamentarians from 80 countries joined to share insights and ideas on how to ensure that recovery funds are not diverted through corruption.

COMMEMORATIVE PLENARY MEETING TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

On 19 March, I convened a commemorative plenary meeting of the General Assembly to mark the International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We were joined by Dr. Uzodinma Iweala, author, medical doctor and CEO of The Africa Center. The active participation of Member States demonstrated that there is more uniting us, than that which divides us. The meeting emphasized the need for collective efforts in the combat one of the great injustices of modern society: racial discrimination.



COMMEMORATIVE MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF SLAVERY AND THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

The International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is an important reminder of the genesis of inequality as we strive towards 2030. The transatlantic slave trade defined our world and the supremacy that justified it is not gone. On 25 March, I convened a commemorative plenary meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. We were joined by Dr. Lisa Coleman, New York University's (NYU) inaugural senior vice president for global inclusion and strategic innovation, and the University's chief diversity officer.



INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY ON THE POLITICAL DECLARATION ON EQUITABLE GLOBAL ACCESS TO COVID-19 VACCINES

From the earliest days of this Presidency, I have stressed that the world has both a moral and practical obligation to provide vaccines for all. On 26 March, I presided over an informal meeting of the General Assembly dedicated to the issue of vaccine equity. I applaud and commend the 181 countries that come forward with the Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines. The Declaration demonstrates bold and principled support to solidarity and to a truly multilateral approach to vaccine equity.



COVID-19 is the greatest challenge experienced by the world in the 75-year history of the UN. This is the global issue of our times. Tackling this crisis depends on fair and equitable access to vaccines. From the healthcare worker in a small island to a teacher in a refugee camp, to the elderly in care facilities across our countries, we must all be covered.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

From my first day, I have advocated for a return to the General Assembly's normal way of working. And we have succeeded. The Assembly has been meeting regularly and taking action on decisions and resolutions in person in line with appropriate health mitigation measures.



From 15 December, we have held 33 plenary meetings including: a briefing to the membership on my priorities for 2021; two informal meetings of the plenary on COVID-19 related business continuity issues; a plenary meeting on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine; a plenary meeting on the role of diamonds in fueling conflict; an informal meeting to hear a briefing by the Special Envoy on Myanmar; a high-level panel discussion to brief on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic; a meeting to hear a briefing by the Secretary-General on the Call to Action for Human Rights; an informal meeting on the humanitarian situation and human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic and many others.

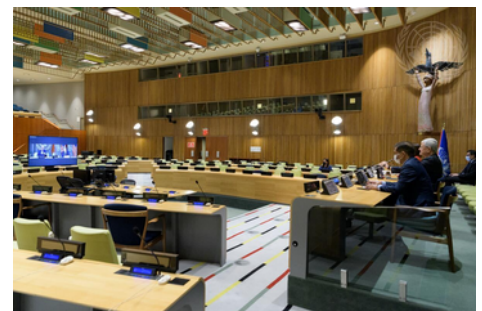


EVENTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS

In addition to our high-level events and General Assembly plenary meetings, I participated in many other important initiatives. I am encouraged by the active engagement of UN partners and civil society organizations. I spoke at opening of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council and gave opening remarks at the Annual High-Level Panel on Human Rights Mainstreaming. I joined the Secretary-General's ceremony to celebrate the successful conclusion of the main part of the 75th session, and participated at the Fourteenth UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and at the Special Event on Promoting the Rule of Law and Justice.

I joined the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development during their spring meeting, the Africa Regional Review Meeting, the Fifth UN Environment Assembly, UNCTAD's Meeting on E-Commerce and Digital Trade, the launch of the 'Report of the High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda' (FACTI Panel) and the launch of the fifth Global Report on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the UN Trafficking in Persons protocol. I participated at the High-level UN Friends of Vision Webinar, the handover ceremony of the chairmanship of the Group of 77 + China, the Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water, and addressed the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing on its 11th session. I also held a One-on-One Discussion with Civil Society, joined a fireside chat with the Sustainable Energy for ALL Youth Summit 2021 and took part of Global Citizen's campaign: A Recovery Plan for the World, among many others.

On 29 March, I virtually welcomed H.E. Mr. Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States to the United Nations to discuss some of the greatest challenges faced by our world today. The United States is a crucial friend, partner and host of the United Nations and I look forward to strengthening cooperation with the United States across the General Assembly agenda.

