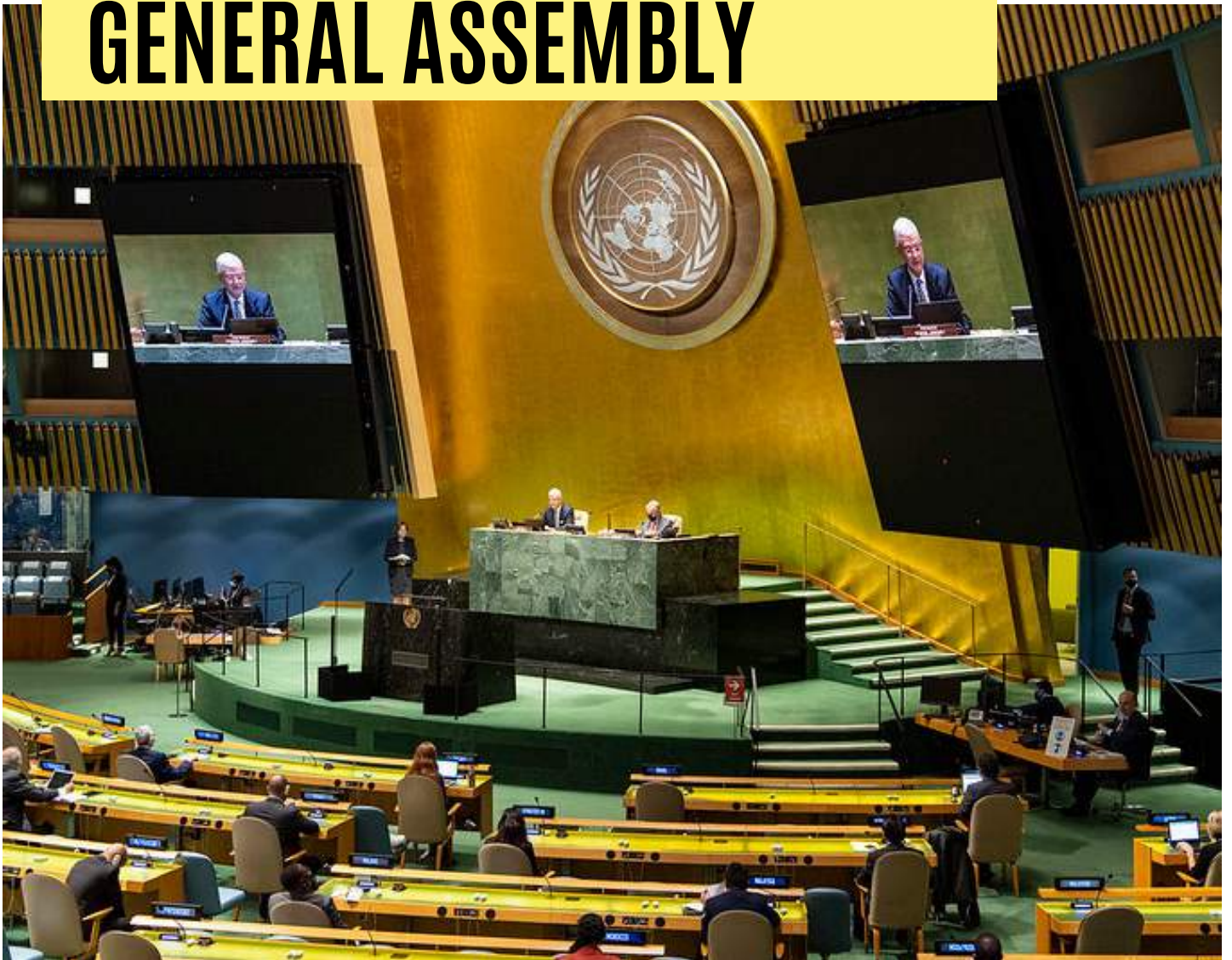


A YEAR IN PERSPECTIVE

75TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



H.E. Volkan Bozkir
President of the 75th session of the
United Nations General Assembly



MESSAGE FROM H.E. VOLKAN BOZKIR

When we started the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly we were in a very different place from where we are today.

