

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77 IN VIENNA

Theme: “Multilateralism in a Complex Era: A Call for Renewed Commitment and Collective Action”

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- H.E. Ban Ki-moon, 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations, Co-Chair of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens (BKMC)
- H.E. Dr. Heinz Fischer, Former Federal President of Austria, Co-Chair of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens (BKMC)
- H.E. Ghada Waly, Director-General, UNOV and Executive Director, UNODC
- H.E. Carl Hallergrad, Permanent Representative of the European Union to the UN in Vienna,
- Ms. Monika Froehler, CEO of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens (BKMC)

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens under the co- leadership of the Eminent 8th Secretary General of the UN and the 11th President of Austria for its initiative in convening this highly pertinent discussion. Your work was not only inspired but continues to inspire even today.

It is both my profound honour and distinct privilege to co-host this timely and crucial discussion. Please accept the warm greetings and gratitude of the G77 Vienna Chapter.

We meet at a time when the multilateral system, which has for decades served as the cornerstone of global cooperation, is under increasing strain. Global inequality is rising, conflicts are proliferating, the development agenda is under pressure, and the rules-based international order is being tested as never before.

And yet, we gather here in the enduring spirit of unity and cooperation — to reaffirm our shared values. We gather to renew our collective commitments, and to remind ourselves that **multilateralism is not optional, nor merely desirable — it is essential.**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**A call for renewed commitment compels us to reflect deeply on the very foundations of our multilateral engagement—it takes us back to the *why* and *what* we committed to in the first place.** At the heart of our shared endeavor lies a collective belief in the power of cooperation over confrontation, dialogue over division, and solidarity over self-interest. We committed to upholding peace, advancing sustainable development, safeguarding human dignity, and ensuring that no nation—especially the most vulnerable—is left behind. In revisiting these original commitments, we are reminded not only of our shared

responsibilities, but also of the immense promise multilateralism holds when we act with unity, purpose, and resolve.

**Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**A call for renewed commitment also compels us to take an honest and courageous look at our multilateral journey—to recognize not only what is going right and reinforce it, but also to confront what is going wrong and course-correct. Some of the foundations upon which our multilateral system was erected was laid at a different moment in time. A number of countries- especially in Africa didn't exist then as Sovereign states. A number of countries from the global south have since risen to medium income levels. Furthermore, a fundamental shift in demography has occurred. For example, the median age in Africa is 19 years compared to 39 in the USA, 45 in Europe and 33 in Asia respectively. These, and other realities of the day call for a reinvigorated multilateral system that speaks to the future, while borrowing lessons from the past.**

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the UN; the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement; the **10th anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development just to mention a few. I MUST PAUSE HERE AND BE SENTIMENTAL AS WELL AND RECALL THAT MY COUNTRY, KENYA CO-CHAIRING THE SDG PROCESS.** These instruments were a result of shared hope in a better future. A hope that we must reignite and maintain. On 15th June 2025 we celebrated the 61st anniversary of the G77, itself the coming together of countries in pursuit of collective economic interests out of the understanding that the members would achieve more together. Indeed, our group has grown from its initial 77 to its current 134 for this very reason. While celebrating the progress made, it is also clear that a lot still remains to be done. For example, a decade later, only 17% of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are on track. A sobering reminder of the gap between ambition and action.

Equally pressing is the urgent need to bridge the growing inequality gap between regions and countries; and not forgetting the need to reduce the trust deficit and slowing down international cooperation.

**Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For the Group of 77, challenges have also arisen. Nevertheless, the Group has reaffirmed that its main strengths are its unity and solidarity, its vision of fair, just and equitable multilateral relations, the commitment of its members to the well-being and prosperity of the peoples of the Global South, as well as our commitment to uphold multilateralism and strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation.

The G-77 has also stressed the need to increase the representation and voice of developing countries in international affairs, institutions and mechanisms. It has not always been smooth

sailing all the time. However, an honest commitment to collective gain rather than individual interest has enabled us to overcome hurdles. Compromises have been achieved, not out of weakness but out of what the past has taught us: that we rise or fall together.

**Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

To conclude let me share a story:

On 12th October, 2019, here in Vienna, the famous INEOS 1:59 challenge was held. Eliud Kipchoge, a Kenyan athlete took on the challenge of running a full marathon in a historic under 2 hours. And he did it. Achieving that feat brought together experts, athletes and support staff from multiple nationalities. I share this story to remind us that beautiful things happen; that progress is made; that new ground is broken, when humanity comes together. Investing in multilateralism thus would bring just returns for all humanity. Pulling back from doing so exposes the world to costs, sooner or later. May the history books record that we invested well.

**I thank you.**