

SG Dialogue — A-Baki

Recorded 2026-08-20 10:01 · Organized by speaker

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

4:22 (10:05:56) Good morning. I call to order the informal meeting to conduct an interactive dialogue with Ms. Ivonne A-Baki, candidate for the position of the United Nations Secretary-General.

Today's interactive dialogue marks a critical step in the selection and appointment process of the next Secretary-General, while also coming at a pivotal moment for the United Nations. The person we select will be more than the face of this institution. Our choice will send a powerful message about who we are and whether we truly serve all 8 billion people of the world in all their diversity. The multilateral system, with the United Nations at its center, is under unprecedented political and financial pressure. From a deepening liquidity crisis to fundamental principles of the UN Charter being put into question, the next Secretary-General will be entrusted not only with navigating these challenges, but also with advancing essential reforms to ensure the UN is fit for the future. At the same time, the world needs the UN more than ever, and it needs a Secretary-General who can provide strong, principled, and effective leadership across all three pillars: peace and security, development, and human rights.

These interactive dialogues, which are convened by the President in line with General Assembly Resolution 79/327, offer a unique opportunity for candidates to present their vision for the future of this organization, and for member states and civil society to ask questions and interact directly with the candidates. The interactive dialogues are essential to ensure a transparent and inclusive selection and appointment process, while underlining the important role of the General Assembly. I encourage you to make full use of this opportunity, and I thank all the candidates for their active participation, and member states and civil society for their questions and engagement. But these dialogues do not end in this chamber. They are also an opportunity for people around the world, the very people the United Nations serves, to listen, to engage, and to hold this process to their highest standards. For this decision does not only concern a few, but all of us, in and outside the United Nations, who look to this institution to reflect the principles and values it champions.

As reflected in the President's letter dated 4th March, 15th April, and 18th August 2026, the dialogue will begin with an introduction by the candidate of their vision and priorities up to 10 minutes, followed by an interactive exchange. Each interactive exchange will last up to three hours. The interactive exchange will take place in two segments. We will begin with a one-and-a-half-hour discussion focused on leadership abilities, experience, and skills needed to lead a strong organization that is fit for the future. Following this, we will move into the second segment, which will focus on the three pillars of the UN: peace and security, development, and human rights. In line with the revitalization resolution, civil society representatives will be invited to pose questions in each of these two thematic segments.

Before proceeding to hear the presentation of the vision of the candidate, I would like to inform member states how to inscribe to speak in the thematic segments. Delegations wishing to speak can register their wish to speak by pressing their microphone button, but please do not press the microphone button yet. I will announce when delegations will be asked to press the microphone button at the beginning of the first segment. Member states speaking on behalf of groups are invited to approach the list of speakers table and will be given priority. Delegations can speak only once in each segment, whether on behalf of a group or in their national capacity. In the second segment, priority will be given to delegations that did not have an opportunity to speak during the first segment.

I would now like to invite Ms. A-Baki to present her vision.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

9:35 (10:11:09) Thank you so much, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Ambassador. What an honor for me to be here today with all of you. Mr. Vice President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, representatives of civil society, friends, and those watching on the phone. Let me begin by extending my sincere gratitude to the Vice President for convening this interactive dialogue, and my deep appreciation to the Kingdom of Tonga for the distinct honor of nominating my candidacy.

I come before you today as an Ecuadorian diplomat who served on four continents as a cabinet minister and head of a regional organization in Latin America. I also come before you as a nominee who's helped negotiate a peace agreement between two UN member states, an architect of a win-win solution for climate with sovereign debt relief. And as someone whose heritage and career spans Latin America and the Middle East, as well as the Global North. But I also come before you today in a much more humble role — as a mother. More than 40 years ago, in a basement in Beirut, where I lived all through the war, I held my three children as bombs fell around us. In that moment, I made a promise that if they were spared, I would devote my life to peace. I've kept that promise ever since.

My decades-long journey in the world of diplomacy has now led me to this moment today, and to my future commitment to lead a renewal of the UN and to fulfill the promise so eloquently stated in the Charter's preamble: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. I lived it in my own life. I intend to keep that promise and make it my primary focus, should I have the honor of serving as the United Nations' 10th Secretary-General.

This morning, I also intend to be as forthright and transparent as I can be as to what I would do as the next Secretary-General. I recently had a conversation with someone who asked me, how would you manage the UN? My response? I don't intend to be a manager. A manager is someone who follows a mission statement. A leader is someone who follows a North Star. My North Star for this world body is not necessarily reform, it's renewal. Renewal of the promise of building peace and preventing war, renewal of the promise to promote human dignity and social progress, and renewal of the vision that the UN can be the one body where nations of the world can work together to achieve more than nations working alone. Let me outline the five pillars of my vision.

First, direct, undelegated peacekeeping and peacemaking. I'm the only candidate in this race who's lived through the devastating reality of active interstate warfare between two UN member states. I kept that promise of 40 years ago when I had the honor of negotiating a lasting peace agreement between two sovereign UN member states, Peru and Ecuador, helping broker the 1998 treaty that permanently ended a generations-long border conflict between those two countries that cost many, many lives. As next Secretary-General, I will apply all the tools, time-tested and cutting-edge, of preventive diplomacy, mediation, and early warning. More importantly, I will be on the ground. Not just at the desk in New York on the 38th floor, but in war zones, in areas of tension, engaging every party directly to stop conflicts before they erupt. The offices of the Secretary-General should also be the active offices of the Secretary-General. I intend to personally use that power that the SG possesses to build peace, to the more than 60 state-level conflicts we see around the world today — 60 world conflicts — and to prevent the ones that might be in our future. Let's hope not.

Second, Security Council modernization. We must confront the reality that the UN Security Council remains frozen in the geopolitical landscape of 1945. One need only look around our world today to understand the need for renewal. Only 2% of the world's population, about 174 million people, were alive when the UN was created. Now we have 8 billion. Meanwhile, the two continents that have seen the greatest drop as a percentage of global population still hold the same number of permanent seats on the Security Council. And the continent that has seen the greatest population growth does not. How can we argue that the UN has kept pace with our changing world? This structural underrepresentation of the global majority is fundamentally unfair. It's the primary reason the Council so frequently collapses into deadlock, never agreeing. I fully understand that the Secretary-General cannot alone alter the UN Charter. But the SG does have a microphone, like I have now, right? And I

don't intend to exercise administrative neutrality. As Secretary-General, I'll use the full persuasive force of my office to work together with all of you, with the General Assembly and the Security Council, to build momentum for a modernized Security Council that reflects 21st-century realities and is far more effective.

Resolving development debt and unlocking finance. We all talk about that. We must repair our broken approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. With fewer than one-fifth of the SDG targets on track for 2030, just a few years from now, our failure isn't one of ambition. It is one of financial execution. Developing nations are trapped under crippling debt burdens. Capital that should be building schools, clinics, green infrastructure is instead used to service external loans. We must stop burdening the Global South with new layers of debt and instead rewrite the financial rules that were crafted for an era long gone. I bring some personal experience to the table here. My work with public and private partnerships and innovative climate instruments — such as the blue and green bonds that protect biodiversity in places like Ecuador's Galápagos Islands and the Amazon of the Yasuní — while delivering vital debt relief, demonstrates that we can unlock genuine fiscal space, shifting away from top-down implementation towards empowering national and local capacity. Planet and prosperity can co-exist. As Secretary-General, I will encourage more win-win solutions like this, and scale them.

Human dignity and emerging frontiers. We must renew human dignity across all UN pillars, and renew the Charter's commitment to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small. Today, human dignity reaches into frontiers our founders could never have envisioned, including artificial intelligence. The rules governing AI are currently being written by a handful of private-sector actors and powerful states without global consent. Yet the forces of AI, still largely a mystery to most, will have a profound impact on all of us. The UN must serve as the universal negotiating table where every nation, large and small, helps set guardrails — ethical, fair, and binding. Likewise, a discussion of human dignity that ignores the climate threat is no discussion at all. In my mind, we need to respect the scientific consensus, but that does not mean we need to accept unrealistic solutions that fail to recognize the very real disruption they could cause to hundreds of millions of people. And for all the conferences, communiqués, and reports the United Nations has produced, too little has been translated into practical, sustainable results. I will be less focused on conferences and more interested in building consensus for a path to action and results. For small island developing states, including Tonga, the climate risk is not an abstract future threat. It is an existential reality. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and severe weather events directly threaten sovereign territory, cultural heritage, and economic survival. The same can be said for Ecuador's beloved Galápagos Islands. The most climate-vulnerable are at the risk of being pushed closer towards environmental catastrophe. They did not cause it. We cannot lose sight of this.

The institutional outsider's advantage. Although I am deeply grounded in the world of global diplomacy, I view my status as an institutional outsider — so you have to teach me all the more, and I have to listen to you more — as a strength in bringing renewal to the UN. I do not have bureaucratic habits. I'm free from internal inertia and ready to introduce fresh talent, new ideas, greater accountability, and real, measurable results for all 193 member states.

Finally, sometimes clichés are true. The UN today really does stand at a critical crossroads. We can remain trapped in bureaucratic routine, or we can choose the courage to build a renewed United Nations. Like that promise I made in Beirut 40 years ago to my children, I choose — if chosen as the 10th Secretary-General, I promise everyone today — that I will work night and day to build a renewed UN that delivers for all 8 billion people, helping build a better world for future generations and a renewed organization our founders would be proud of. Thank you. I look forward to listening and to addressing your questions. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

24:49 (10:26:23) Members are reminded that they are encouraged to ask short and focused questions. Interventions should not be more than two minutes for delegations speaking in their national capacity, and not more than three minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of member states. Time limits will be strictly enforced by automatic microphone cutoff. A timer will be projected on screen to assist speakers to observe the time limit; the microphone will start blinking 30 seconds before the time. As indicated in the President's letter, after each intervention the candidate will be given the floor to respond. The response should not be more than two minutes for questions from delegations speaking in their national capacity, and no more than three minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of member states. I will remind candidates of their time limits. Civil society questions will be interspersed with the questions from member states.

As mentioned before, we will now focus on leadership abilities, experience, and skills needed to lead a strong organization that is fit for the future. Now I give the floor to Singapore to speak on behalf of the Small States Group. Singapore, you have the floor.

DELEGATE — Singapore (on behalf of the Small States Group)

26:22 (10:27:56) Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, and I extend a warm welcome to Madam A-Baki for joining us this morning. I have indeed the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Small States Group, SSG, which is a cross-regional grouping of small states comprising both developed and developing countries. More than 50 countries have aligned with the statement, and I'll be happy to make available the list of countries who have joined this statement after our meeting this morning.

