



STATEMENT BY H.E. HON. UHURU KENYATTA PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

H.E. Abdulla Shahid, President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly,
H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you today in this 76th session of the General Assembly. I congratulate you Mr. President on your election to preside over the 76th Session, and assure you of Kenya's full support during your

The theme for this Year's Session — 'Building resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19' — has inspired my address today.

The Secretary General in his report on Our Common Agenda observed, and I quote: "Humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: breakdown or breakthrough."

The world needs to take seriously this warning from the Secretary General.

In doing this I urge the following immediate multilateral actions:

(i) First, we must put equitable global vaccine access at the core of "Building Back Better" from the COVID-19 pandemic;

(ii) Second, we need to provide tangible climate financial support to developing countries and ensure that a significant portion of "green manufacturing" is located in developing countries;

(iii) Third, we must align our conflict resolution tools to the strategic shift in threats to regional and international peace and security;

(iv) Fourth, we must strengthen the competence of states to manage diversity and regional trust between citizens and institutions, and between citizens and their leaders.

As of a week ago, close to five thousand Kenyans had succumbed to COVID-19. We mourn these Kenyans and the 4.7 million lives that have been lost around the world. The pandemic's devastating impact on global travel, tourism, supply chains and investment has caused the deepest economic recession in nearly a century.



Kenya responded swiftly and boldly to contain the pandemic; and, as a result, the human toll, though most distressing, pales in comparison to other parts of the world.

While we also undertook measures to cushion different sectors of our economy, the economic pain has been, pronounced. Now is the time to rebuild;

To rebuild successfully requires a worldwide response in confidence and investment to enable production and consumption to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels. The surest way to building that confidence is by making vaccines available to the world, in an equitable and accessible manner. That, sadly, is currently not the case. The asymmetry in the supply of vaccines reflects a multilateral system that is in urgent need for repair.

At the heart of the global effort to “Building Back Better”, we must make concerted, structural changes that should enable a quantum increase in investment and technology transfers. Not as charity, but instead driven by enlightened self-interest and solidarity.

A fast-developing Africa will offer the entire world the benefit of its demographic dividend of youth and vast investment opportunities. Africa can become an engine of sustainable global growth and an exporter of peace and stability and transformative prosperity.

Excellencies, many leaders have noted, on previous occasions, the need to deliver concurrently economic recovery linked to climate change action. As COP-26 approaches, we should aim to make clear commitments that contribute to developing country investments in green manufacturing and the infrastructure it requires.

A “Green Building Back Better” that delivers jobs and shared prosperity, will win the support of the young generation and intensify the drive towards climate change action.

Mr. President,

Kenya is ready to become a leading green industry country. We have mounted a strong climate change response. We have submitted an updated National Determined Contribution (NDC) plan that aims to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 32% by 2030.

Kenya also has a “Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016-2030)”, which will enable us to achieve higher economic growth and support a low-carbon development path.

Kenya has also identified a range of ocean based adaptation priorities to integrate Ocean-based climate solutions with the global response to climate change.

We look forward to co-hosting the second United Nations Ocean Conference with Portugal in late June 2022, to galvanise commitments and partnerships that will promote ambitious global ocean action, and scale up investments in the Blue Economy.

This follows Kenya’s successful co-hosting of the first global “Sustainable Blue Economy Conference” in 2018, with Japan, Canada and other partners.



Mr. President,

Kenya is, blessed with a youthful, well-educated, and productive population that has managed to build one of the most vibrant mixed economies in Africa.

We are implementing ambitious programmes to prepare the country to produce decent and rewarding jobs. Our investments in roads, air and port infrastructure, and critical health care facilities throughout the country, are the most extensive and ambitious in our history.

We have also delivered a national competency based curriculum and on universal access to schooling, which will further boost competitiveness of our workforce.

My Administration is simultaneously focusing on the immediate needs of our people. We have targeted 3.3 million households that are most at risk and in the process achieved a 50 percent reduction in the number of food insecure Kenyans.

By next year, we will have achieved a 27% reduction in malnutrition among children under 5 years of age, created 1,000 agro-processing SMEs and 600,000 new jobs. We will also have recorded a 48% increase in agriculture sector contribution.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the President-in-Office of African, Caribbean and Pacific States Organisation, I convened and chaired an extraordinary inter-Sessional Virtual Summit, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in June last year.

We made the Nairobi "Nguvu ya Pamoja" Declaration calling for the need to transcend the COVID-19 pandemic through global solidarity.

I also recently hosted the inaugural Africa – CARICOM Summit, during which we re-established the critical need for peoples of African descent to strengthen our economic and political linkages. It was a historic and proud moment for me personally to be part of the great legacy of Pan Africanism in our world!

What ties these events, and others that I have participated in during the last year, is the collective conviction that the global system is not working well for all our people and all our regions.

The unequal trade and investment patterns, the outflows of illicit finance and inflows of illicit small arms and light weapons, the extraction versus production mentality, are all escalating global inequality, fragility, conflict and violence. Many of the tools at our disposal to deal with these challenges are not living up to their promise. One such core tool is the United Nations Security Council in which Kenya has been an elected an active member since the beginning of the year.



In October 2021, Kenya will assume the Presidency of the Security Council. During that period, I will chair several signature-events. These include; one, how we can make an appreciation for diversity, a core aim in promoting state building and the pursuit of peace. Second, how illicit small arms and light weapons impact peacekeeping operations; and third is how to better support and promote women peacekeepers and peace builders.

Excellencies,

In many countries, we are witnessing state fragility that leads to protracted crises. This fragility is, driven mainly by inability of countries to manage diversity within nations, thus offering militant and terrorist groups opportunities to create social discontent and control large territories within affected countries.

The tools to deal with these crises are not proving adequate; so we must work to improve their capabilities. The most important task we can undertake is to increase the competence of states to manage both political and social diversity within their nation states.

Indeed, countries must do so in a way that strengthens the trust between citizens and public institutions and citizens and their leaders. I believe that the tough experiences that Kenya has had, and our determination to rise above them, are a good case study for other states.

Mr. President,

I am proud to lead a country that has worked hard to deepen its democracy and to entrench the rule of law, embracing all in the society irrespective of race, colour, gender or religious affiliation.

Throughout my tenure as the President, I have led a nation that is marching forward to attain the "Greatness We Believe, Is In Us". I am proud to have furthered that ambition by building bridges of unity and inclusion for all.

I want every Kenyan to know and to be proud of how our nation, Kenya, is highly regarded in the "Community of Nations".

Kenyans must never forget the hand-of-friendship that extended to us on various times, by many states seated in this General Assembly; nor what our contribution has been to the international community.

Finally, Kenya must never forget those countries that still struggle against occupation and illegal sanctions that cause suffering and undermine the human rights of people in our world.

As I conclude, we offer our solidarity and commitment as a Member State of the United Nations to undertake the journey back to recovery and to prosperity, "building forward better" in a multilateral system that is fair and effective.

Mr. President, I Thank You. God Bless You All!