Now, although there are many steps left on the path to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are on that path. And that path looks brighter, greener, and more sustainable than the path we were on.

Presiding over the United Nation's most representative body over the past year has given me a profound sense of hope. And that has been my main priority, to ensure the continuing functioning of the General Assembly, which is critical for the people we serve.



I am proud of what has been achieved during this historic 75th session. I thank all Member States for their support and trust, I also thank the United Nations Secretariat who ensures the General Assembly functions efficiently and effectively every day, and of course, I thank my team for their dedication and distinction. I am privileged to have served alongside you.

LEADING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

COVID-19 and Beyond

The COVID-19 pandemic tested the United Nations and the multilateral system as a whole.

At no time since the founding of the United Nations has the General Assembly been more needed and at no time since the founding of the United Nations has the General Assembly been as constrained by the very global developments for which it was designed to respond to.

It was this knowledge and this understanding that drove my every action and decision during the 75th session.



For the UN to remain true to the principles for which it was founded, we needed to re-open and work to deliver on behalf of the people we serve.

A STRONGER GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Despite the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly has emerged stronger.

I am proud to say that during the very earliest moments of the session, through the darkest days of the winter and into the end of the term, we have been vigilant in pushing for ever more in-person presence, for ensuring the nuance and delicacy of diplomacy, all the while adhering to safety protocols.

Through a combination of in-person meetings and online, and hybrid attendance, the six Main Committees of the General Assembly successfully concluded their extensive work. Furthermore, we have not only completed all mandated events during the 75th session but many of those postponed from the 74th session as well.

This is a testament to the joint power of Member States – what can be achieved when we work together towards our common objectives and goals.



THE FUTURE WE WANT THE UN WE NEED

Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to multilateralism

I was personally encouraged by the remarkable participation of world leaders during the High-Level Week in September 2020 and in particular the UN75 commemoration, which saw the adoption of the Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, an ambitious and forward-looking message of world leaders' commitment to meet the collective challenges facing us all.

This was the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly during the 75th session and set the tone for the entire session.

I am proud that in total, we convened, adopted and implemented:



103 Formal plenary meetings of the General Assembly

16 High-level Meetings

320+ General Assembly Resolutions

21 Mandates for negotiations and facilitation processes implemented (the highest number in recent years.)

STRONGER TOGETHER: 75 YEARS OF ACTION

The 75th anniversary year of the United Nations presented a moment of reflection for the Membership.

I often reminded delegations that the United Nations came into existence at a time of crisis, similar to that which we are currently navigating.

Based on an initiative of the women Ambassadors to the United Nations, I arranged a 're-signing' of the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, as a physical gesture of re-commitment to, and strengthening of, multilateralism. All Member States, Observer States, and the European Union, as well as the Secretary-General, joined me in signing the Preamble of the Charter.



A UNITED NATIONS THAT IS FIT FOR PURPOSE

I called for a United Nations that is fit for purpose, efficient, and effective in its operations to better deliver for the people.

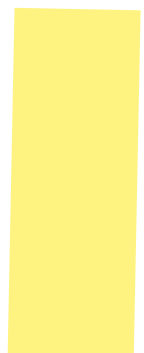
To this end, I enhanced interactions and coordination with the other principal organs of the United Nations throughout the session.

The Heads of all United Nations' principal organs participated in the UN75 High-level meeting, as well as at the commemoration of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

During this session, I held combined bi-monthly trilateral meetings with the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to streamline the work of the UN's principal organs and ensure mutually reinforcing efforts.



I am confident that our efforts to ensure the United Nations and the General Assembly are fit for purpose, will be enhanced and strengthen with a new term by the Secretary-General and with my successor for the 76th session. I was pleased to oversee their re-appointment and election respectively, during my Presidency.



FIGHTING COVID-19 TOGETHER

31st special session
in response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic tested both the United Nations and the multilateral system as a whole. On 3-4 December 2020, I hosted the 31st special session of the General Assembly in response to the pandemic. This was a historic gathering aimed at addressing the gravest challenge humanity has faced since the UN's founding.