Mr. Vice President, and Madam A-Baki, we are indeed living in a volatile and dangerous period in international relations, characterized by geopolitical tension and conflict. And for many small states, an effective multilateral system founded on the principles of the UN Charter and international law is not an option but an existential necessity. The next Secretary-General will play a critical role not only in defending the UN Charter but also in reinvigorating and reshaping the role and relevance of the United Nations. We look to the Secretary-General to safeguard the interests of all member states, of course, but particularly the interests of the smallest, the weakest, and most vulnerable members of the UN. We do not want a world of "might is right" where international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small states are violated with impunity. The members of our group, the SSG, stand ready to work with the next Secretary-General and with all member states, of course, to strengthen the role of the UN and to defend international law and multilateralism.

Let me now go to the questions. First, Madam candidate, what steps will you take to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, especially at a time when the Security Council has been unable to take decisive action? And in this context, how do you intend to support and strengthen the office of the President of the General Assembly? Secondly, you spoke about the Sustainable Development Goals, and this of course is a landmark agreement, but so is the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact. They provide a roadmap for global action and partnership. So my question is, how would you accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and the Pact for the Future? My third and last question is that we are at a critical moment when public perception of the UN seems to have become critical and even cynical. How do you plan to galvanize support for the work of the UN, especially among younger people who represent the future in all our societies? Thank you very much.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

29:24 (10:30:58) I thank the distinguished representative of Singapore, who spoke on behalf of the group of Small States. I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

29:30 (10:31:04) Thank you, Ambassador. What great questions that you gave. And really, I'm pleased to tell you that, from the first, you mentioned about gender, right? If I'm not mistaken, you mentioned gender. The problems that are happening in the world, mostly in things that have to do with security, peace — even if I put there also human rights and development — it's for the lack of having men and women working together. Especially when there are problems that have to do with finding solutions for war. If you see the tables of negotiations for peace, whether it's Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza, all the other countries in Africa, wherever the problems are, all the tables are only men working there, trying to find solutions, but without giving up. And you cannot find solutions if you don't have a win-win, which is a lose-lose. You have to give up and give up to find a solution. And that's when the role of the woman gets there — to see things in a different perspective, because when a woman sits at the table being a mother, she doesn't want her children to go to war. She wants to find solutions. Whether it's a small country, a big country, nobody wants to see the children being killed.

So the UN was created after the war of 1945 for that purpose, to prevent a third world war, and we are almost at the brink of a third world war, with big countries that think that they have all the answers. And who's paying the price of all that? Those that have nothing to do with it — mostly women, children, elderly, but also those that are in the war, that don't want to die, but they are doing it, and sometimes they don't know why. And the UN was created for that, to prevent, or, if there's a war, to bring them here, put them at the table, talk about it. You know, I've been working for peace all through my life, because of the war in Lebanon. I lived more than 20 years there in the war. And when I became ambassador to the United States and to other places, I always listened to all the news, and I feel very depressed when I see news happening everywhere. My grandson sits with me all the time to listen to the news. That was two years ago; he was seven, now he's nine. When he was seeing the news and the war between Ukraine and Russia, he says — he calls me Yvonne — he says, "Yvonne, why do you feel so sad and bad? Don't feel sad. Just invite Putin and Zelensky for dinner at the residence and make them be friends. It's not difficult." We create the problems. We don't want wars to stop. This is egos. They don't want to stop because this is something that will keep them in their positions. We have to work beyond that.

Regarding the SDGs — I just said that. How much money has been given for the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals? So much money. It's a lot of money given for that, but we didn't see results. We have to start working on what is possible to do. When I worked on the debt swap for the environment of the Galápagos Islands, we created a group of Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, and Ecuador to expand the marine reserve to be protected, and at the same time we did a debt swap for environment — the first and the biggest in the history of humanity, \$1.6 billion. So we reduced the debt of Ecuador by \$1.1 billion, and with the \$500 million we're creating a fund, the Galápagos Forever Fund. So those are concrete results; that's the way it's done. And the young generation — the young are the most important for me. They know. As I mentioned, my grandson — but look behind me, the person who's helping me, 22 years old, is doing conflict resolution at Georgetown University. And they know what they want. We have to listen. We have two ears and one mouth, and we speak more than we listen. We have to listen to the young. We have to get them involved. They know more than us. Believe it. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

34:28 (10:36:02) Thank you very much. We have to be fair to all the candidates; I have to be scrupulous in giving the same amount of time to all the candidates. The next speaker will be Qatar, followed by Uruguay and the European Union. Qatar, on behalf of the Arab Group.

DELEGATE — Qatar (on behalf of the Arab Group)

34:46 (10:36:20) Thank you, Mr. President. It's my honor to deliver the statement on behalf of the Arab Group. Please allow me to thank Ambassador A-Baki for her vision and for detailing her priorities as the next SG. The Arab Group stands ready to cooperate with all candidates in order to support the role of the United Nations and to make it more capable of addressing current international challenges, and to strengthen its Charter in order to maintain international peace and security and sustainable development. We would like to raise the following questions.

First, in light of the current complexities in implementing international law, what is your vision to ensure alignment and non-selectivity in addressing different crises? This will ensure that multilateralism and a balanced and fair implementation of international standards. Second, how do you perceive your role as the next Secretary-General in strengthening the United Nations and mainly in addressing the question of Palestine, to ensure the consistent implementation of all relevant resolutions and to support a just and lasting peace? Third, in light of recent developments, including growing conflicts across the world and increasing challenges in implementing the Charter of the United Nations and international law, how can you promote consistency with these rules, mainly at the humanitarian level? And how can you support UN agencies, including UNRWA, to fulfill their mandates? Fourth, with respect to the liquidity crisis in the United Nations and less support for development, and with the growing debt burden, how will you strengthen the UN's role in supporting the development pillar? And how can you accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? And how will you support the financing needs of developing countries? Fifth, how do you perceive the reform of the Security Council, and what, in your opinion, is the most effective reform? What is your take on the membership of the Security Council and the veto power? And how do you perceive the UN80 Initiative, and how do you think this UN80 Initiative can be implemented without undermining the key mandates of the United Nations? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

36:52 (10:38:26) I thank the distinguished representative of Qatar. I now give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

37:00 (10:38:34) Thank you very much. I have listened to you in Arabic, because, as you know, I have lived in Lebanon more than in Ecuador. And I represented Ecuador in Qatar for three or four years. Qatar was at a difficult juncture in 2017, and from 2017 to 2020 — your question is very important. I cherish Qatar, and I'm fond of the late Emir, the father, Sheikh Hamad. This is an ongoing and protracted problem. As I said, I will spare no effort for peace, mainly for peace to prevail in the Middle East. Without peace between Israel and Palestine, peace will not prevail across the world. This is the role that the UN must play. But because the UN is not playing this role, other countries are stepping in, which leads to an endless cycle. They agree on a ceasefire, but then, once again, the ceasefire collapses, and we are back to square one.

What is our role? I believe Arab countries must come together. I extend my thanks to Qatar, the UAE, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and all the mediating countries. I thank them all for their efforts. I support the Abraham Accords, but at the same time, we must ask ourselves, what will happen to Palestine? What's the fate of Palestine? I know we cannot talk about a two-state solution. No one, perhaps, wants a solution, but what can we do? Maybe we should set borders, strong borders. This is what we need — we need strong borders, we need security. Israel wants security, and Israel is right, but also Palestinians want a land, want a territory. It's not hard to shape this solution, and this drives me back to the main issue. This is why we should work hand in hand. Here at the UN, the UN must be a platform that brings all parties. The Security Council and its roundtable is meant to foster and to bring parties together.

I am confident that there will be a solution. Money is not important. More important is trust. When we have trust, money will flow. The most important thing is to build trust among parties. When they come together, they can reach a common understanding. And I believe Qatar has an important role to play in order to help bring parties together — you mediated during the siege and the blockade of Qatar. We should go back to the basics. We are all one family. The international community is one family. We live in one world, and our problems are interconnected, whether we like it or not. He's now giving me notes to wrap up. But in a nutshell — I can speak for one hour, because this issue is of interest to me, and this is why I'm here. When my husband passed away, he asked me to focus on peace in the Middle East and on Arab countries. There must be peace between Israel and Arab countries. We can live together, in Lebanon, in my hometown. There were many Jews, and there are Jews everywhere in our part of the world. We should work hand in hand. We should work for peace. My children do not want to leave their home country. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

41:03 (10:42:37) The next speaker is Uruguay, who will be speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Uruguay.

DELEGATE — Uruguay (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China)

41:22 (10:42:56) Thank you, Mr. Vice President. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to this election and appointment of the Secretary-General, and reaffirms the need to ensure that this process remains open, transparent, and inclusive, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. In this regard, while thanking Ms. A-Baki for her presentation, we wish to pose the following questions to her.

First, on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, how would you, as Secretary-General, ensure its full and timely implementation, bearing in mind the universality and indivisibility of the goals and targets, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and the commitment to leave no one behind? Specifically, how do you envisage the role of the SG and the UN Secretariat in advancing this objective? Second, on geographical and gender balance, how would you, as Secretary-General, ensure equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographical balance, as prescribed by Article 101 of the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly in terms of the overall increase in the representation of unrepresented and underrepresented countries, especially from developing countries, at the senior-level appointments within the UN Secretariat and the broader UN system? Third, on the UN financial situation, what concrete measures would you, as Secretary-General, undertake to promote compliance with member states' financial obligations and ensure that assessed contributions are paid in full, on time, and without conditions, particularly in light of the record level of arrears owed to the organization? Fourth, on the UN80 Initiative introduced by Secretary-General António Guterres, what is your assessment of the proposal and how do you believe it could advance a UN that is more effective, efficient, and delivers greater impact on the ground? How would you ensure that any related reforms fully respect the intergovernmental nature of the UN, preserve the balance among its three pillars, and do not come at the expense of development mandates or other priorities of developing countries? Mr. Vice President, the Group of 77 and China underscores the importance of safeguarding the full independence, impartiality, and institutional integrity of the Secretariat, while ensuring the provision of equitable and effective support to the representations of all member states in the discharge of their responsibilities. I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

43:47 (10:45:21) I thank the distinguished representative of Uruguay. I now give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

44:02 (10:45:36) Thank you. I do have to speak to you in Spanish, as the representative of Uruguay. As I previously stated, the SDGs — we're three years away from the deadline. They've been here for a long time, and our efforts should be focused on achieving results across the widest range of SDGs. A great deal of money has been spent, so now we need to do what needs to be done. We have to work together. Because — well, why aren't resources getting to us? Because there's no trust that we'll achieve results. If there are no results, no outcomes, countries or institutions have no confidence in terms of giving resources, because they don't trust that there'll be results. So that's why there needs to be action. If I am elected Secretary-General, I do hope we'll achieve results. We have to work together, including with young people, young people that will be there to diagnose. For me, what we have to do is remedy that trust deficit — to achieve results and therefore get resources. So we need trust in results. That's what's lacking.

