



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
1 April 2020

Original: English

---

## Seventy-fourth session

Agenda item 4

### Election of the President of the General Assembly

#### **Letter dated 26 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

I have the honour to submit herewith a letter addressed to you by Ambassador Volkan Bozkır, Turkey's candidate for the role of President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly (see annex), and his vision statement (see enclosure), in accordance with General Assembly resolution [71/323](#).

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 4.

(Signed) Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 26 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

I hereby present my vision statement for the presidency of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, prepared in line with General Assembly resolution [71/323](#).

I would be pleased, if the present letter and my vision statement (see enclosure) could be circulated to the Member States.

As you may recall, I visited New York from 19 to 31 January 2020 as part of my campaign for the presidency of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. During my visit, I participated in the monthly meeting of the Western European and other States, during which I had the opportunity to share my vision. Following this meeting, my candidature was endorsed by the group on 27 February 2020.

As the candidate endorsed by my regional group, I had planned to travel back to New York on 15 March for one week, in order to meet with the monthly chairs and representatives of other regional groups, as well as with the chairs and coordinators of other groups of States.

It was my intention to share my vision with the wider United Nations membership and to receive their suggestions for and expectations regarding the next President of the General Assembly.

However, I had to reschedule my New York programme owing to the unfortunate circumstances related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, a global health crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations.

I wholeheartedly believe that the overarching priority is to ensure the health and safety of people. With this understanding, I commend the prompt measures that you have taken together with the Secretary-General and the President of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the sense of solidarity and cooperation that the whole United Nations family has displayed.

I would also like to express my support for the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, launched on 25 March 2020 by the Secretary-General, for the protection of the most vulnerable people around the world from this health crisis.

Let me also extend my sincere condolences to the countries and families who have already suffered the loss of their citizens or their loved ones and wish a speedy recovery to those affected by the coronavirus disease.

My vision statement coincides with a time during which the COVID-19 pandemic has yet to reach its peak. At present, it is hard to predict its longer-term consequences on the United Nations agenda and our daily lives. Therefore, circumstances may oblige me to make certain adjustments to my priorities during my term as President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

We all are in this together, and I am confident that we shall overcome this crisis together.

*(Signed)* Volkan **Bozkır**

## **Enclosure**

### **Vision statement by the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Ambassador Volkan Bozkır, as candidate for the presidency of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly**

#### **Foreword: 45 years of public service in a founding Member State of the United Nations**

The Government of the Republic of Turkey had announced her candidature for the position of President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, from the Western European and other States in 2014. On 12 September 2019, the Government of the Republic of Turkey officially nominated me to this position and my candidature was endorsed by the group on 27 February 2020.

The elections are scheduled to take place on 8 June 8 2020. With the confidence to be expressed by the Member States, I will be the first Turkish citizen to preside over the General Assembly.

As a career diplomat and politician for over 45 years, I have spent my entire professional life in public service.

In the latter part of my career, I have extensively worked on Turkey's relations with the European Union, as Deputy Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for European Union Affairs, Secretary-General for European Union Affairs and most recently as Turkey's Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator.

In these capacities, I have led the reform agenda of my country, including the constitutional changes towards the strengthening of political and civil rights.

Turkey is a founding member of the United Nations, one of the top contributors to its budget and a consistent contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Turkey hosts a sizeable United Nations presence, including a large country team and several regional offices of various United Nations system entities, with Istanbul steadily becoming a United Nations regional hub.

The United Nations presence in Turkey also attends to the basic humanitarian needs of approximately 4 million Syrians who are under temporary protection in my country, as well as to those in need in Syria through cross-border humanitarian assistance.

Overall, Turkey's institutional ties with the United Nations have always been solid.

#### **What makes the General Assembly so eminent?**

The General Assembly is the only United Nations organ where all Member States have an equal voice, embodying the collective conscience and will of the international community.

I am pleased to observe that there is a growing sense of awareness among the Member States about the unmatched legitimacy and the convening power of the General Assembly. Accordingly, over the years, the nature of the role of the President of the General Assembly has evolved and expanded to attain a more political character.

Coming from Turkey, a Member State that genuinely believes in the eminent role of the General Assembly, I am fully conscious of this change and the greater responsibilities that it entails. I am equally ready and committed to discharge these responsibilities with the utmost care.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations gives us a unique opportunity to renew our commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the Organization therein.

### **My pledge for the presidency of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly**

During my term of office, I will represent the membership as a whole, take the views and interest of all Member States into account and reconcile them to the best of my abilities.

In line with the existing scope of the mandate of the President of the General Assembly, I will be the guardian of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. In that regard, I will ensure the smooth implementation of the agenda and the efficient management of the session, and I will abide by the code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly.