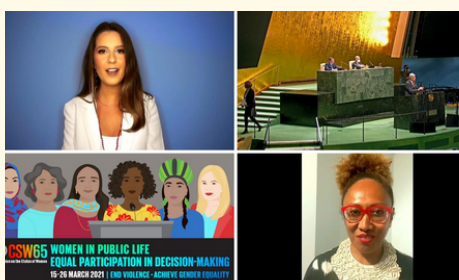


IN FOCUS - GENDER EQUALITY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

No country, in the 75-year history of the United Nations has achieved gender equality. As such this has been a key priority of the 75th session of the General Assembly, beginning with the high-level meeting to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, where 160 Member States outlined their commitments to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Following this, I met with the women Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, where I sought and thereafter heeded their advice.



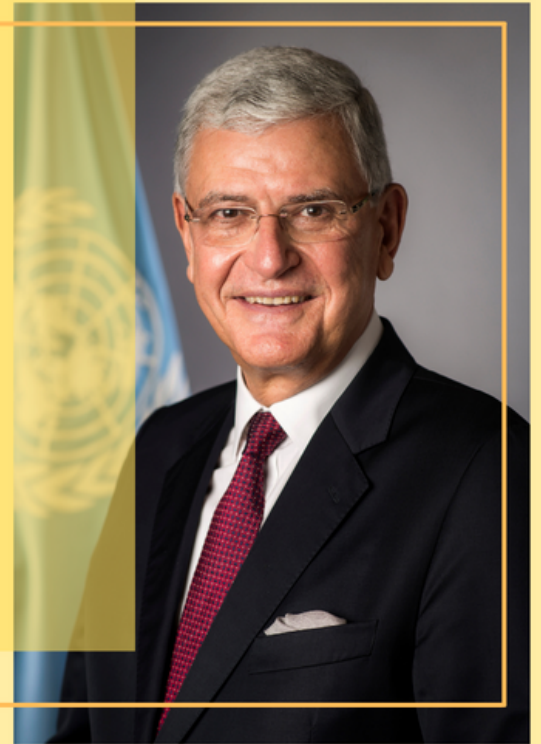
I was proud to become an International Gender Champion, wearing the pin as a badge of honour. I felt a responsibility to do more to advance the rights of women and girls throughout the work of the General Assembly, and I thus established a Gender Advisory Group comprised of experts from across the UN system and civil society. I continue to learn from them as we meet regularly, and as a result I have continued to engage in similar conversations with the Group of Friends on Gender Parity as well as the members of my own gender-balanced Cabinet. Indeed, I shared some of these latter discussions with the membership of the United Nations on my Twitter feed on International Women's Day.



IN FOCUS - GENDER EQUALITY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This was the beginning of a busy period on women's rights here at the United Nations, thereafter I addressed the membership and civil society at the opening of the Commission on the Status of Women. I was also delighted to host a special event entitled Political Leadership and Violence Against Women and Girls: Prevention First. This interactive discussion brought together experts to highlight the importance and urgency of action to prevent violence against women and girls and promote women's participation and leadership in all spheres. Furthermore, I was proud to deliver a keynote address at a CSW side event organized by the Permanent Mission of Turkey on Social Support Policies as a Tool for Women's Empowerment in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and to open the side event hosted by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences.

As an International Gender Champion, I have raised the issue of gender equality throughout my work, even when it was not set out on the agenda: from my bilateral meetings, to the opening of the 46th plenary of the Human Rights Council, I have continued to advocate for gender equality.



I assure you, I will continue to advocate for the empowerment of women and girls throughout the 75th session for it is up to each of us to uphold the rights of all women, and to make Generation Equality a reality.



COMMEMORATIONS

At events and on social media, I commemorated: World Braille Day, the General Assembly's first meeting, the International Year of Health and Care Workers, International Education Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the International Year of Creative Economies, the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, Chinese New Year, Nowruz, Women in Science Day, the International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers, World Radio Day, the World Day of Social Justice, International Mother Language Day, Zero Discrimination Day, World Wildlife Day, the International Day of Forests, International Women's Day, the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, French Language Day, World Down Syndrome Day, World Water Day, and World Meteorological Day, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, World Tuberculosis Day, the International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims, the International Day of Solidarity with Detained & Missing Staff Members.