My system has always been — I've worked in many institutions, embassies, in Washington, Qatar, France. But I've also worked as the Minister for Industry and Commerce in Ecuador, and I've worked on environmental issues in the Andean Parliament. On every front I've worked, I've always said, well, everything's bureaucracy. You need to sit in offices, send messages, and you don't always do things live, and you don't always do things on the ground, and that's how things tend to play out. And I, in contrast, want to listen. My doors are always open. I never close my office door, and I'm going to do that when I'm here. I'm not going to be here very often — I'll be on the ground — but when I am here, my doors will be open. This idea of closing doors and only agreeing to meet with the big fat cats — well, I'm not going to do that. You have to listen to everyone. How can we give credibility to the United Nations if we don't listen? We don't listen to what's occurring. So that's the crux of what needs to be done. We need to work with young people, women, men — with people that believe in the primary endeavor for which the UN was created: achieving security and peace. If we want to achieve peace, we have to focus on human rights, development, economic development, everything. Everything comes, everything follows, when you have security and peace. They're all inextricably linked. They cannot be separated. So that should be the focus of our work. That's what I'm going to put on my business card, if you like. And that brings me to a close. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

47:05 (10:48:39) I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the European Union.

DELEGATE — European Union (on behalf of the EU and its member states)

47:22 (10:48:56) Thank you, President, and thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for sharing your views with us this morning. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member states. At this critical juncture, the United Nations needs a Secretary-General who can build trust, reduce polarization, and bridge divides — someone who can mobilize collective action, accelerate UN reforms, and deliver solutions that make a real difference in people's lives on the ground. It also needs a Secretary-General that is fully prepared to defend and promote full respect for the UN Charter and international law, and all three UN pillars equally. We emphasize this last point because the EU's support to the UN reflects precisely that premise. We support all strands of the UN's work equally. On peace and security, the EU actively advances the implementation of key UN mandates through our security and defense missions around the world. On sustainable development, the EU provides close to 50% of all ODA and over one-third of all voluntary contributions to the UN system, safeguarding the SDGs and battling inequality. And on human rights, we are committed to protecting and defending all human rights — civil and political, economic, social and cultural — with equal vigor. We are, therefore, deeply concerned with recent normative attacks on human rights, including on women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights and on gender equality, as well as racial, religious, political, and other forms of discrimination and persecution, and also with the fact that,

remarkably, only 1% of the UN system's spending is dedicated to human rights mandates, in a clear imbalance between the three UN pillars.

So against this backdrop, we wish to ask you the following question. As Secretary-General, how do you plan to promote, protect, and increase the funding of the human rights pillar, as explicitly mandated in the Pact for the Future? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

49:10 (10:50:44) I thank the distinguished representative of the European Union. I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

49:29 (10:51:03) Thank you for a very good question, and really I appreciate your asking, what do we do? Again, we go back to the same. I've represented Ecuador as ambassador to France and also Monaco, and I've been living a lot with the European Union, because when I was president of the Andean Parliament, we created the EuroLat, the European–Latin American assembly. So we were working together, Europeans and Latin Americans, to create a consensus on what is needed. We have so many things in common.

But we're going back to all the issues that have to do with human rights. You're right about the problem that girls are having, especially women and girls, in different places in the world. This is something in my heart. It's something that I care so much about. I've always cared about that. But we go back to the same issues. If we don't have peace and security, we don't have human rights. So we have to have peace and security with development and human rights. It's all about the economy. When you give a woman economic stability, she will have human rights. When she is educated, she defends human rights. When she has the chance to dream to become a Secretary-General or a President of her country, she will have human rights. So we have to work on that. We have to work on how to give this to the part of the world that is everywhere — it's in Latin America, it's in Africa, it's in the Middle East, you name it, and in Europe, and in America. They say that North America doesn't have that. They do. Still, women have been discriminated against. I'm seeing here more women than I saw in Washington when I was ambassador there. In Washington, when I arrived as ambassador, we were only three women ambassadors in 1990. Three. And when I met one of the ambassadors, and they presented me, he asked me, "And where is your husband, the ambassador?" So we have moved a lot. When I came back as ambassador in 2020, we were 47 women ambassadors, and many from the Arab world — Saudi Arabia had a woman ambassador, Jordan had a woman ambassador, Kuwait now has a woman ambassador, and Latin America has many. At that time, I was the only one.

So we have to move and help each other, because sometimes the number one enemy of a woman is a woman. So we need to work together. Men will support when they see that. I don't like when they say, "Oh, we're going to have the first woman Secretary-General." Did you ever ask, "You're going to have the first man Secretary-General?" We do that because there are insecurities. I hope one day the men, they have to ask. We have to get back to being in that position. So coming back to the SDGs, we go back to that — I say it's linked. It's about trust. It's not about money. Money will be there, but it's about results. So we have to have action, and we have to have results in order to be taken seriously. They are not seeing the UN as a place where there is action. They are seeing it as a place where there is a lot of bureaucracy and everything takes time. And we don't have time. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

53:21 (10:54:55) I would like to invite the Assembly to view a pre-recorded video by the Society for Children Orphaned by AIDS, SCOBA.

CIVIL SOCIETY — Society for Children Orphaned by AIDS (SCOBA) (pre-recorded video)

53:42 (10:55:16) Good day, distinguished candidate. My name is [inaudible], and I represent SCOBA, the Society for Children Orphaned by AIDS. We work with children and young people affected by or at risk of HIV/AIDS, many of whom must face poverty, inequality, and uncertainty on their own. For these children, delays in support are not just administrative. They can change the course of their lives. Opportunities are lost, and futures are altered. Our question is this: if selected as Secretary-General, how will you make sure the United Nations delivers for the most vulnerable, especially children, not just in words but through real action? How will you ensure accountability, transparency, and urgency so that help reaches those who need it when they need it the most? As you move forward with UN reform under the UN80 Initiative, how will you make certain that human rights and the dignity of every child remain at the heart of development and peacebuilding? For the children we serve, timely action is not optional. It is essential. I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

54:52 (10:56:26) I thank the representative of SCOBA for the question. Ms. A-Baki, to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

55:09 (10:56:43) Thank you so much. That's one of my aims, and thank you for the question, because for me, if I'm doing this, it's also for children. When I said that I decided to use my life for peace, I couldn't do it in Lebanon at that time, so I did it as an artist — I was painting, and I was using women, mothers, as a symbol in the paintings for peace and love. But for children, always my life has been for children. Children are the innocent that are paying the price of everything, whether it's wars or diseases that come because of war, because of all the problems. Look at the refugees, the diseases that they are having, the immigrants that have to leave because of wars and political mal-decisions, that they have to leave their countries — and who dies mostly? And who is the one that's suffering the most? Our children. So, my number one — and I promise that if I do this, it's for the children. And I really want to say something important: UNICEF is doing a great job. We need to have more of that. Children are the present and the future, and they are the innocent that are full of love.

I want to say something here, if you permit me. Maybe sometimes you don't hear this. When I was a candidate for UNESCO Director-General in 2009 — when you enter the institutions, like in Geneva, here, in Paris, there is something missing. Love, passion, motivation. I would put music as a background. You have to have something of feelings. We are for the people. We are here for the people. We have to have a heart. We have to have feelings. We have to have passion. We have to have dedication. We have to do everything possible. We are not machines. And we forget that — that's the missing part — that children are born without fear, because there are only two emotions in a human being: fear or love. We live more in fear than love, and we teach the children to be afraid when they are pure love. So this unconditional love of the mother towards the child, this is what we have to work for. Children are the present and the future, and it's for them that we're going to be continuing. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

57:52 (10:59:26) I now give the floor to Palau, who will be speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. That will be followed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea.

DELEGATE — Palau (on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States — AOSIS)

58:10 (10:59:44) Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for convening this important dialogue. I also wish to thank Ms. A-Baki for your interaction with us today. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the 39 members of the Alliance of Small Island States, AOSIS. As a group of countries in special situations, the credibility of the United Nations lies in its ability to respond to the unique circumstances of SIDS, correct long-standing inequities, and deliver results for the most vulnerable. In this regard, allow me to pose the following questions.

First, how will you, as Secretary-General, ensure that the United Nations system is more accessible, better coordinated, and tailored to the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS, to better and more meaningfully support the full implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS? Second, how will you use your leadership to accelerate global ambition and action on climate change, particularly to keep 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach? And lastly, what specific measures will you take to improve on the underrepresentation or unrepresentation of SIDS within the United Nations Secretariat, especially at professional and senior leadership levels? I thank you.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

59:40 (11:01:14) Well, thank you for your question. And, you know, I've been nominated by one of the small island developing states of the Pacific, like you — by Tonga. And that's why — because I believe that this is what we have to consider. This is what we have to concentrate on: environmental protection more than anything, because of the water rising, and because of the problems you're having. So we have to be working together towards that. You know, don't forget that I've been helping the oceans for a long, long time. The Galápagos Islands, I call them the treasure of the world, because it's unique, and it's a place where, when Darwin made his theory of evolution, it was because of what you see there. You believe in God when you are there. It's a creation, and it has to be kept. So, of course, we cannot have a lot of tourism going to Galápagos because it will get spoiled, so we have to restrict it. And that's why we did this debt swap and we helped protect it. So we will work very much with the small island developing states. For me, it's a priority.

And I have been promising that I will do that, and I believe that — why I love oceans — I will tell you what I feel when I am in the ocean: that we are interconnected because of water. We are interconnected because of the oceans. Water doesn't have borders or frontiers. They are open. Freedom. And it's something that we need to protect, because if we don't have protection of the oceans, we lose the land, but beyond the land, the human race. You know, when we talk about conservation, we say, oh, we're going to conserve the trees, the Amazon — the Amazon is the lungs of the world, the oceans are the oxygen of the world. The earth, the oceans, they will continue. What's going to disappear is the human race. So we are doing it for the human. As I said, we were 174 million when the UN started in 1945. Now we are 8 billion. So the danger is more. It's not that climate change has changed — I mean, it's cyclical — but it's because we are so many more people that we are using and abusing the land and the oceans. We are depriving the oceans of all the fish. And the Earth has given us so much that we are using and abusing. So I will concentrate a lot on the small island developing states. Absolutely. And the doors are open at the UN for talking about that. It's a priority. And I'm very proud to be nominated by Tonga.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:02:23 (11:03:57) I thank Ms. A-Baki for your response. I now give the floor to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, who will be speaking on behalf of Benelux.

