

Your excellency Mr Abdullah Shaheed, president of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, your excellency Mr Antonio Gutierrez, Secretary General of the United Nations, your excellencies Heads of state and government, distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

I wish to begin by congratulating your excellency Mr Abdullah Shaheed on your election as president of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that your wealth of knowledge and vast experience in multilateral issues will lead to a successful discharge of the important responsibilities of the Assembly throughout this session. Zambia stands to work with you as you execute your mandate in presiding over the matters of this session. To the outgoing president his excellence Mr Vulcan Bosek I wish to convey Zambia's appreciation for your commendable service to the UN family during the 75th session.

Mr President, I have the distinct honor to deliver my maiden speech as the seventh president of the republic of Zambia following the electoral victory of our United Party for National Development, UPND, in the presidential and general elections that were held on the 12 August 2021. I am pleased to inform this august house that the people of Zambia the republic of the people of Zambia once again rose the occasion to usher in a new government through a peaceful election. This has enabled Zambia to further consolidate our democratic credentials, which serve as an inspiration to the African continent, where the outcome of our election was determined by those who vote and not those who count votes. Very important, we are therefore proud to provide leadership in our country where people aspire for a free and just society and where they aspire for their voices to be heard.

Mr President, we were able to achieve this political transformation even at the time when Zambia was grappling with the covid-19 pandemic and in the midst of deep sorrow following the passing on of our founding father and first republican president Dr Kenneth David Kaunder. I therefore wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the people of Zambia to pay tribute to pay tribute to this icon leader who was fondly known in our country and elsewhere as Keke. It is without doubt that the last remaining strain of liberation struggles has left an indelible mark on humanity. Dr Kaunder's principles, values, contributions towards the ideals of emancipation and independence did not only spread across the African continent, but across the entire globe. His unfolding devotion to peace and unity laid the very foundation for Zambia's stature as a beacon of peace not only in southern Africa but on the African continent as a whole. The Zambian government will therefore build upon Keke's profound legacy to live in peace and harmony with one another as we work towards this year's theme. Let us remember the important lessons that Dr Kaunder taught us, especially as we work towards revitalizing the UN system.

Mr President, the covid-19 pandemic has had a far-reaching social economic impact globally including disturbing trade flows, supply chains, and various economic activities on our continent in the world. In addition to loss of lives, the pandemic increased poverty levels through job losses, stressed health care systems, and we're still the delivery of education to learners. Disruption to the education systems, particularly in developing countries, was in part due to inadequate information communication and technology - ICT facilities within our countries. In response to the pandemic, Zambia

has developed a national preparedness and response plan for covid-19 which has been used to guide the implementation of mitigation measures for the pandemic the vaccine program forms an integral part of the response plan in our country despite our placing the vaccine program high on the list of mitigation measures. Zambia has only managed to vaccinate a mere 3 percent of its population. This is again as the country's target of vaccinating 70 percent of the eligible population by the third quarter 2022. This clearly highlights the inequitable access to vaccines developing countries, especially that more than 2 billion vaccines have been administered worldwide.

Mr President, it is fair to state that recovery from the pandemic hinges upon mass-vaccinations before considering other reforms or facilities that tend to fail when countries lock down the economies. It is therefore gratifying that this session of the General Assembly will consider building on initiatives such as the African vaccine acquisition. coveted 19 you know acquisition trust sorry for kobe 19 avat and kobe 19 vaccines global access coverts the two initiatives have made it possible for low-income countries such as our own, Zambia, to access life-saving vaccines which will contribute to building resilience and recovery from the pandemic. I wish therefore to express Zambia's appreciation for the support that has been provided thus far through the COVAX and avat facilities the un system and various stakeholders have benefited from to further guarantee resilience we call for the concerted and enhanced global efforts towards promoting investments particularly in local manufacturing capacity and technology transfer on vaccines, related infrastructure, human capital, as well as research and development, r&d.

Mr president, the new administration in Zambia is cognizant that a conducive governance environment is a precursor for the country's political stability security economic growth and sustainable development it also fosters enhanced transparency accountability and consultative dialogue very important with this realization our administration will work towards strengthening of oversight governance institutions and ensure the independence and autonomy of the three arms of government particularly the legislature and the judiciary the fight against corruption will be at the center of our transformation agenda and this shall be expected to be executed with zero tolerance to corruption zero tolerance to corruption we shall also promote free media and an active civil society as they are critical in upholding checks and balances human rights liberties and freedoms

mr president, my government my government's high priority is to restore macroeconomic stability attain fiscal undead sustainability promote economic growth enhance economic diversification and manage the contraction of debt i am confident that these measures will restore macroeconomic stability and put the country back on economic recovery to sustain this growth Zambia will dedicate efforts to guarantee a stable unpredictable environment that will attract and protect local regional and foreign direct investment as well as enhance local participation in our economy very important this is a prerequisite for a vibrant private sector led economy and thus create jobs and opportunities for all our people

Mr president to complement these efforts Zambia has embarked on an ambitious economic and social transformation agenda with a view to creating equitable opportunities and poverty reduction for the Zambian people especially the youth and the women who actually delivered our election victory in our country. In order to achieve this goal our administration shall design and implement interventions aimed at inducing enhanced productivity in agriculture mining energy financial services tourism technology

health and education as well as support the growth of micro small and medium enterprises despite these well thought out interventions today's world economy is more complex than ever before given the numerous global concerns including pandemics climate change and indeed illegal human migration. It is imperative that we adapt to these effects of globalization by fostering key partnerships and the deepening integration at all our levels at all levels so to say this is critical to ensure that we realize our aspirations of restoring Zambia on a path to sustainable economic growth and development.

