

**VISION STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY,
AMBASSADOR VOLKAN BOZKIR AS CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF
THE 75th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Foreword: 45 years of public service in a founding member state of the UN

The Government of the Republic of Turkey had announced her candidature for position of the Presidency of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly from Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) in 2014. On September 12th, 2019, the Government of the Republic of Turkey officially nominated me to this position and my candidature was endorsed by WEOG on the 27th of February 2020.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What makes the UN General Assembly so eminent?

The General Assembly is the only UN organ where all member states have an equal voice embodying the collective conscience and will of the international community.

I am pleased to observe that there is a growing sense of awareness amongst the member states about the unmatched legitimacy and the convening power of the

General Assembly. Accordingly, over the years, the nature of the role of the PGA has evolved and expanded to attain a more political character.

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

75th anniversary of the UN gives us a unique opportunity to renew our commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the UN therein.

My pledge for the Presidency of the 75th session of the General Assembly:

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

In line with the existing scope of the PGA's mandate, ***I will be the guardian of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Herein, I will*** ensure smooth implementation of the agenda and efficient management of the sessions and I will abide by the code of ethics of the PGA.

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

Within this framework, I will ***also work towards consolidating the much needed trust and cohesion among the UN member states, major groups of countries and other international organizations.***

The President of the 75th session of the General Assembly already has a wide range of mandates deriving from previous sessions. Taking into account the existing heavy workload of delegations, especially small ones, I ***do not intend to start new initiatives or create new fields of GA work.***

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

I will ***allow continuity with the work of the previous PGA's*** through building on their achievements and successful initiatives and ***make improvements where necessary.*** The views and suggestions of member states will be essential to make this possible.

The overall agenda of our organization requires close coordination among the UN decision-making bodies. I will ***try to address the gaps and duplications in different agendas.*** I will regularly raise these issues during the monthly meetings with the

Presidents of other main organs of the Organization, including the Security Council and the ECOSOC, as well as with the UN Secretary-General.

The issues I will give priority to during my term:

1) We are commemorating the **75th anniversary of the UN** under the theme “**The future we want, the United Nations we need; reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism**”. This overall theme shall guide the general debate of the 75th session in addition to all other activities, meetings and conferences organized by the UN in 2020.

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

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

As the 75th anniversary program concerns both 74th and 75th PGAs, in order to ensure continuity and coherence, I **will be closely coordinating** the preparations and the implementation of the 75th anniversary celebrations **with the current PGA**.

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

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

The UN is the most important platform to **give voice to the most vulnerable**, namely, refugees, immigrants, and stateless persons.

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

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

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

As we enter the “SDG Decade of Action”, we need to ensure that **countries in special situations, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**, remain a priority as they are lagging behind the most in SDG implementation.

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

Applying emerging technologies accelerates the impact of SDGs especially for the most vulnerable. I will attach special importance to **result oriented action when it comes to addressing the complex development needs of the LDCs**. In this respect, I hope we can benefit from the experience gained during the formation of the UN Technology Bank for the LDC's, which was the first ever SDG target to be achieved.

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

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

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

The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held on September 23, 2020 in the margins of the general debate, will be instrumental in accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

My principles:

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

In the execution of my responsibilities, I will work closely with the representatives of member states as colleagues. **Consensus building** will be one of my core efforts during my tenure. To this end, I will use, to the extent possible, the moral authority and soft power of the PGA.

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

As last word

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

Close coordination within the wider UN system, adopting a holistic approach and efficient use of our time will be the key to our success. Depending on the developments in the period ahead, I, as the President of the 75th session, will contribute with the best of my abilities to the collective efforts of the international community to fight against this pandemic and mitigate its consequences.

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

Ankara, 26 March 2020