DELEGATE — Kingdom of the Netherlands (on behalf of the Benelux)

1:02:41 (11:04:15) Thank you, Mr. Vice President, and I thank Madam A-Baki for sharing her vision. I speak on behalf of the Benelux, a long-standing regional partnership comprising Belgium, Luxembourg, and my own country, the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We align with the statement delivered by the European Union. What our three countries consider is that the UN needs, really, above all, a Secretary-General with proven leadership and reform credentials, capable of guiding a complex organization in a time of geopolitical tension and financial pressure. We attach particular importance to a Secretary-General who can strengthen trust in multilateralism and in the international legal order, a Secretary-General who can act as a strong convening power across all three pillars, and a Secretary-General who can proactively contribute to prevention, peacebuilding, and mediation. At the same time, our three countries see a need to strengthen the UN's financial sustainability, accountability, and system-wide coherence. We place high value on leadership that connects the UN's development work with broader efforts on peace and security and human rights, particularly in times of systemic stress.

In your vision statement, Madam A-Baki, you describe an organization that is slow, fragmented, and expensive, with tens of thousands of mandates and a serious liquidity crisis. We would like to ask you the following. What specific steps would you take in your first year to make mandate discipline a permanent practice, to reduce low-impact reporting and duplication, and to shift resources towards prevention, human rights, and field operations without undermining the independence of key mandates? Finally, Madam A-Baki, could you share your early thinking on the composition of your senior leadership team, including the Deputy Secretary-General? How would you approach considerations such as regional balance, gender, and the specific qualities needed to support your priorities? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:05:22 (11:06:56) I thank the distinguished representative of the Netherlands. I now give you the floor, Ms. A-Baki, to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:05:30 (11:07:04) My dearest Bahia, thank you. You are my sister. She was with me in Qatar. She was ambassador of Qatar. And I cannot find words to tell you how much I missed you since I left, and I'm so glad that you are here. And thank you for that question. You will be the best. You were working with me, because I know. And how do you build trust? Trust is not just something that happens overnight. It takes time. This is relationships. I'm so pleased to see so many familiar faces, and Bahia knows about that — that you have to have relationships with everyone, and you have to talk with those that you don't agree with, and you have to agree to disagree, but get together and talk, because it's through dialogue that you find solutions.

So you were asking about the first year — at least you asked about the first year, not the first hundred days. But I think, from the beginning, we have to build trust among each other first. We have to get together and talk and see what the needs are. The money is not the problem. The money is there. Once there is trust in what we are doing, and we put the priorities — because you cannot put ten priorities, you have to put three, four, five priorities. More than five priorities will be lost. And most of the priorities are interconnected. So if we do that in the first year with results, believe me, we will be the number one in the world. That's what it should be. The UN should be the preventive group of people that we promise each other that there will be no more wars.

Why do we have to have wars? I just want to ask that. Because of what? Because of greed? Or because of creating more armaments? Or because of personal interests? Why are there narcotraffickers, terrorism, cartels, all these people? You know what? We are creating a society of those that have nothing to lose. When a person doesn't have a job, and doesn't have hope, and doesn't have a future, and doesn't care, they will become human bombs. So we have to put ourselves in the place of those that have nothing to lose. Why are we letting societies of those that have nothing to lose? So we have to help the countries be strong again. Every country has the right to become strong economically, socially, politically, giving the tools for it. And the UN was created to prevent war, so we have to give the tools for those countries to be able to be self-sufficient. And once they have that, things will just follow. And I thank you, Bahia, again, for being here and for asking that question. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:08:56 (11:10:30) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea.

DELEGATE — Republic of Korea (on behalf of member states whose nationals have served as Secretary-General: Norway, Sweden, Myanmar, Austria, Peru, Egypt, Ghana, Portugal, and the Republic of Korea)

1:09:16 (11:10:50) Thank you, Mr. Vice President. Thank you, Madam A-Baki, for joining us today. I have the privilege of delivering these questions on behalf of the nine member states — Norway, Sweden, Myanmar, Austria, Peru, Egypt, Ghana, the Republic of Korea, and Portugal — that have had the honor of having their nationals serve as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Drawing on our experience and institutional memory, we wish to engage constructively in the ongoing selection process and stand ready to support both the process itself and the next Secretary-General.

Every UN Secretary-General has faced the defining challenges of their time, and in navigating those challenges, each has left a lasting legacy on the organization. Through the efforts of successive Secretaries-General, major conflicts were brought to resolution through political compromise, the foundation of UN peacekeeping operations was established, and landmark global agreements such as the MDGs, SDGs, and the Paris Agreement were achieved. Today, the UN is again facing major challenges, as complex conflicts continue to unfold across the globe and the call for reform of the organization grows ever stronger. In this context, our first question is: among these many challenges, if you were to assume office as Secretary-General, what would be your highest priority during your first year? And why did you choose debt issues over others? And second: responding to the immediate challenges of each day is, of course, the Secretary-General's role. But the Secretary-General also needs a broader sense of direction, a set of principles that can serve as a compass throughout the term. What political and institutional legacy would you like to leave as Secretary-General? What kind of Secretary-General would you want to be remembered as? Thank you.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:11:41 (11:13:15) Thank you for the question. I will start from the end. It's not about leaving a legacy, because it's about working all together. So it's not about me. This is going to be about all of us. So it's about the UN's legacy. That's what I care about — the UN's legacy.

The first priorities in the first year, as I told you: this is what it was created for, preventing problems, and if they arise, to try to solve them. So this would be the priorities. First of all, to listen to all of you. To listen to all of you and to work together with the best minds that are here — and I feel that you all

are ready, with all these questions that are amazing, that you all want to do something, you are frustrated to help and to do something, to do it for your children and for the future generations. But we have to work together on that. So the priorities are known. That's what the UN was created for: the three pillars, and they are linked together. So these are the priorities that we're going to start with, and working together for getting results. Action, not reaction. You know, when you react, you already lose. You have to act, and you have to be one step ahead in order to be able to act. So that's why we have to work together on seeing on the ground what problems could happen. What could happen here, because they have a problem of poverty, because they have a problem with the water? This could become a bomb — a temporary bomb. So we have to work together to see these problems before they happen. So preventing is acting, not reacting. So this is something that we will work for from the beginning. And as I said, the legacy issue is a legacy for the UN, not for whoever is sitting at the head on the 38th floor. It's all together. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:13:28 (11:15:02) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response. Now I'll give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Andorra, followed by Women and Youth Advancement and Nepal.

DELEGATE — Andorra (on behalf of the Group of Francophone Ambassadors)

1:13:43 (11:15:17) Mr. President, on behalf of the Francophone Ambassadors Group, I'd like to commend the holding of this interactive dialogue, which will help to strengthen transparency and accountability in this decision-making process for the next Secretary-General. The Francophone group would like to thank Ms. A-Baki for explaining her strategic vision. At a time when the UN must address systemic crises and a growing fragmentation of the international order, we believe that the issue of multilingualism is not a secondary one — it is a strategic driver for legitimacy, effectiveness, and inclusion in the multilateral system. In this context, in which multilingualism ought to be brought to the fore, we would like to hear about your personal position and your ability to spearhead this issue at the highest level. Could you explain in greater detail your relationship to the UN working languages, especially French, and the role that you grant to multilingualism in your background? How, as SG, would you make multilingualism a pivotal element of your leadership and not a simple functional tool? How would you ensure that your team's composition would effectively reflect regional, linguistic, and cultural diversity at the UN? And lastly, when it comes to governance of the Secretariat, how do you plan to improve HR management to ensure that language skills are fully recognized and given their due value during the recruitment and promotion of staff, in accordance with the Secretariat's rules about linguistic diversity? The Group of Francophone Ambassadors remains committed to an inclusive multilingualism based upon linguistic and cultural diversity, which is a key prerequisite for its legitimacy and effectiveness. We are looking forward to hearing about how you plan to translate these principles into concrete commitments. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:15:35 (11:17:09) I thank the distinguished representative of Andorra. I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:15:52 (11:17:26) Thank you very much. Thank you for that question. And I also feel quite Francophone. I lived in France for several years. I was an artist, a painter previously. I was also an ambassador there. So this is a very important question for me. I believe in multilingualism. But the issue is that we have not seen positive outcomes, and that is why people everywhere are asking me, what is the UN doing? What is UNESCO doing? And so on. On the contrary, I think these are

institutions that can make a major difference now more than ever. We need multilingualism now. We need men and women who are working together, and languages are very important. And that is why you can see here that there are many languages and cultures that understand each other. What is culture? Culture is everything, but we have to go beyond all of the things that divide us. We have to think about what we can work on together. And there are many more things that we can work on together than separately.

Personally, my experience when I was living in Europe, especially France, is that people would say, "Oh, they're so arrogant because we don't speak their language." I said, no, not at all — sometimes they're a bit shy because they don't speak another language as well as their own. And in the U.S., everyone speaks English; we speak English everywhere, so we don't have to learn a new language. I think that we ought to work together to uphold multilingualism, to set an example to the rest of the world, to show that the UN can work together. It is the only place where we can find solutions for all of the world's problems, and now more than ever, with AI — which I think is not artificial intelligence, it is human intelligence, the intelligence of all humans together who created this intelligence. So we are here today together, and we can work not to control it. We can't control anything. If we have a heart attack tomorrow, we disappear. We can't control anything. But we could at least ensure that AI is used for good, because bad people want to use it for bad things. So we have to work on this issue. We can't stop AI, but we have to work together here in order to ensure that it can help us as humans to do things better. We must remember that human memory is more important than artificial memory, and that we can do this — we're not even using 10% of our brain. So that's why we have to work together. We represent human intelligence together. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:19:41 (11:21:15) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response. Now I give the floor to the representative of Women and Youth Advancement. The floor is yours.

CIVIL SOCIETY — Women and Youth Advancement and the Collaborative AI Group

1:20:03 (11:21:37) Good morning, Ms. A-Baki. Thank you for being here. I'm Judy Snell, representing Women and Youth Advancement and the Collaborative AI Group, working at the intersection of human capability development, business, and mental wellness. As the UN undertakes reform, civil society is increasingly consulted, yet consultation does not always translate into meaningful influence. What concrete reforms would you champion as Secretary-General to ensure that grassroots and underrepresented organizations move from being consulted to genuinely co-shaping, implementing, and evaluating UN priorities? Secondly, as AI increasingly shapes access to employment, finance, education, and public services, how should the UN— [time]. Thank you.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:21:16 (11:22:50) Yes, as I mentioned, this will be an open place for everyone. And civil society should be part of all this, too. And I would like to listen to everyone. You know, you are the ones that have to be working together, because civil society are the ones that are giving us the tools in order for us to be able to know what's happening in your places, in your countries, in your institutions, whatever you're doing. So I promise that it will be an open place. And it's not going to be difficult. We have to change some of the rules to leave a place for people that really have something to say.

And what you mentioned about the jobs with artificial intelligence — there will be other kinds of jobs, believe me. It's not going to disappear. Maybe it's going to be better, and it's going to be more efficient, and it's going to be used in a different way. And I'm sure that education everywhere has to change in a different way, but that doesn't mean that jobs — maybe they will be of better quality. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:22:25 (11:23:59) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response. Now I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Nepal, followed by New Zealand.