Mr president, Zambia is aware of the critical role of the united nations in guiding the world to focus on the sustainable development agenda in particular the 2030 agenda for sustainable development has set the tone and benchmarks for countries to incorporate sustainable sustainability in their development policies our new dawn government in zambia is committed to realizing tangible growth and sustainable development while paying particular attention so that this is not achieved at the expense of future generations. Like many other developing countries, Zambia calls for closer cooperation and support for capacity to adopt better safer climate changes sensitive and modern methods of increased production and productivity. Our administration has established a ministry that is the first of its kind in Zambia the ministry of green economy and the environment to address this among other important issues concerning environmental system sustainability it became important for us to establish this new ministry this will be crucial to build the ability for implementing climate positive actions in our country

Mr president i am drawn to the prophetic inscription on the wall of the united nations plaza and i quote they shall beat their swords to plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks nations shall not lift up a sword against nation neither shall they learn war anymore isaiah 2 verses 4 to 5 end of court these words

Mr presidents president serve as a remain as a reminder to the united nations to work towards global peace and international cooperation though we have made leaps and bounds in the area of peace security and stability there remains pockets of conflict in many regions of the world where guns have not been silenced up to now. The silencing of guns therefore goes beyond addressing conventional warfare but also in addressing new emerging threats of our century which includes challenges of extremism and international terrorism cyber crime asymmetric warfare proliferation of non-conventional weapons and organized crime as an international community we need to continue to work towards or to work together to address the root cause of these global threat through various national regional and global mechanisms

Mr president the former secretary general of the united nations they led dr kofi annan laid out an ambitious agenda before the 60th general assembly which is still prominent or pertinent today in his report in larger freedom towards development security and human rights for war he made the case that development security and respect for human rights cannot be enjoyed in the absence of the other these are indispensable realities of a well-functioning nation and international system i however wish to go a step further

Mr president in asserting that the foundation to sustainable economic growth and development is peace and stability without peace unharmed development cannot be attained Zambia will therefore continue to support national regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting security peace and stability in this vein Zambia reaffirms its commitment to play an active role in the Sadiq mission in Mozambique aimed at restoring peace to the Kabul Delgado province of our country of that country rather. In

addition, Zambia remains committed to the cause of the Lusaka master roadmap to silence guns in Africa an initiative being implemented by all African union EU member states to promote peace and security which has since been endorsed for extension for a further 10-year period from 2021 to 2030.

We therefore wish to call for continued support of the united nations in silencing guns in Africa and other continental initiatives

Mr president in the quest for promoting global peace and stability security Zambia notes with satisfaction the entry into force of the treaty on prohibition of nuclear weapons tpnw which became operative on the 22nd January 2021. the entry into force of the p of the tpnw is a tangible fit towards advancing the cause of nuclear disarmament on the international stage Zambia encourages other states that are yet to ratify the tpnw to come on board so that we can continue making advances towards achieving our situations of eradication or eradicating nuclear weapons on our continent.

On the United Nations security council UN SC reform, Zambia is still concerned with the slow pace of negotiations which have continued without making much progress Zambia in this regard wishes to reiterate the African common position the ez Israeli consensus that calls for a more representative and democratic united nations security council in which Africa like all other world regions will be fairly represented on this body

Mr president the call for gender equality is now a century-old struggle for women to participate equally with men in society as a whole despite realization that women's full and effective participation in all areas of life results in prosperity women are still however involved less in public life and decision making it is important that we continue to demand for the promotion of gender equality while paying particular attention to the rights of women children girls included India and the rights of people living with disabilities for us in Zambia we will remain committed to the advancement and promotion of women's rights and for the first time

Mr president in the history of our country our new parliament has elected the first female speaker of the national assembly to preside over Zambia's supreme law making organ of our government i further wish to state and i think this is important with pride that Zambia's vice president president republican vice president as well as the deputy speaker of the national assembly are both women in our country we're very proud of that consistent with our commitment Zambia is implementing various initiatives designed to harmonize the development programming and indeed implementation of economic empowerment efforts targeting women and the youth across the country in doing all of this our aims to eliminate hunger and rural poverty as we know these vices are said to have a face of women and children further Zambia emphasizes the importance of ensuring that communities have women at every level of decision making as doing so will translate into a discourse that will be inclusive representative and thus more holistic and insightful our government will focus on increasing support for women through a creation of employment opportunities and entrepreneurship programs amongst others we will also focus on increasing access to secondary education for adolescent girls from impoverished households through financial aid and grant schemes

Mr president i wish to stress that the government of the republic of Zambia will remain committed to economic diplomacy and modularise multilateralism to consolidate global efforts through promoting open and cordial relations with the international community in order to ensure collective sustainable growth and development in our country mr president as i conclude i wish to emphasize that it is the duty and indeed responsibility

of all of us in the global democratic community to make democrats work for all our people we can do this by delivering democracy dividends through accelerating economic development balanced distribution of resources and among our people and our people accessing opportunities for a better life this is what will make democracy attractive to our people in our individual countries this is what will make democracy sustainable and keep away autocratic and heavy-handed alternatives from leadership in our countries it's very important this is what will foster a peaceful prosperous and more united world.

Mr president, heads of government, states, I thank you for your attention.