A total of 147 Member States, 1 Observer, and 3 civil society organizations participated in the General Debate, including pre-recorded video messages from over 70 Heads of State and Government and 48 Ministers.

The special session galvanized concerted action to defeat COVID-19, strengthened multilateral cooperation, promoted access to vaccines, and put the world back on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

#VACCINES4ALL

Throughout my presidency, I advocated for fair and equitable access to vaccines for all. In this regard I launched my #Vaccines4All initiative, aimed at strengthening political and resource support for multilateral initiatives, to better manage the complexities of vaccine production, storage, distribution, and access.

I hailed the "Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines", signed by 181 countries, as a bold and principled support to solidarity, and to a truly multilateral approach to vaccine equity. My priority has been to urge the UN membership to take up this call for action and implement those commitments to see vaccines for all become a reality.

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

#UNGASS

3 – 4 December 2020 | United Nations Headquarters, New York



We must be able to rise to the challenge and our response should not simply target a return to the status quo ante.

We must start with ensuring fair and equitable access to vaccines.



HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS

We convened 16 High-level meetings that addressed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Member States, the United Nations system, civil society, youth champions, representatives from the private sector, and scientists discussed the multiple levers available to recover better.

-
- 01** High-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations

 - 02** Summit on Biodiversity

 - 03** High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

 - 04** High-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

 - 05** Joint informal High-level meeting of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development

 - 06** High-level meeting on implementation of the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda

 - 07** High-Level debate on Urban Safety, Security and Good Governance: Making Crime Prevention a Priority for All

HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS

-
- 08** High-Level thematic debate on Digital Cooperation and Connectivity
-
- 09** High-level Interactive dialogue on Antimicrobial Resistance
-
- 10** High-level event on Culture and Sustainable Development
-
- 11** High-Level debate on the Ocean
-
- 12** High-level meeting on HIV/AIDS
-
- 13** High-level dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
-
- 14** High-level meeting on Middle-Income Countries
-
- 15** High-level forum on the Culture of Peace
-
- 16** High-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests



UNITED AGAINST CORRUPTION

32nd special session

From 2 to 4 June 2021, I held a special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation.

During the opening segment, a Political Declaration was adopted by consensus. This landmark text reflects Member States' readiness to more effectively address corruption and illicit financial flows.

120 speakers at the highest political level including eight Heads of State, two Heads of Government, three Deputy Prime Ministers, and twenty-one Ministers participated at the session. In addition, five inter-governmental organizations and six civil society representatives also made statements.



ADDRESSING THE MOST PRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES

During the 75th session, the General Assembly addressed the most pressing human rights and peace and security issues.

I convened a Joint Debate on the Situation in the Middle East and the Question of Palestine, following a request from the Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Chair of the Arab Group. In doing so, we ensured the General Assembly assumed its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations and met to address the grave situation on the ground. The announcement of a ceasefire, as the joint debate was taking place, was a significant development. I am also proud that this was the first High-level in-person meeting at the United Nations headquarters since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, with 14 Ministers participating in person.

Throughout the session, the General Assembly also met to listen from the High-level Panel on the Human Rights Situation in Syria, a briefing by the Secretary-General on the Situation in Syria and we had a meeting to consider the report of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIIM).

In February and June 2021, in accordance with resolution 75/238 and following requests from groups of Member States, I convened two meetings to hear briefings on the situation of human rights in Myanmar by the Special Envoy on Myanmar, Ms. Christine Schraner-Burgener.





FOCUSING ON THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

People in need, or under oppression, should feel that their concerns are being considered in the United Nations. In fact, they expect the General Assembly to act on their behalf, to deliberate on their behalf.

Throughout my term, I sought to draw links between the issues on the agenda of the General Assembly and how they impact the most vulnerable people we serve, including during my official visits.



In our efforts, let us put the people we serve front and center. Our UN Charter is a product of 'We the Peoples'. Let us consider these people as individuals, with varied circumstances and challenges, hopes and dreams.





I also established the Board of Advisers on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to highlight and address the myriad structural, systemic, financial, socio-economic, and environmental challenges they face.