DELEGATE — Nepal (on behalf of the Least Developed Countries)

1:22:46 (11:24:20) Thank you, Mr. President. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the group of least developed countries, which remains most structurally vulnerable and the farthest behind in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The LDC group appreciates the candidate for the presentation and requests to share her reflection on the following question. If elected next Secretary-General, what will be your strategic approach to mobilize and direct adequate, predictable, and concessional resources to LDCs? And how will you reorient the UN development system so that supporting LDCs to achieve the SDGs and the Doha Programme of Action becomes a visible system-wide priority at country level? I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:23:26 (11:25:00) I thank the distinguished representative of Nepal for his question. Now I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:23:41 (11:25:15) Thank you for the question. And I've already said that we have to generate trust and results in order to be able to generate resources for everything that we're going to be doing, especially for the SDGs and all the problems that are going on through not having enough resources, or because we are not showing that there will be results. So we have to create action, as I said, with trust, for the implementation of all the things that we see that are stopped now — temporarily, I hope. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:24:15 (11:25:49) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of New Zealand, who will be speaking on behalf of CANZ. New Zealand.

DELEGATE — New Zealand (on behalf of CANZ — Canada, Australia, and New Zealand)

1:24:34 (11:26:08) President, Ms. A-Baki, Excellencies, dear colleagues, I have the honor to address you today on behalf of Australia, Canada, and my own country, New Zealand. President, first let me commend the President of the General Assembly and her team for the transparent, inclusive, and professional manner in which these interactive dialogues have been conducted. Given the significance of the decision before us, the opportunities these have provided for the UN membership to engage directly with the candidates have been of the utmost importance for the rigor and credibility of this process.

Ms. A-Baki, at a time of heightened global uncertainty and complex international challenges, the United Nations' ability to fulfil its core mandates rests on its institutional credibility, capability, and capacity. Institutional credibility requires bold and principled leadership, including the ability to deploy the Secretary-General's good offices with political courage and effect. Institutional capability requires a UN that is focused on upholding all three pillars of its work and translates early warning into early action. Institutional capacity requires experienced and ethical management and realistic, fit-for-purpose mandates that sharpen effectiveness and delivery. How do you think that the UN80

Initiative is working to align leadership, authority, and resources to restore confidence in the UN and enable it to deliver results? And how would you build on the UN80 Initiative to make the UN more effective? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:26:06 (11:27:40) I thank the Distinguished Representative of New Zealand. I now give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:26:12 (11:27:46) Thank you for your question. I appreciate that. How do we do that? Again, we go back to the same thing. We have to work together. They have to see us as united. You know, when they say "the United Nations" — do you think we are united? I think we are more divided than ever. So we have to get united. And when they see us united with a purpose — because you have to have a purpose. In life, if you don't have a purpose, you're lost. And I don't think that you have had a purpose here, because it's because of not having the results that were needed. Everybody's saying, oh, it's so bureaucratic, it's so difficult, nothing gets done because it takes time. Well, let's act. We have to show to the world that, yes, we can do it together, that everybody here, all the diplomats here, want their countries to be better, the world to be better for the future of their own families and children. And the world — we all want that. It's just we have to unite. And it's very divided yet. So I don't see it as a difficult thing if we have the purpose. And the purpose is written there — these three pillars. We don't have to move from them. We need just to concentrate on that. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:27:33 (11:29:07) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Austria, followed by Indonesia and Ireland. Austria.

DELEGATE — Austria (on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law)

1:27:52 (11:29:26) Mr. Vice President, Excellencies, I have the honor to deliver this question on behalf of over 50 cross-regional members of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law. And I would like to thank Ms. A-Baki for her presentation and for the questions and answers provided so far. Excellencies, in recent years we have witnessed breaches of even the most fundamental provisions of the UN Charter, including the obligation of all member states to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force, as well as mass atrocities committed at large scale in grave breach of international law — all this paired with the failure of the Security Council to take action in response. So the questions of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law to you would be: what concrete, proactive, and preventive measures would you personally pursue if elected as Secretary-General to strengthen the rule of law and prevent breaches by member states of the Charter's principles and of international law? And what specific preventive diplomacy initiatives would you launch or strengthen? I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:29:05 (11:30:39) I thank the Distinguished Representative of Austria for his question. I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki for her response.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:29:12 (11:30:46) Thank you for the question. And I always follow the law. I believe very much in the rule of law. All my life has been about that. We have to respect; in order to be respected, we have to respect. And the rule of law is something that we cannot ignore. We cannot give impunity. We have to follow the rules, and the rule of law is important. What I will do is, again, the same thing. As we said, we have to be acting. When we have action, the results are positive. And we can make the UN what it was created for, if we work on that. I know that it's not resulting as you would like, especially in the Security Council. But even there, we should get united, not divided. So the Security Council, as I mentioned in my remarks, they have to be renewed. It's not me, or whoever is going to be the Secretary-General, to do it, but it's through dialogue, through talking, and through saying, "We're not getting anywhere." So we need to work together. Even if we don't agree on everything, let's find something that we agree on in common in order to move forward and not have deadlocks in everything. So I will stop there. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:30:36 (11:32:10) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response. Now I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Indonesia, followed by Ireland. Indonesia.

DELEGATE — Indonesia (on behalf of the UN80 Global Group, and in national capacity)

1:30:51 (11:32:25) Thank you very much, Excellency. I will ask the following question on behalf of the UN80 Global Group, a cross-regional group comprising Barbados, Jordan, Kenya, New Zealand, Norway, Mexico, Senegal, Singapore, and my own country, Indonesia. Excellency, if elected as the next Secretary-General, what will you do to strengthen the trust between the Secretariat and member states, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the rest of the system, as well as the global confidence in the UN?

And now, Excellency, allow me to add three questions in our national capacity. First, with multilateralism under increasing strain, do you believe incremental reform is sufficient, or is there a need for more fundamental recalibration of the system? And how will you overcome the persistent resistance to change? The second question is, in an era of complex fragmentation, how will you revitalize the UN's role as the prominent forum for open dialogue among leaders to foster mutual understanding and solidarity? Third and last, how do you envision strengthening meaningful youth participation in shaping global norms and contributing to forward-looking and future-ready multilateral solutions? Thank you, Excellency.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:32:42 (11:34:16) I thank the Distinguished Representative of Indonesia for her question. I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki for your response.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:32:48 (11:34:22) Thank you for the question. And I think this could be answered in one — which is the one that you asked first. The trust in the Secretariat and how do you build that? I've never been Secretary-General here, but I know that to build trust, you have to talk. Talk with everyone. I know it's a little abstract, but I will give you an example of what I mean by that. When I first became Minister of Foreign Trade, Industry — it was five ministries. It was Foreign Trade, Industry, Fisheries, Competitiveness, Economic Integration. So I had, I don't know, maybe 14,000 people in the country under me. So I arrived, and I didn't have that experience. I mean, I was just ambassador in Washington before that. I ran for president. I didn't make it. The person that won the presidency put me in that position. And that place is the one that is productive, that generates jobs in

the country. So everything you need is jobs. So what do you do? And I'm arriving there and it's so many people. And everybody's sitting in their offices sending messages and doing nothing at all. And I said, what are the priorities here, if you have so many issues? And they said, well, we don't know. We don't know. I said, OK, what do you have? Let me see something. They said, well, there is a room where all the projects are. So I go to the room. It's a room — full of papers and books. And I said, what is this? And they said, these are projects. And I said, and which ones were implemented? Zero. And why do you have them? "This is our work." So they present projects, but no implementations. So we changed that completely.

So what I mean when I say bureaucracy, it's that. Sometimes leadership, it's not just one person — I don't believe that — but you have to work together with the Secretariat, with the group that has the same purpose of not accumulating. Here, you have resolutions. How many resolutions have you had? Tell me which ones were implemented. So it's the same thing. How can you trust when the results are not there? You know that in one year we changed this ministry because of the group that was working, not because of me. We negotiated the free trade agreement of the United States, together with Colombia and Peru. I didn't have a negotiating team. We had to create a team of 80 people to negotiate. And they didn't even know in the United States that we didn't have a team. We brought the best people, and we had the purpose and motivation, and we were the best. And this was done in less than one year. When you have a decision, a political decision, and a purpose with motivation for a good result, you can do it. So it's not difficult. It just takes political decision and motivation, and not accumulating papers and more papers and more resolutions that don't have anything that you can see in front of you that's happening. So that's why the lack of trust. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:36:35 (11:38:09) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Ireland, who will be speaking on behalf of the ACT Group. Ireland.

DELEGATE — Ireland (on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group — ACT)

1:36:52 (11:38:26) Thank you, President, and thank you, Ms. A-Baki. I would like to ask two questions on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, or in short, ACT — a cross-regional group composed of 27 small and mid-sized countries committed to a transparent and accountable UN and seeking to improve the working methods of the Security Council.

First, ACT believes that the Secretary-General should be proactive in reaching out to the Security Council when crises are imminent. In your opinion, what are the principles that would guide you to bring matters threatening the maintenance of international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council pursuant to Article 99 of the UN Charter? What specific steps would you take prior to invoking Article 99? And what course of action would you pursue following its invocation if the Security Council remains deadlocked and violations continue? And second, in line with Charter provisions and the oath taken by the Secretary-General, the ACT Group believes that the Secretary-General should exercise independence in the selection of senior officials. If elected, how would you build your team? What would you do to safeguard your independence? How would you take into account factors such as geographic and gender balance alongside merit in those appointments, and avoid a continuation of monopolies on senior posts for certain nationalities? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:38:05 (11:39:39) I thank the Distinguished Representative of Ireland. Now I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:38:12 (11:39:46) Thank you for the question. I've been all my life independent. And I believe that independence — when they tell me you don't have an ideology, I say, well, it doesn't mean I don't have an ideology, but I am not left-wing or right-wing or center. When I ran for president, I made my own movement, because I didn't want to have a party where they would put me in a box. So freedom is about choosing what you need, but I believe in something. I believe in the human. I am a humanist, so I believe in the richness of a human being, and I will choose the people, the right people, that also have this neutrality. Because in order to be able to be in a position like this at the United Nations, you need to be neutral. I know it's difficult, but I learned it through my life. And I learned it when I was seeing people being killed in front of me in Lebanon in the name of religion. So I said, no, I'm never going to be with one side or the other. You have to listen to both sides.

