



INSIDE THE ISSUE

**COP26/
PROTECT THE
PLANET**

**ENGAGING CIVIL
SOCIETY/
REVITALIZATION**

**GENDER
EQUALITY/
HUMAN RIGHTS**

"Yes, it has been a tragic and challenging year. But this is a new session. We can fall back on the comfort and predictability of systems and procedures, of the UN machinery that fills our days. Or, we can choose to push forward and turn the page. We can choose to write a new chapter.

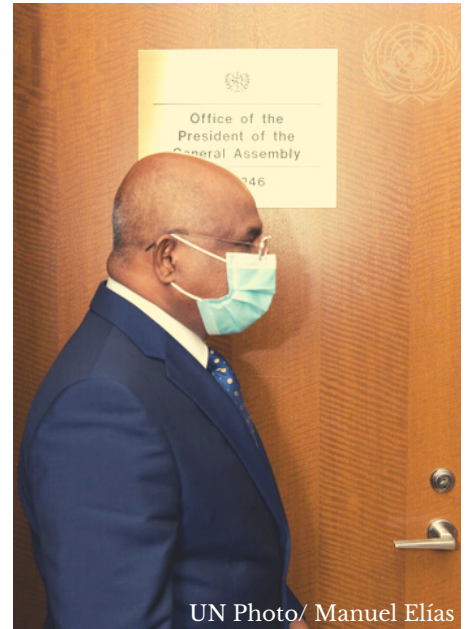
Let us choose the latter.

**Let us dare to dream and let us dare to hope, to embrace
the Presidency of Hope."**

*Abdulla Shahid
President of the UN General Assembly*



UN Photo/Evan Schneider



UN Photo/ Manuel Elías

HIGH-LEVEL WEEK

The UNGA76 High-Level Week welcomed 194 speakers, including 100 Heads of State, 52 Heads of Government, 3 Vice-Presidents, and 34 Ministers.

However, only 18 of the 194 speakers this year were women.

The President of the General Assembly held discussions with close to 70 heads of delegations of all levels.

The President also participated in all the high-level side events, including the SDG Moment, the commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration, UN Food Systems Summit, and the High-Level Energy Dialogue.



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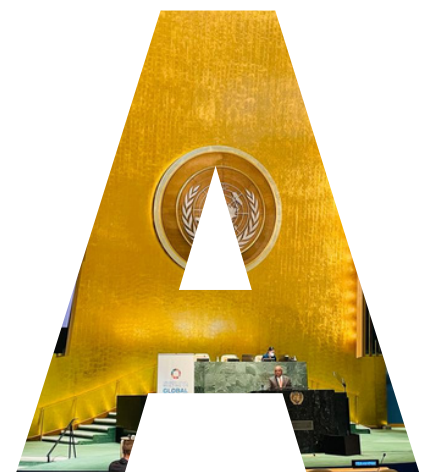
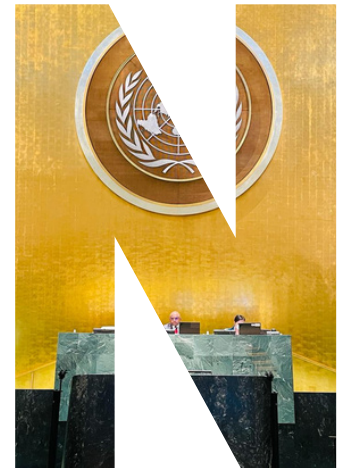
WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

During the main part of the 76th session, the General Assembly adopted more than 220 resolutions, and convened 54 formal plenary meetings and 16 informal plenary meetings. The General Assembly held elections for the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice, the International Law Commission, and other organs with pre-COVID balloting arrangements.

The Observer Status of the International Solar Alliance was conferred on 9 December, on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee.

I had the honour of appointing co-facilitators and co-chairs for 8 intergovernmental processes, of which 5 are women Ambassadors.

I organized and convened high-level plenary meetings to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and informal plenary meetings to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Volunteers Programme, the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, and World AIDS day.



BOARD OF ADVISORS FOR LLS: LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES



At the outset of my presidency, I announced my decision to re-constitute the Board of Advisers on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (LLS), established by my predecessor.

The 91 most vulnerable UN Member States in these categories are facing a myriad of structural, systemic, financial, socio-economic and environmental challenges to their attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These risks are even more pronounced due to the COVID19 pandemic.

This Board will continue to serve as a platform to strengthen cooperation and coordination, identify bottlenecks to action, and recommend solutions to maintain focus on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in the work of the General Assembly.