I find it important that the Secretary-General and the PGA work in harmony. My efforts and activities will therefore complement the agenda and priorities of the Secretary-General. Among other things, this means supporting the implementation of the United Nations reform agenda and the 2020 vision of the Secretary-General.

Within this framework, I will also work towards consolidating the much-needed trust and cohesion among the Member States, major groups of countries and other international organizations.

The President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly already has a wide range of mandates deriving from previous sessions. Taking into account the existing heavy workload of delegations, especially small ones, I do not intend to start new initiatives or create new fields of work for the General Assembly.

I will choose quality over quantity. In this respect, I will aim for a streamlined working agenda and concrete results and observe the balance between the three pillars of the Organization's work. I will also guide the work of the General Assembly in an effective, transparent and inclusive manner.

I will allow continuity with the work of the previous Presidents of the General Assembly through building on their achievements and successful initiatives and make improvements where necessary. The views and suggestions of Member States will be essential to make this possible.

The overall agenda of our organization requires close coordination among the decision-making bodies of the United Nations. I will try to address the gaps and duplications in different agendas. I will regularly raise these issues during the monthly meetings with the presidents of other main organs of the Organization, including the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the Secretary-General.

### **Issues I will give priority to during my term**

1. We are commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations under the theme "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism". This overall theme shall guide the general debate of the seventy-fifth session in addition to all other activities, meetings and conferences organized by the United Nations in 2020.

We should take full advantage of this historic anniversary to underline the irreplaceable nature of the rules-based international system, as well as the imperative to consolidate it.

The principle of multilateralism and a rules-based international system are also essential to fulfil the core mandates prescribed in the Charter of the United Nations.

As the seventy-fifth anniversary programme concerns the Presidents of both the seventy-fourth and the seventy-fifth sessions of the General Assembly, in order to ensure continuity and coherence, I will be closely coordinating on the preparations and the implementation of the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations with the President of the seventy-fourth session of the Assembly.

2. I intend to place an emphasis on the need to advance the United Nations collective agenda for humanity with particular attention to vulnerable groups, people in need and people under oppression.

This agenda provides us with an opportunity to see where we stand in addressing humanitarian needs, reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

The United Nations is the most important platform for giving voice to the most vulnerable, namely, refugees, immigrants and stateless persons.

Hence, we also need to look at our objective of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with an emphasis on humanitarian action in a world of growing inequalities.

I will especially endeavour to contribute to the efforts of the international community and United Nations initiatives to ensure impartial and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance and full respect for international humanitarian law in conflicts and crises.

3. The Sustainable Development Goals are the most transformative set of objectives, yet they cannot be achieved without strengthened global partnership. To support this within my mandate, I will be working closely with the Deputy Secretary-General.

As we enter the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to ensure that countries in special situations, including the least developed countries, remain a priority, as they are lagging behind the most in implementation of the Goals.

As it happily coincides with my term, the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Doha from 21 to 25 March 2021, will be an opportunity for renewed and strengthened partnership.

Applying emerging technologies accelerates the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for the most vulnerable. I will attach special importance to result-oriented action when it comes to addressing the complex development needs of the least developed countries. In this respect, I hope we can benefit from the experience gained during the formation of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, which was the first target of the Sustainable Development Goals to have been achieved.

4. Throughout my professional life, I have been fully committed to the goals of improving the living standards and the rights of women, ensuring their full and equal participation in all spheres of life and strengthening their status within society.

I wholeheartedly support the Secretary-General in his objective of achieving gender parity at all levels of the United Nations.

Women have been active agents of positive change. In this respect, women can play a unique role in reviving our collective commitment to multilateralism and a more inclusive vision for a better future.

The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held on 23 September 2020 on the margins of the general debate, will be instrumental in accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

### **My principles**

Like my predecessors, I will be working with a multinational team. The principles of professionalism, merit and expertise, as well as regional and gender balance, will determine the composition of my team. I intend to keep the size of the team not larger than necessary. The valuable contributions of Member States will be most welcome to make this team effort a success.

In the execution of my responsibilities, I will work closely with the representatives of Member States as colleagues. Consensus-building will be one of my core efforts during my tenure. To this end, I will use, to the extent possible, the moral authority and soft power of the role of President of the General Assembly.

Efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and non-discrimination will be the guiding principles of my presidency and my team will operate on the basis of openness, inclusivity and transparency.

### **A last word**

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the measures taken to contain its spread have recently emphasized that the agenda and the activities of the United Nations should focus on the issues directly affecting our citizens across continents.

Close coordination within the wider United Nations system, adopting a holistic approach and the efficient use of our time will be the key to our success. Depending on the developments in the period ahead, I, as the President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, will contribute with the best of my abilities to the collective efforts of the international community to fight against this pandemic and mitigate its consequences.

With this vision and objectives in mind, I would highly appreciate the most valuable support of the Member States for my candidature.

Ankara, 26 March 2020