Do I have time to tell a story? Okay. The first negotiation I started in my life was when I married — I was 17, I had my son at 18. And my husband was in politics in Lebanon. And the war started. And he was in politics. So they came to my home asking for my husband to be kidnapped. I had 14 people with Kalashnikovs in front of the door. I said, he's not here. So they said, then your son — they told us your son. I said, well, over my dead body; you have to kill me first in order for you to take my son. And I looked at all of them. They were my age — almost 18, 17, 19. I saw one leader. I said, can you come in? So he passed. And I said, leave your arms outside. You just come in and close the door. We talked for two, three hours. You know what? I told him, why did you do this? Why are you doing this? He said, well, they killed my family because I am a Shia. It was in southern Lebanon; I was Shia, and my family was killed by a Sunni — between themselves. And they killed my mother and father. And I have five brothers and sisters. And I have to educate them and help them. So I left school, and I'm doing this because they are paying me. We had a foundation with my husband, regardless of religion, just to educate people in Lebanon. I told him, look, bring your brothers and sisters, bring them over, we'll give them education — if you want, also for you — but leave this. How can you do this? So he brought his children. To make a long story short, this boy afterwards was taking my children to school in Lebanon. So every person is good. It's the problems that happen that change that. So I would be surrounded with people that really believe in the purpose of this institution — for peace and security. When there are wars, when there are problems in the world, we are creating this kind of society. I'm sorry, I have the red one. Okay, thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:42:15 (11:43:49) Thank you very much for that response. We have now exhausted the allotted time for the first segment of the session, so we move to the second segment. I invite delegations to proceed to the second segment to allow sufficient time to hear the candidate's response to the questions related to the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development, and human rights. Civil society questions will be interspersed with the questions from member states, and priority will be given to those who have not spoken in the first segment. Now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Poland, followed by Uganda and Cuba. Poland.

DELEGATE — Poland (on behalf of the Lublin Triangle)

1:43:10 (11:44:44) Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for joining us today and for your exposé and responses in four languages, no less, which makes me tempted to ask you a question in Polish, but I will refrain and stick to English for now. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Lublin Triangle countries, comprising Lithuania, Ukraine, and my own country, Poland. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has produced documented patterns of atrocity crimes, including deportation of children, attacks on civilian infrastructure, and arbitrary detention. In this context, existing UN mechanisms have proven unable to compel accountability.

The questions are as follows. What is your vision for strengthening coordination between the relevant UN entities and fact-finding mechanisms to ensure that impunity is not the default outcome? How should the UN strengthen cooperation with existing investigative mechanisms to support the documentation of evidence of war crimes and other serious violations, while ensuring consistent UN system-wide reporting and response, including efforts to advance accountability for the crime of aggression? Finally, what concrete role should the Secretary-General's good offices play in ensuring the implementation of General Assembly mandates, such as the resolution on the return of Ukrainian children of last year, and advancing accountability when a permanent member of the Security Council is the alleged perpetrator? I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:44:40 (11:46:14) I thank the distinguished representative of Poland. I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:44:46 (11:46:20) You know, thank you for the question. I don't speak Polish. But it's very sad what's going on. And I told you from the beginning, when I spoke, that this war and this kind of war should have been avoided. And I think the UN could have avoided that. I will not enter into details. So, first of all, if you can avoid it — but suppose it happens, you have to act immediately to find a quick solution. Because, as I said, who pays the price of this? Children. Children that have nothing to do with it. And this marks them forever. I lived it. My children — I have two boys and a girl. They are marked. They cannot see on TV what's going on in the world, in the Middle East, in the war in Ukraine. They can't. They were marked forever. The music of my children to sleep was the bombs. The bombs were what put them to sleep. So this is unacceptable. How long has the Ukraine–Russia war been going on? And we don't see — we want more arms, more wars, more bombs, who takes more, who takes more?

There should be a solution. And I believe that the two presidents, they should sit together. When we did Ecuador and Peru, it was the longest dispute, more than 150 years old. They wouldn't speak with each other. Enemies. I was raised to hate Peruvians because they took half of our land. And it was not true — because they were not educated that way. Maybe it's true for Ecuador, because we didn't have a passage to the Amazon, and that was the reason. But if we didn't get the two presidents that hated each other — and now his daughter is the president of Peru, Fujimori's daughter — Fujimori, and Jamil Mahuad, an Ecuadorian Lebanese, and I was negotiator with them. We put them together at a table, just with food, and no maps and no papers, just to get together and talk and to become friends, even if they were not agreeing on everything. It took three years, but we signed a historic peace. This should happen between Russia and Ukraine. They should get together. And this is the place where they should get together. And who brings them? The Secretary-General. Not the presidents, not the special envoys of other countries that are not from the UN. The UN has to do that. It was created for that. I'm starting to have points. Okay. I will talk to you later, but these are long things that we have to talk about. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:48:15 (11:49:49) I thank Ms. A-Baki very much for that response. Now, I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Uganda, followed by the civil society organization. Uganda.

DELEGATE — Uganda (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement)

1:48:33 (11:50:07) I am speaking on behalf of the 120 member states of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement affirms the role of the United Nations in promoting multilateralism and international cooperation, which are essential for addressing global challenges that impact the member states of the Movement. In this context, I wish to raise the following two questions. Number one, the Declaration on the Right to Development was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1986 — that's 40 years ago. What is your position on the right to development? And how would you advance its implementation within the UN system when you become the next Secretary-General? Number two, how do you assess the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the ability of affected developing countries to achieve sustainable development and fully implement the 2030 Agenda? What concrete actions would you promote in your capacity as the next Secretary-General to strengthen the role of the United Nations in opposing such measures that violate the UN Charter, urging their elimination and promoting mechanisms to prevent their application? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:50:02 (11:51:36) I thank the distinguished representative of Uganda. Now I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:50:08 (11:51:42) Thank you for your question. For me, Africa — where are you? Africa is very important for me. I think you have an amazing continent, and when I was mentioning that the continent is growing the fastest, I was meaning that. And all the problems that are still happening there, and they're not changing — and that's the place that has to be the one that the Secretary-General should concentrate on. Finding solutions that are implemented, not just resolutions that stay there. So I will work very closely with leaders, and I know you have a candidate from Uganda that I'm sure is caring for that. This is one of the things that is creating a lot of problems, other than the Middle East and Russia and Ukraine — it's in Africa. And it's one of the richest areas, richest places in the world. Now, if we are talking about artificial intelligence, what's going to be needed mostly is the minerals that you in Africa have. So I think that's a priority for the United Nations — to see solutions in Africa and work together with the member states on finding ways that will not be creating worse. So prevent going to the worst of what's going on just now. So we'll work on that, absolutely.

I just want to say that Africa for me is important because of the environmental issue. It's important because of the environmental issues that we do together with the Amazon and the Galápagos. When I heard about the unity between what's happening in the Sahara and what happened in the Amazon — there's so much link, being so separated. It's a link that you should read about, how important it is that, being so far away, we are so interconnected. So I think that we should see this world as one, whether it's Africa, Asia, Latin America — we all are interconnected, and all the problems that happen, whether close or far away, affect us all. And what's going on in Africa now is a big problem that we have to solve together. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:52:29 (11:54:03) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response. Now, I would like to invite the Assembly to view a pre-recorded video by Pax Christi Flanders.

CIVIL SOCIETY — Pax Christi Flanders, Belgium (pre-recorded video)

1:52:46 (11:54:20) Hello. My name is Bénédicte Coussandila, representing Pax Christi Flanders from Belgium. Today, we see international law and human rights, rooted in the United Nations' founding values, increasingly undermined, alongside rising inequality, discrimination, and violence. In this context, how can active nonviolence — supported by the UNESCO Peace Education and the Sustainable Development Goals — strengthen ethical leadership across politics, business, and society to build a sustainable culture of peace?

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:53:18 (11:54:20) Thank you for the question. Sustainable culture of peace. Isn't it amazing that we are talking about how do we build a sustainable culture of peace when we're having more than 60 wars? So something is being done wrong. Again, we're talking about the same thing. It's true, it's education, but even if we do education, we're still not getting there. So there is something beyond just education. It's a culture. And I will say something that maybe is not going to be very — we have to have more women in the positions of negotiation, at the table of negotiations, in the leading positions of taking decisions. If you see the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, or Israel and Gaza — even not Palestine, I will say — but you see only men. I'm not saying that it's wrong. I'm saying that we have to have women and men. When we negotiated Peru and Ecuador, I was the only woman. I wanted to have more women. We couldn't find any — in 1995, when we started.

So we need to educate women, and the question was asked by a woman — that they have to; it's not a must, it's an obligation for us women, mothers, to be at the table of negotiations. The most affected by their absence in the wars are women and children. So it is a must that we need to have women. We have been here now in the United Nations for 81 years, almost, and we haven't had yet a woman. So I'm not a feminist. I'm feminine. I like to work with men, but also with women. We need to work together. We see things in a different way. A man says, this is my position at the table of negotiations, and I don't move. So the other loses and one wins. This is not a win. You have to give up and give up to win. The win-win is a lose-lose. You can't win everything, because the other one that loses will come back. So that's why this culture of peace has to be together, working men and women, to have this culture of peace, because it's part of us. We are the mothers that give birth to the men also. So we are 50-50. But the 50% men, they have mothers too. So we need to work together. That would be the answer for a culture of peace that works.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:56:41 (11:58:15) Now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Cuba, followed by the Russian Federation, Namibia, and Switzerland. Cuba.

DELEGATE — Cuba

1:56:59 (11:58:33) President, Ms. A-Baki, good morning. We're grateful for the opportunity to have these interactive dialogues. It's necessary to ensure that the SG selection process is open, transparent, and inclusive. We echo the questions put to you by the G77, NAM, and AOSIS, and we wish to put the following questions to you in our national capacity. Which structural reforms specifically would you champion to transform the international financial system into one that is more just, inclusive, transparent, and representative, and that can effectively meet the needs and priorities of developing countries, including access to financing, debt relief, and greater participation in decision-making processes? How do you view the UN's role in that process? In view of the escalation of conflict and the proliferation of belligerent narratives, what specific steps would you take as Secretary-General to promote a culture of peace, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the principle of the non-use of force? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:57:49 (11:59:23) I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba. I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki for her response.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

1:57:55 (11:59:29) Thank you. Cuba is a marvelous country. I've been to Cuba personally. It has a huge opportunity in terms of tourism. What are the problems that mean that developing countries lack resources? Corruption. We have to work extensively on corruption. Where does the money get to? Who is using it? And who's it being used for? For people, or to fill the pockets of those in power? I've been very careful when working on those issues. We have to be careful. If people don't feel that they are enjoying opportunities and that they have the freedom to decide what they want to do and which opportunities they wish to take in terms of work — without them feeling those things, there can be no democracy. I believe a great deal in democracy. It's not solely a word. It's a culture of peace itself. It's a way of living. It's a culture of respect. It's a culture of trust in institutions. And when there are no robust, strong institutions, there can be no justice. There's no respect and there's no freedom. We have to work very carefully indeed, as all countries together, on all of these issues. I don't stand against anyone. That's very true. I'm deeply interested in seeing Cuba sitting down and engaging in dialogue, but we have to be cognizant of the fact that the UN is neutral. And the issue of democracy and human rights has to be respected. Justice also, justice for all, has to be upheld. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

1:59:44 (12:01:18) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I'll give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation.