The first meeting of the Board was held on 9 November and focused on sustainable recovery from COVID.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION

Cities are facing unprecedented demographic, environmental, economic, social and spatial challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was cities that led the frontline response and will spearhead long-term recovery.

It is in this context that I will convene the High-Level Meeting to assess progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, in New York, scheduled for 28 April 2022.

To support my preparations for the High-Level Meeting, and help identify key messages for strategic advocacy and engagements to support implementation efforts throughout the 76th session, I decided to convene an Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanization.

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was held on 2 December 2021.



Henrik Holkenbri

DELIVERING CLIMATE ACTION

On 26 October, I convened a *High-level Thematic Debate on Delivering Climate Action: For People, Planet and Prosperity*.

The meeting allowed Member States one last push for climate ambition ahead of COP26 and highlighted the best practices and transformative partnerships that Member States and stakeholders could support to rapidly accelerate climate action.

By spotlighting the practical measures and policies needed to bridge the technical, funding and skills gap to 1.5, my goal was to help build a hopeful vision that counters the dispiriting narrative that the future will bring only more tragedy and loss.



UN Photo/ Manuel Elías

“Let us come together and reaffirm our commitment to solving this climate crisis. Let us put our faith in science and reason, share technologies and invest in climate friendly innovation.”

– Abdulla Shahid, President of the UN General Assembly



“My hope, after all, is not rooted in blind optimism, or in diminishing the gravity of the situation. I am from the Maldives, a country whose very existence is threatened by rising sea-levels. Our people, and all islanders, are vividly aware of this threat.

My hope derives from an honest assessment of the challenges before us, and on an understanding that we have the combined capacity to confront those challenges, if we work together.” –

President Shahid's Opening of Thematic Debate on Delivering Climate Action

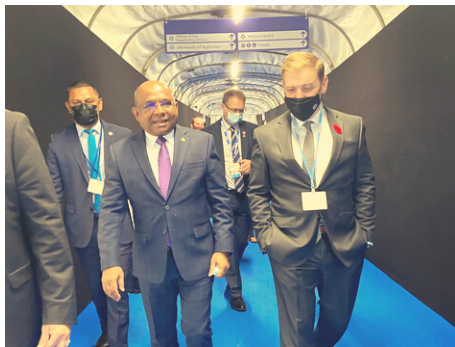
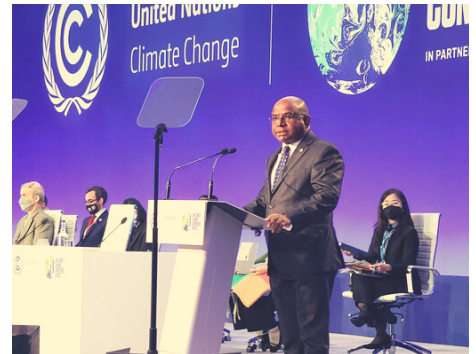
COP26

I am happy that I was able to participate at COP26 in Glasgow, to share with the international community the messages I gathered from the High-Level Thematic Debate on Delivering Climate Action.

At COP26, I used both my remarks to the Opening of the COP, as well as bilateral meetings with world leaders, to underscore critical points: the need to keep 1.5 degrees temperature goal alive, the urgency and necessity of climate finance, support for adaptation, and concluding the Paris Rulebook.

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet and hear first-hand experiences from young people, CSO representatives, women climate scientists, and other stakeholders.

The outcome of COP26 is not perfect, nor does it meet all our expectations, yet hope remains. From now until COP27, we must focus on implementing the Glasgow Climate Pact and to support efforts to raise ambition and keep momentum high.



“I leave Glasgow with cautious optimism; COP26 needs to reignite hope for people everywhere by recommitting to 1.5, by fleshing out details on how we will get there. The people of the world sense the urgency, now they need to know we have a clear pathway and timeline. I believe we are seeing that come together. The announcements on deforestation and on methane, combined with calls for finance, adaptation and net zero targets, are signs of progress.”

Abdulla Shahid

RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF ALL



An integral component of my priorities is mainstreaming human rights throughout the mandates and work of the General Assembly. For this reason, even before taking office I met with Women Ambassadors to solicit their views on how I could better deliver for gender equality.

This was followed by my meeting with Women Head of States and Governments, where I was able to hear and learn of their lived experiences and lessons learned, and a meeting with the Group of Friends on Gender Parity, which focused on climate change and gender equality. I also met with women scientists at COP26.

