

Statement by Denmark at the 79th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, General Debate, XX September 2024

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Delegates, Friends, Colleagues,

The high-level week is a welcome reminder that the vast majority of nations – large and small – do seek global unity.

That the division we talk so much about is only sought by the few. This gives me hope.

Yet, as we open the 79th General Assembly, we cannot close our eyes for the fact that conflicts and war are raging across the world.

Mr. President,

It is utterly unacceptable that a permanent member of the Security Council continues to violate the most basic principles of the UN Charter.

Wars of aggression and altering borders is – and should remain – a thing of the past.

An imperial practice that has no place in the 21st century.

Denmark will persist to stand by Ukraine. And to support a just and lasting peace.

The Summit on Peace, that was held in Switzerland in June, clearly showed that there is strong global support for peace based on the UN Charter.

We must all use our influence to further the cause of peace. But it must be a peace that does not reward the aggressor for his brute use of force. Otherwise we set a very bad precedent. Otherwise we undermine the principles on which the UN was founded..

Mr. President,

Almost a year has passed since Hamas' horrendous attacks on Israel 7th October. The cruelty and the barbarity, we witnessed that day, was shocking. I think none of us are able to comprehend the shock and trauma this day has caused upon Israel and which will forever symbolize the darkest chapter of the country's history.

The terrorism of Hamas sparked a downward spiral of human suffering and regional instability. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic and the human suffering unbearable.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced all over the region. There is a very real risk of an all-out regional war. Which would affect all of us.

This must end now. A cease fire is urgently needed. All parties should exercise restraint and contribute to de-escalation.

And then we should start thinking about the future. Not tomorrow or next week, but right now. The current horrible situation may also contain the seeds of a new beginning. A new beginning leading to a just and lasting peace for all, unleashing the potentials of the whole region. Allowing everybody to see a future for themselves and their children. Breaking with the vicious circle of violence that has lasted much too long.

Such a more promising future can only be based on the two-state solution. We all need to work together to create the conditions for that two-state solution to materialize.

By building the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to take on the role of legitimate and effective government in the future Palestinian State. By stabilizing the West Bank. And by already now start preparing for early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza.

I call on all parties to make such a development possible. To the benefit of the people of Israel and Palestine. To the benefit of the whole region and the world at large.

Mr. President,

We often talk about Ukraine and Gaza in these halls. But sadly, people are dying and suffering from conflict in many other countries.

I am deeply concerned with the continued fighting in Sudan. And the humanitarian consequences for the civilian population.

More than 10 million people have been displaced.

In Sudan there is an urgent need for political dialogue. And for putting a halt to the conflict.

As there is in Yemen, Haiti, Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, The Democratic Republic of Congo. The list tragically goes on.

And in the wake of our collective inability to stop the wars – the respect for international law, is slowly undermined.

Mr. President

As a small country, Denmark is conscious that our safety and security depend on international rule of law.

The respect for basic UN principles – sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence for all states – is fundamental to international peace and security.

As we uphold these principles, the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law must be at the core.

Denmark is a strong supporter of the international justice system and the work and independence of the ICC [I-C-C] and the ICJ [I-C-J].

The ICJ [I-C-J] has an important role in the peaceful settlement of disputes. And the ICC [I-C-C] is crucial for the global fight against impunity.

Without respect for international law, we are looking at a world where might makes right and brute force rules.

This is very dangerous.

Mr. President,

I began by stating that the vast majority of nations – luckily – seek unity and international cooperation.

Earlier this week – in the Pact for the Future – we all reaffirmed our commitment to the UN Charter. And we outlined a clear direction towards a transformed system of global governance.

The existing system has enabled nations to lift people out of poverty. To eradicate diseases. And to advance better education for children around the globe. Big achievements.

But after almost 80 years of service, that system is in need of a serious update.

Mr. President,

It is urgent to reform the international financial architecture. It needs to be more representative. More effective.

Denmark supports a stronger representation of African countries in the Bretton Woods Institutions. We agree that global financial safety nets must support all countries, including the poorest, when a major crisis hits.

This should not be dependent on voluntary donor contributions.

We agree that all countries – on an equal basis – must be subject to independent, transparent, and accurate credit ratings.

We agree that we need to find sustainable solutions to the high levels of debt faced by many countries. Debt treatment through the Common Framework needs to be accelerated.

All creditors and lenders should act transparently. And concessional financing be made available. The Multilateral Development Banks have mobilised billions already through reforms.

But reforms need to deepen to move from billions to trillions.

Looking forward – towards the Financing for Development Conference in Spain next year, COP29 and beyond – reform tracks must be made tangible.

Solutions should be developed not just for the future. But also for the present.

I wish to praise Barbados for suggesting concrete actions to help fix some of the systemic errors of the International Financial Architecture.

We are happy to support the Bridgetown initiative. And we are proud to work alongside Barbados on greening international financing.

We encourage others – including the UN and the international financial institutions – to work together. To be bold and to achieve the necessary progress on reform of the international financial architecture.

Mr. President,

While we reform for a more just financial architecture, we need to sustain levels of development assistance to the poorest countries.

Commitments made should be honoured.

Denmark remains a member of a club that is far too exclusive: The club of countries that meet the UN target of providing 0.7 per cent of our Gross National Income for Official Development Assistance.

It is a good club. We invite others to join.

In April this year, African Heads of State met in Nairobi to call for an ambitious replenishment of the World Bank's International Development Association [forkortes IDA].

We have decided to respond to that call.

Denmark intends to increase our contribution to IDA [I-DA] with 40 per cent. For the IDA21 [I-DA twenty-one] replenishment, we will contribute with 479 million US dollars.

We encourage all – current and new donors – big and small – to help us reach an ambitious replenishment.

Mr. President,

In June this year, Denmark was proudly elected to the UN Security Council for the period of 2025-2026.

I was present – and voting – here in this grand hall that day.

I wish to thank member states for the strong show of confidence and support.

It will be an honour to serve on the Council.

As we look forward to our membership, I cannot help but wish that the Council were in better shape: More accountable, more effective, more transparent and above all, more inclusive and representative.

The world needs a Security Council that reflects the world of today. That is able to respond to the security concerns of people all around the globe.

To Denmark, it is evident that this calls for an expansion of the Council. We wish to see both more permanent and more elected members. And we wish to limit the use of the veto.

Both aspects are long overdue.

Mr. President

Time is of the essence.

The year 2030 – that once seemed like a distant dot on the horizon – is now only six years away. Yet, only 17 per cent of the SDGs are on track to be realised. And we are far from on track to fulfil our climate targets.

The accelerating climate crisis must be met with accelerating climate action. We need more ambitious reductions. More support for climate change adaptation. And we need to speed up – and scale up – climate financing.

No country can solve these global challenges alone. And no country is too small – or too big – to contribute.

Everyone is needed.

As a long-standing and dedicated supporter of global cooperation, Denmark will continue to do our part: We will deliver on promises made. And we will push for more ambitious targets. And for concrete actions.

For the present – and for the future.

Thank you.