DELEGATE — Russian Federation

1:59:57 (12:01:31) Mr. President, thank you very much. The Russian Federation believes it is crucial to select the most worthy candidate who will meet the highest standards of professionalism, competency, and dedication to the goals and principles of the UN Charter in their entirety and interconnectedness. Therefore, we'd like to ask Ms. A-Baki the following questions. First of all, can the Secretary-General base him or herself on decisions of the General Assembly that are not consensus-based in nature, that go beyond its authority under the Charter, especially in situations when the issues are being examined by the Security Council? Secondly, do you believe that the principles of the Charter can be ranked in terms of importance, essentially juggling with them? And do you agree that the Secretariat has the right to interpret the Charter to determine which situations can have the principles of territorial integrity versus self-determination applied to them? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:00:54 (12:02:28) I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation. Now I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:01:10 (12:02:44) Thank you. Though I studied Russian for three years, I couldn't follow you, because I was listening in English, and I couldn't listen to both at the same time. But anyway — another place that I believe I've visited a lot, and I know, and I love, is Russia. You have an amazing culture. When I was with my project of the Yasuni for the Amazon, Russia supported the project, and it was an incredible project — to leave the oil underground, and be given by not cutting the trees,

and Russia was believing in that. I believe again that Russia and Ukraine should sit together in the United Nations and talk. I think that the only solution now, after we couldn't prevent the war, is to bring them to the table here at the UN and sit and find a way. Okay, what does Russia want? I believe borders should be respected. So I think there was an agreement that Russia doesn't want NATO to be near, right? Okay, let's agree on that then. Let's decide that. Stop the war. The most important thing is to stop the killing. So if Russia could be stopping the war, and Ukraine could decide that they will not be part of NATO, and respect the lines wherever they want to decide, and respect the borders, and get to an agreement. The important thing is to end the war. We can't continue with this war. And the only way to do it is for them to sit. They can't come together — he cannot come, the other one cannot come. Separate, it's not going to happen. So we need to find solutions, because the people that are dying, and the refugees — I heard that there are almost no more men in both countries. And it still is continuing. Until when? Until when? What are we doing here at the UN? We need to work harder, and to force that. And it will be an obligation for them to do it because of humanity. Because it's affecting Europe, it's affecting everywhere. A war that's close or far away, it affects us all at the same time. Everywhere. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:04:09 (12:05:43) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Namibia, followed by Switzerland. Namibia.

DELEGATE — Namibia

2:04:28 (12:06:02) Your Excellencies, Madam A-Baki, in September 2024 world leaders adopted the most wide-ranging international agreement in many years, namely the Pact for the Future, that has brought a renewed impetus towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This notable agreement has reinvigorated the multilateral system and has given direction in a number of important global multilateral thematic issues. My question is: what's your vision to implementing the Pact for the Future, and how best can the Secretariat support member states in its implementation ahead of the 2028 review of the Pact? In the Pact for the Future, world leaders agreed that Africa should be treated as a priority and a special case as far as the reform of the United Nations Security Council is concerned. What's your understanding of this unique decision taken by member states, and how would your office support its implementation? Finally, what would be your plan to making the international financial architecture more representative and fair, as borrowing rates for Africa are much higher than other parts of the world, thereby structurally disadvantaging Africa's development? Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:05:41 (12:07:15) I thank the distinguished representative of Namibia. Now I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:05:56 (12:07:30) I thank you, and I agree very much with you about the Pact for the Future and about the Security Council agreeing. I mean, it's not the Secretary-General that has to agree on that. It's with everyone — the General Assembly and the Security Council. But I spoke in my remarks about that. We were living in the 21st century, and at the moment when it was created, the UN, we were 174 million people, and now we are 8 billion, and the region that's getting more people, you can say, is Africa. So the representation should be in a different way. The issue of economics — I believe that once you generate trust in the UN, and see results, real results that are shown, there will be money coming. And every country should be able to pay what it needs to pay accordingly. But also,

we can find, according to projects, private-public partnerships for the project. Once the UN shows that its purpose is to create a better world for every country, for every citizen to feel that they are living in a better way, they will invest in those places, especially in Africa, with all the richness that they have. Well, another issue is the issue of corruption, too. In the countries, they have to also have accountability. So we will work together on that, absolutely. But I have to listen to the member states and to see with the Security Council what the decision is, but I will support that.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:08:02 (12:09:36) I thank Ms. A-Baki for her response, and now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Switzerland.

DELEGATE — Switzerland

2:08:23 (12:09:57) Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this informal dialogue, and more generally thank you for this series of discussions which all member states greatly appreciate for the exchange between member states and the candidates. And we thank Ms. A-Baki for presenting her vision. We have the two following questions. First of all, with regard to reforms, UN80 was launched to make the UN more agile and efficient. How do you plan to promote the UN80 process during your mandate? And secondly, on management and your team, the Secretariat of the UN is currently facing major constraints and growing pressure on its personnel. How would you strengthen the commitment of UN staff in a situation of financial constraints and increased security risks? Thank you.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:09:13 (12:10:47) I'm sorry, I didn't hear the first part of your question, but when it comes to what we can do to ensure that the UN can have more engagement and more funding — once again, the question is one of trust. When there is trust in the UN, there is no problem when it comes to financing. And I am sure that all the countries present here today, everyone knows that there has been a problem of inaction. There are many resolutions, many papers, a great deal of work that has been done, but there's not enough implementation. So what we're going to do is change everything. We have to change everything. Everyone is expecting for there to be a decision by the UN to work together between the Security Council and the General Assembly. There is a division right now between these two bodies, not only between countries, but between these organs of the UN. If there is no connection between the Security Council and the General Assembly, how can we do our work? That's the first point that I wanted to raise. We have to talk to everyone, not just the representatives of the countries represented — that's all. We have to all work together. All resolutions need to be worked upon with all the parties. So money is not the issue. It is political decisions, implementation, and transparency that we need. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:11:22 (12:12:56) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. The next speaker is the Digital Citizen Fund, followed by the Philippines and Peru. Digital Citizen Fund, you have the floor.

CIVIL SOCIETY — Digital Citizen Fund

2:11:38 (12:13:12) Good afternoon, Ms. A-Baki. I'm representing the Digital Citizen Fund, where we work to provide educational opportunities for Afghan women and girls. My questions are: if you become Secretary-General, how will you uphold UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and ensure the meaningful inclusion of Afghan women and civil society in any UN-facilitated dialogue or political

process with the Taliban? And what other concrete steps will you take to support Afghan women in ending this gender apartheid system? Women's rights are human rights. And the situation of Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan today is among the worst in the world. Over 2.4 million girls are out of school. And the UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan himself has called it the most extreme and systematic assault on gender equality of our time.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:12:33 (12:14:07) Thank you, Digital Citizen Fund, for your question. Ms. A-Baki, your response.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:12:39 (12:14:13) Thank you for that. My God, it's something that keeps me awake a lot — listening to the girls that in Afghanistan are not going to school, and it's becoming worse and worse. Can you imagine? When you had that dream, with Malala it happened, and then all of a sudden there are no more. What can we do? We can do a lot. That's another priority — talking about children. Girls, for me, are very important, and you cannot have this kind of discrimination happening in the 21st century. So it was given to the Taliban — maybe that was a mistake, the way it was done. Everything went upside down when it was going right. But we'll pay the price for this, again — girls. And this cannot continue. It's not acceptable. That's why, when I said I will have a microphone, we will have a microphone here. We will speak clear and loud that this is not acceptable. These girls are begging for that. Everywhere that I go, that question happens and comes out: how can this be happening again? And I don't have an answer, but we will do it. We will do it. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:14:21 (12:15:55) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Philippines, followed by Peru and Equatorial Guinea. Philippines.

DELEGATE — Philippines (Chair of the Group of Like-Minded Countries on Middle-Income Countries — LMG-MIC)

2:14:42 (12:16:16) Thank you, Mr. Vice President, and thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for this conversation with the member states and civil society. As Chair of the Like-Minded Group for Middle-Income Countries, the LMG-MIC, the Philippines would like to inquire how you believe the UN's support to middle-income countries can be improved, considering that the majority of the world's poor continue to live in middle-income countries, including through a strategic plan of action for middle-income countries and a dedicated focal point in the Secretariat, which the LMG-MIC have been consistently calling for. And in particular, how do you see the opportunities provided by UN80 to rethink, recalibrate, and strengthen partnerships for and with the middle-income countries throughout the UN? I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:15:18 (12:16:52) I thank the distinguished representative of the Philippines. I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:15:35 (12:17:09) Thank you for the question. I was visiting your country just a few months ago — an amazing place, and I have a lot of friends, and you're doing a great job in the Philippines. And, you know, when you consider middle-income countries, the majority are now middle-income countries. I think very few are not anymore. And this is another thing that is linked also with democracy. Look, Singapore is an example that it could change, not having a lot of resources, but they could do it — political decision. When you lose the middle class, you become a low-income country, and you lose democracy, because the middle class is like the backbone for a society. And if they are becoming more rich and then more poor, and the middle class is disappearing, then problems happen, corruption gets inside, and we lose democracy, and we become middle-income — or lower. But still, the UN can help on that, with every country. Like I mentioned, we have to work together with the countries in order for them to be able to tell us what the problems are that we can solve, in order not to lose the opportunities of generating jobs and getting more people being able to dream bigger, to have more income, and to develop.

And I think now, with artificial intelligence, you can do a lot. That's why artificial intelligence has to be used in a positive way — the negative people are using it for that, and we have to be very careful, because the good, they don't unite, but evil unites. So we need to work on that. And that's when I mention also the debt. You know, one of the solutions for countries that are indebted so much that they only go to pay the interest of the debt — so if we can reduce the debt, and make swaps not just for environment, like we did in Ecuador with the Galápagos and the Amazon, but swaps on education, on health, to have the burden less for the country, so they will be able to develop and to invest in other things for the social and for the people to become better, in a better position, and the country itself. So these are things that we need to talk about together and work out, and it could happen. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:18:32 (12:20:06) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Peru, followed by Equatorial Guinea and Ukraine.