To date, I have met with women, girls, youth, and civil society representatives during my travels to the Maldives, Serbia, UAE, COP26, and China, and have ensured the inclusion and participation of women and youth in mandated and flagship events, including the Climate High Level dialogue convened on October 26.

I am pleased that under my Presidency the General Assembly commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, where Member States adopted a Political Declaration, as well as the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

RECONSTITUTION OF THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR GENDER EQUALITY

To strengthen delivery and action for gender equality, I have reconstituted the composition of the Advisory Board for Gender Equality and convened our first meeting on October 28 which identified priorities, best practices, and ways forward.

The composition of the Board has been expanded to bring in an extensive wealth of expertise and experiences to translate gender equality policies into action. The Advisory Board comprises of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, UN Agencies, and representatives of CSOs and NGOs.



TOWNHALL WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Advocating for in-person diplomacy and further reopening of the UN headquarters, I hosted almost 200 representatives of civil society in the General Assembly Hall on 17 November in a Town Hall meeting organized together with Secretariat.



I believe that a 'new normal' should also call for a new multilateralism: one not just limited to interactions between states, but one in which civil society plays a more prominent role in recovering better from the pandemic, and in shaping our common future.

President Shahid at the CSO Town Hall

My aim was to enhance inclusivity of all stakeholders including civil society, businesses, philanthropic organizations, academia, and the scientific community on discussions in the General Assembly.

This is the first CSO meeting in person at UNHQ since the start of the pandemic, with many more joining online.

I announced that, with effect from 3 January 2022, the annual and temporary UN grounds passes of civil society organizations with consultative status with the ECOSOC and / or formally associated with the DGC will be renewed.

This sets us on a path to returning to the full involvement of civil society in the work of the General Assembly.



HOLHUASHI DIALOGUES

Under the label ‘Holhuashi’, a Maldivian term for a place for informal communal gatherings, I continued the practice of morning dialogues with Permanent Representatives, to create opportunities for dialogue on issues related to the work of the General Assembly.

Five dialogues on five separate themes have been convened so far with topics relevant to matters related to the work of the United Nations.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

5 THEMES

15 October – *“Climate Change and Humanitarian Situations”*

29 October – *“More effective, engaging and impactful high-level meetings”*

12 November – *“Being inclusive - Small States at the United Nations”*

3 December – *“The “Decade of Recovery” – What next?”*

10 December - *“Cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional, and other organizations in the Context of COVID-19”*

Over 50 Ambassadors participated and summaries of each dialogue were circulated to the whole membership.

FELLOWSHIP FOR HOPE

In November, I launched the *President of the General Assembly's Harnessing Opportunities for Promoting Empowerment of Youth Fellowship – the PGA's Fellowship for HOPE*.

With the generous support of Member States, the Fellowship will benefit eight young diplomats over the remainder of the 76th session.

Drawing primarily from underrepresented countries at the United Nations, particularly from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the Fellowship will aim to open the doors to the inner workings of the United Nations.

The stint at the United Nations will include mentorship with senior diplomats and civil servants across the multilateral world. Fellows will have the opportunity to support and engage in High-Level events at the General Assembly, follow negotiation processes, and facilitate the management and execution of mandated events and initiatives.

Developed in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Fellowship will allow participants to garner a deeper understanding of the United Nations system, its organs and subsidiary bodies through training components that shall cover the full gamut of issues relevant to the world today, from climate change to COVID-19, from peace and security, to human rights and gender equality.

76TH SESSION FELLOWS



Ms. Margaret Tatenda
Chikawa, Zimbabwe



Ms. Kamukama Stella,
Uganda



Ms. Jaala Jeremiah,
Nauru



Mr. Javier D. M.
Spencer, Antigua and
Barbuda



Ms. Jigme Wangmo,
Bhutan



Mr. Phongsavath
Mahathilath, Lao PDR



Ms. Diedra Sealey,
Grenada



Mr. Mohamed Fofana,
Guinea

ROAD SAFETY



As mandated by the General Assembly, on 3 December, I held the one-day informal supporting event for the high-level meeting on improving global road safety, to take place on 30 June and 1 July 2022.

More than 40 speakers and panellists joined the discussion, which consisted of an interactive thematic dialogue on domestic and international financing for road safety, and multistakeholder engagement session.

These were two critical areas where enough progress was not seen in the First decade of action.

A summary will be circulated and feed into the preparations for the High Level Meeting on Road Safety to be held on 30 June and 1 July.