The Membership of the Board comprised of Chairs of LDCs, AOSIS, LLDCs, as well as the Administrator of the UN Development Programme, the Under-Secretary-General for the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, and the chiefs of the New York Offices of the UN Conference on Trade and Development and the UN Office on Disaster Risk Reduction.



A FIRM COMMITTMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

At each event – and each travel abroad – I have underscored the need to empower women and girls, and to use the opportunity provided by the pandemic recovery to reignite progress towards gender equality.

Even before the session started, I made sure women's voices were represented within my gender-balanced cabinet. Women constituted 56% of my team, and they also filled half of the leadership roles.

At the outset of the 75th session, I convened the High-level meeting on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The theme of the High-level Meeting was “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”. 160 Member States outlined their commitments to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Thereafter, I met with the Group of Friends on Gender Parity, and henceforth my approach to gender equality was characterized by partnerships with women across the United Nations system and civil society.



I was proud to become an International Gender Champion and I felt a responsibility to do more to advance the rights of women and girls throughout the work of the General Assembly. I thus established a Gender Advisory Group comprised of experts from across the UN system and civil society, which provided both normative and operational insights to enrich the mainstreaming of gender equality throughout the session.

I participated in the opening of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and, upon the advice of my Gender Advisory Group, I convened a signature event on 23 March 2021, on “Political Leadership and Violence Against Women and Girls: Prevention First”. The special event sought to address the barriers to women’s political leadership, particularly as it pertained to violence against women.

Lastly, I am pleased by the election of an all-female bureau of the Second Committee for the 76th session, as well as the gender balance in the election of the Chairpersons of the Main Committees. I encourage Member States to continue to put women candidates forward until we achieve full gender balance in all elected positions in the organization.



COMMUNICATIONS & TRANSPARENCY

Communicating the work of the General Assembly to Member States, world leaders, media outlets, the wider United Nations community, civil society and the general public was a priority during the 75th session.

From the website to the daily spokesperson briefings, media advisories, press conferences, periodic newsletters on activities and visits, and a very active presence on Twitter, my office was highly committed to communicating our work and upholding high standards of transparency and accountability.



VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS REAL WORLD DELIVERY

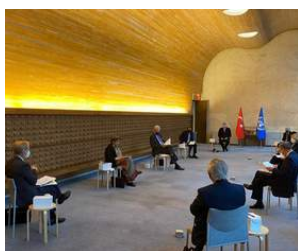
Due to limitations pertaining to in-person meetings and events, we had to make specific decisions to ensure we remained engaged through this session. To this end, I participated in more than 100 events via video messages, which are all accessible on my website and on the official UNWEBTV channel.



MORNING DIALOGUES

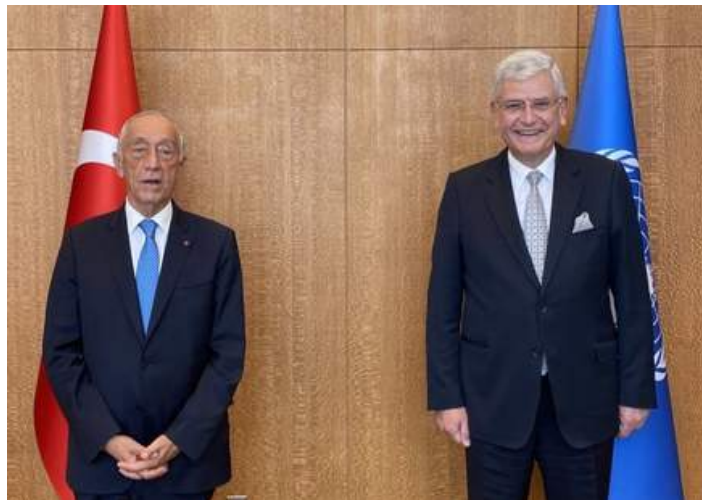
During the 75th session, we continued the tradition of hosting Morning Dialogues, a space for Member States to discuss in an informal setting, openly and frankly, the most topical issues of our time.