DELEGATE — Peru

2:18:51 (12:20:25) Thank you, President. My thanks also go to Ambassador A-Baki for her presentation. We know her well in Peru and we appreciate her wealth of experience. Peru is attending this dialogue strongly committed to strengthening the United Nations so it can tackle, through cooperation, the urgent challenges facing humankind. Inspired by the legacy of the Peruvian diplomat Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the only Secretary-General of the United Nations to have come from Latin America and the Caribbean, we reaffirm the importance of leadership able to build consensus in the current international landscape, marked by increasing complexity, volatility, and uncertainty. Peru wishes to pose the following two questions. How do you view the role that Latin America and the Caribbean can and must play as a zone of peace and a region of democracy, committed to promoting and defending the principles of the UN Charter and to strengthening multilateralism? My second question: what specific actions will you champion to restore the UN's convening and leadership capacity — or more specifically that of the Secretary-General — in order to respond to emerging threats and challenges facing peace and security? These include transnational organized crime. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:20:06 (12:21:40) I thank the distinguished representative of Peru. I give the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:20:22 (12:21:56) Thank you very much indeed, Ambassador. Thank you, Peru. I will say from the get-go that Peru is a brotherly country — more than a brother now. We've worked a great deal together. I was part of peace missions from 1995 to 1998, and I was an appointed ambassador of peace. And so it's a pleasure for me to see you here today, Ambassador. A great deal of work can be done, more than ever before, in the United Nations on security. What's happening in the Andean region is very dangerous indeed, but a country can't tackle these threats and these dangers alone. Ecuador — I was giving the example of Ecuador as a country of peace, par excellence. When I lived in Lebanon, Ecuador was a peaceful country. Look at how things are now, and how things have changed as a result of drug trafficking, organized crime, the cartels. And this is happening in Peru, too. It's in the grips of the same problem, as is Colombia. So we need to work on this issue together as a team, because these issues are affecting not only the Andean region, but the whole region of South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. This is a critical juncture for the United Nations to get involved. If what the United Nations mainly does is deal with peace and security, what better area in which to lead by example? We need to work as a team. Unite as countries. Like-minded countries need to get together — I think that's what you say. A great deal of work can be done by them together as a team. And that was the idea driving my meetings in Colombia. I was at the inauguration of the President of Colombia. I was also in Peru at the inauguration of President Keiko. I went to visit Fujimori's tomb with Mahuad, and we talked about this. We talked at great length about countries getting together. President Noboa, Ecuador's also working jointly with allies. Many countries were present. And we talked about rallying efforts through the United Nations. And that is the idea. The United Nations should unite more than ever before, because a great deal can be done, and can show, through this example, that together we can accomplish a great deal and overcome problems. Thank you for your question and thank you for being here.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:22:44 (12:24:18) We have three more speakers on the list today. The next speaker is Equatorial Guinea, followed by Ukraine and the UN Association of the USA. Equatorial Guinea.

DELEGATE — Equatorial Guinea

2:23:04 (12:24:38) I do wish to thank you and say how much I appreciate your clear, pragmatic, and idealistic responses to the questions raised, and it is with that in mind that I wish to say the following. As you are well aware, but I do want to drill down further into the question posed by Namibia: as you know, Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat on the Security Council, and this in spite of the fact that more than 60% of the Security Council's agenda focuses on Africa, and despite the fact that Africa accounts for 28% of UN member states. Since 2005, the African position has been clear and unified. The Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration outline that position. They ask for no fewer than two permanent seats for Africa with all prerogatives, including the veto, and five non-permanent seats. If we don't eradicate the veto, new permanent members should also enjoy that privilege. Given your experience, and despite the fact that the Secretary-General doesn't have direct control here — it's a member state issue — but in your experience, what suggestions do you have for this situation to be resolved after almost 20 years? The historic injustice that's been done to Africa begs a resolution; Africa is calling for a resolution in terms of reform. And what contributions would you make to that? Because for years and years, through the IGN process, we've been adopting the same resolutions, and then we come to the next session. Thank you very much.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:25:10 (12:26:44) Thank you very much to the distinguished representative of Equatorial Guinea. I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:25:27 (12:27:01) Thank you for speaking Spanish. Thank you for being here as Equatorial Guinea and speaking Spanish. As I said, I'm very deeply interested in acting as a mediator, because I think the role of a Secretary-General is not in any way "general," and he shouldn't be a general. He or she should be a mediator, forging common ground. After so many years — and I was saying this — for so many years we've been dwelling on this Security Council issue, and that means that what we have is not fair. When we can find a solution that's more equitable, and when we can find solutions, doors shouldn't be closed down because one country exercises the veto. I can listen to all of you, I can make suggestions, and work with all of you as a team to achieve a positive outcome — an outcome that might help to ensure that not all resolutions are just blocked, because we won't find any solutions if we continue down that path. So we need to find a formula that works. And I am committed to finding that formula when, God willing, I come to be your Secretary-General. Thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:26:21 (12:27:55) Thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for your response. Now I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Ukraine.

DELEGATE — Ukraine

2:26:38 (12:28:12) Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Ms. A-Baki, for sharing your vision and priorities and for your confident and inspiring remarks. As a Ukrainian, I understand very well what you describe — spending hours in a shelter during bomb or missile attacks, especially with the children. It is so hard to see Russian ballistic missiles flying above your head and realize that there are simply not enough air defense interceptors to stop them. It is difficult to talk about a win-win situation when a so-called permanent member of the Security Council openly violates the UN Charter, sending troops into another country, and tries to seize and annex its territory. Russia hides behind the language of self-defense and self-determination, but this war is only about imperial ambitions, territorial expansion, and control over other countries' resources. A real win-win situation begins with respect for the UN Charter, holding the aggressor country accountable, and punishing the one who started this war and crossed the international border with its troops. Last night alone, at least 15 people in my capital, Kyiv, did not see this morning because of Russian missiles. Ukraine is ready to stop this war. Russia is not. So my question is: how do you plan to utilize the mandate of the Secretary-General, including through engagement with the General Assembly, to advance diplomatic efforts to end Russia's aggression against Ukraine and promote a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace, and at the same time strengthen accountability for the violations of international law committed by Russia during its war of aggression against Ukraine? I thank you.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:28:27 (12:30:01) I thank the distinguished representative of Ukraine. I pass the floor to Ms. A-Baki to respond.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:28:48 (12:30:22) Thank you, representative of Ukraine — another of my favorite countries, that I've visited many times. And one of my best friends, like a brother, is Ukrainian. And he teaches me

every day what you were just saying. He tells me every day, "You have no right, you cannot say this." That's why I said I have to be neutral. And I have to listen to both sides. And I've had this discussion with friends from Ukraine and from Russia. And it's the same. We are repeating the same. You know, sometimes, if we want to find a solution, we need to put the past at rest. Otherwise, there will not be a solution. If you want to continue the war, it's going to continue. Neither Putin nor Zelensky, the two presidents, are going to stop. You are accusing this, they are accusing that. So, if we put the past at rest and get together and take a real decision — I didn't say win-win. It will never be a win-win. It will be a lose-lose to win. That's a big difference. There is never a win-win. When they say win-win, it's a lose-lose to win. You have to give up and give up. And everyone has to give up something that they can afford to give up and that will not affect the people. But what most affects the people is when they are dying in the thousands every week. So something has to be found. And try, believe me, to turn the same language and put the past at rest, from both of you, Russians and Ukrainians. It's your children. You are a very young, good-looking person, the one that asked the question. You are young. I'm sure you don't want your children to continue living in war, and I'm sure the Russians don't want their families to continue suffering. Who is paying the price? Put the past at rest. And start with the vision of the lose-lose, not the win-win.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:31:10 (12:32:44) Thank you for your response. Now we have the last question, the last speaker of the day, which comes from the United Nations Association of the United States of America. You have the floor.

CIVIL SOCIETY — United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA)

2:31:25 (12:32:59) My question is regarding development. Recognizing the complex development challenges facing member states, especially those most affected by climate impacts and structural vulnerabilities, how do you envision strengthening the UN's role in mobilizing inclusive financing, building institutional capacity, and advancing responsible technology like AI, and ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals' pathways are both equitable and resilient? That's my question. Thank you.

A-BAKI (Ivonne A-Baki, Candidate)

2:32:24 (12:33:58) Well, I didn't feel the time. We cannot have more questions? No, I'm just joking. I enjoyed very much all your questions, and I would like to answer the question about sustainable development. Again, we go back to the same issue of how do we get resources and where do we allocate them for the Sustainable Development Goals, and all the things that are happening now because of climate change, because of what's going on. I said it's cyclic, but the difference between the past times when it was cyclic — and there were droughts, like we have El Niño now, like we're having La Niña — all the things that happened, it happens. But now we have more people. We used to have a certain amount, and now we have 8 billion. So it affects the people that are living in places that are sensitive, like the small island developing states, and places that are affected more than others. So the UN's role is to help in that, to find resources. It doesn't have to be from the UN. It can be from institutions, the private sector — uniting public and private sector for a purpose of doing specific things to help this to happen and to be implemented. Because, as I said, the SDGs have gotten how much money? It was billions. Billions. I heard that it was like four billion, or more. And where were they used? We have to find out what happened and why. But okay, let's say that we are starting now. What are we going to do to find the problems? With artificial intelligence, it's much easier. You can know how to do it and do it less expensively and focused on the issues that are happening in the place where it's happening. Or prevent it from happening, because you will know. There are things you don't know. Look what happened in Cali — I was just

there for the inauguration, I left, and the next day there was an earthquake. Some people say it has to do with movement of the earth because of climate, because of changes. And all this — not storms; we call them terremotos, earthquakes — and more storms that are happening everywhere. It's due to changes, and it's affected by the people. And I will not say affected by just us, the people; it's affected because it's cyclic, but because we are more now in the world, that's why it's affecting us more. But we need to have resources, and we'll find them. And I don't think it's a difficult thing. It's something that we need to work together on here and make it more effective. I think it's taking forever, the SDGs. It's going to finish in 2030, and what are the results? So maybe we should implement a system now that will use artificial intelligence, and use that for these few years to get more results than we have done in the past, however many years it was started. So it is possible. Nothing is impossible. I don't believe in the word "impossible." Everything is possible if we want and if we have the will to do it.

And I would like to end by thanking everyone — thanking you, Ambassador, Vice President, and thanking everyone. I'm really honored to be attending this amazing group. I feel at home. I really do. You are all amazing. And the only thing I want to tell you is: we should be thankful that we have the United Nations. It's the best institution for the problems that we have now. More than ever, we need the UN. We need to work together. It's not about choosing just a Secretary-General. It's about working together to find ways to solve the problems that are now in the world, and that are going to be even more, because of the problems that are happening that we couldn't prevent. So from now on, we have to work to solve what we have — like Russia, Ukraine, like Israel and Gaza, like the things that are happening in Africa — to solve and to work together to prevent those that we can prevent from happening. So I hope that we can. It's a dream for me. It's a mission for me. It's not a position. I never thought about this. My dream is peace in the world, which is very — but I think that we can do that from the UN. So if you give me the honor and the privilege to be able to work together with you, it will be something that we'll do. And let's hope we can do it in less than five years. I will not say more than five, if I get elected. Thank you very much.

VICE-PRESIDENT (Vice-President of the General Assembly, in the chair)

2:37:46 (12:39:20) Thank you very much, Ms. A-Baki. We have now come to the end of this interactive dialogue. I would like to thank Ms. A-Baki and all participants for their contributions. And with that, the meeting is adjourned.