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS



On 22 Nov 2021, I convened the High-Level Meeting for the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to combat human trafficking. Ms. Kendall Alaimo, a trafficking survivor, artist and advocate had graciously allowed her artwork, entitled 'Survivors' Voices Lead the Way', to feature throughout the event and its associated campaigns.

Trafficking is first and foremost, a severe human rights violation, one that thrives off prejudices and systematic inequalities, discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.

As we develop anti-trafficking frameworks, and devise new methods of identifying and protecting victims, we must consider how the interplay of various prejudices and iniquities render individuals more vulnerable.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

I traveled to Dubai on 1 to 6 October 2021 where I participated at several events at the Dubai World Expo 2020, relating to climate and biodiversity. Expo 2020 is an initiative that both inspires and acts as a catalyst for creative, sustainable, and scalable solutions for society.

I engaged with officials of the UAE Government, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the UN Country Team and spoke at four events, including at the World Women's Majlis which focused on the inclusion of women in the climate discourse and decision making roles. I also visited the Dubai International Humanitarian City, which supports global operational distribution of PPE and other medical supplies.



THE MALDIVES

From 6 October to 9 October, I travelled to the Maldives on invitation of my country's government.

I met with the Maldives President, H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, and senior officials. We discussed ways to strengthen the voice of Small Island Developing States on topics such as climate adaptation and financing ahead of COP-26. Other topics covered include peace and security, recovery from COVID-19 as well as vaccine equity.

I also held my 1st 'Youth Holhuashi' Dialogue with over 70 students in Maldives.



SERBIA



I traveled to Serbia from 10 to 12 October 2021. I spoke at the opening of the High-Level Commemorative Meeting to mark the 60th Anniversary of the First Conference of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and met the President of Serbia, H.E. Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, and other authorities.

I also spoke with to representatives of Civil Society Organizations, women and youth groups to listen to their concerns on issues such as climate action, youth empowerment and gender.

The last time I was in Belgrade was for the 9th NAMS Summit in 1989. It was an honor to be back in this beautiful city.

GLASGOW COP26



From 30 October – 3 November 2021, I participated in the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow.

I delivered remarks at the formal Opening of the COP26, where I emphasized that humanity had the capacity and the tools to tackle the climate crisis but lacked the will to deliver. I urged everyone to choose to deliver!



On day 2 of COP26, I joined other world leaders at the World Leaders Summit. I also held a roundtable discussion with youth climate leaders, and held a special discussion with women scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

I left Glasgow with cautious optimism; COP26 needs to reignite hope for people everywhere by recommitting to 1.5 degrees temperature goal, they need to know we have a clear pathway and timeline.

CHINA

I visited China, from 23 November to 27 November 2021 on the invitation of the Chinese Government. I met with the Premier, the Foreign Minister and State Councillor of China, and Member of the Political Bureau and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee and of the CPC Central Committee. I also met with the UN Country team.

Topic of discussions included multilateralism, climate change, sustainable development, and recovery from COVID19.

I also took the opportunity to meet with students from the Foreign Affairs University of China and women representatives of the All China Women's Federation who shared details of their work on the frontlines during COVID19 pandemic.



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LOOKING AHEAD...

Looking ahead to the remainder of the 76th session, I have optimism for better days, and for a strong recovery from the pandemic. The resumed part of the session will commence mid-January 2022 with a briefing on my Priorities to the full membership. I look forward to your engagement and continued support, and I sincerely thank you for your commitment and dedication throughout the first months of my Presidency of Hope.

My first priority in 2022 will be to convene a High-Level Meeting on Universal Vaccination to emphasise that vaccination must leave no country, no region, and no one behind. I am planning to focus the Assembly on a sustainable recovery from COVID-19, with High-Level Thematic Debates on Tourism (April) as well as Debt Sustainability for Better Recovery jointly with ECOSOC (May). I also look forward to hosting a special 'Moment for Nature' event in July.

Other initiatives to be spearheaded by my Office include a Board of Advisors on Mental Health, the launch of the Women's Network of Leaders, and how the entire UN membership can own and contribute to Our Common Agenda. I will also have the pleasure of hosting a number of mandated events, covering everything from peacebuilding, and indigenous languages, to migration, and the New Urban Agenda. Beyond the many events, I will continue to champion our shared efforts on Security Council reform, and the Ad Hoc Working Group on revitalisation of the work of the Assembly.

Let us continue to maintain our emphasis on **delivering for people, for planet, and for prosperity.**