Some of the topics we discussed were: Action for the Most Vulnerable, Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals, Digital Cooperation and Connectivity, The Risk of Famine, Reform and Revitalization, and Energy For All.



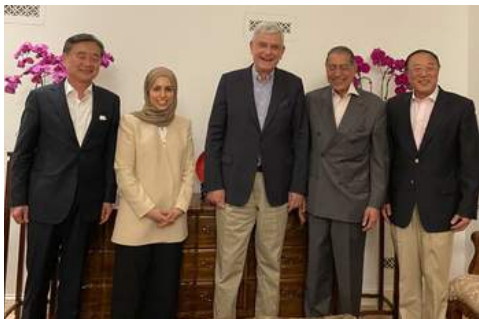
ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBER STATES

All of our achievements in this session would not have been possible without the trust and cooperation of Member States. I thank all of you for the support you have placed in me and continue to show the United Nations.











OFFICIAL TRAVELS

I have seized every opportunity on my official travels as President of the General Assembly to help highlight pressing human rights and humanitarian priorities, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable people.

During my official travels, I carried the flag of the United Nations with me and the message that we are working on behalf of the people we serve, to support them in whatever situation they may be in.



01

Turkey (Ankara - Hatay), Qatar, Azerbaijan

- 8-10 April 2021

02

Bangladesh (Dhaka - Cox's Bazar) and Pakistan

- 25-27 May 2021

03

Kenya

- 28 June – 1 July 2021

04

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

- 4-10 July 2021

05

Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados

- 22-28 July 2021

06

Kuwait

31 July – 2 August 2021

TURKEY (ANKARA - HATAY)



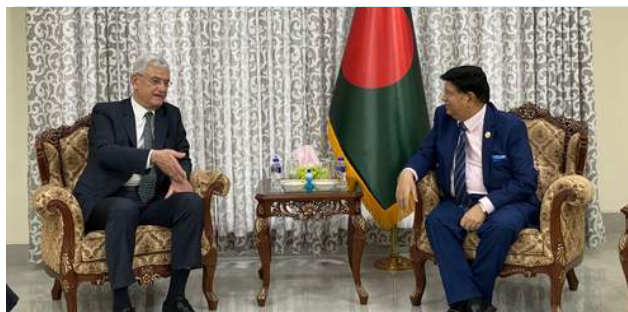
QATAR



AZERBAIJAN



BANGLADESH (DHAKA - COX'S BAZAR)



PAKISTAN



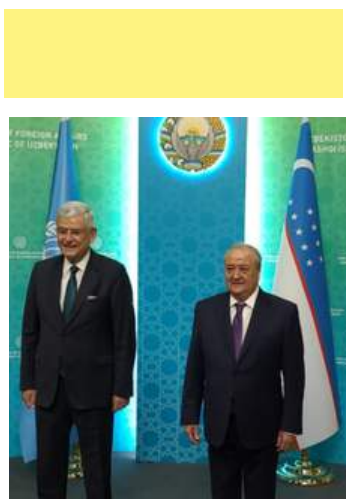
KENYA



TURKMENISTAN



UZBEKISTAN



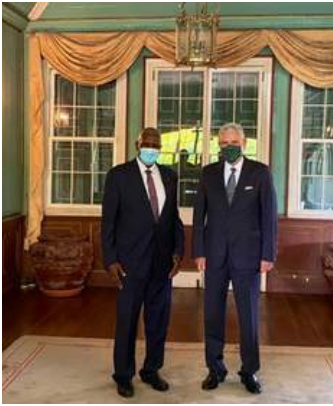
KAZAKHSTAN



KYRGYZSTAN



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



BARBADOS



KUWAIT



As I leave office, my hope is that the 75th session will be remembered for its perseverance and its commitment to multilateralism. During a year of profound challenges, of global and personal strife for so many, the General Assembly began the hard process of re-opening its doors, of showing the world that it remained committed to the principles of the Charter, and vigilant in its promise to leave no one behind.

TO MY OUTSTANDING TEAM

Thank you.
I am proud of the work we
have accomplished together
this session.
I know you'll continue to
flourish and uphold the
principles of the Charter of
the United Nations.

