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The Changing Multilateral World Order and the Summit of the Future

(from the perspective of a small state and an active non-permanent member of the UNSC in the light of a rapidly changing geopolitical environment)

Robert Golob,
Prime Minister, Republic of Slovenia



Unprecedented crises, geopolitical tensions, break of trust among nations, loss of responsibility towards collective action for securing peace and stability are threatening the existing rules-based multilateral system.

This is not a threat to multilateralism but rather a crisis of political will to comply with and respect the international system the international community has built after World War II. The current multilateral system is being undermined. Undermined by the disrespect for the UN Charter, the international law and the decisions taken by the UN Security Council.

Restoring the political will and trust, as well as recommitment to basic principles of the UN Charter must be at the forefront of the efforts of the UN Member States. As said by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the UN Charter remains “the moral compass to promote peace, advance human dignity, prosperity and uphold human rights and the rule of law”.

The world is undoubtedly changing, as it has throughout history. The UN system was built to last and to withstand pressures of always developing times. However, it needs to remain nimble. To make the global governance work, we need a transparent, responsive and accountable multilateral system, built on trust, respect and international law.

We need a living multilateral system ready to adapt to new trends, challenges and realities of changing geopolitical situation (geographical representation, gender balance, small states - the majority of the international community,

developing countries – two thirds of the UN membership etc).

Slovenia, as the Non-Permanent Member of the Security Council and as the member of the UN, will focus on reminding what is the real mission of the UN, on overcoming the misuse of veto in the Security Council and as we are living in a time of crises, on finding solutions.

The main principles of international coexistence, of international order – from respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, to the principles, enshrined in the UN Charter, should remain intact, no matter how big the divides or how tense the competition. Bending the rules in order to adapt them to one's unilateral interests, therefore cannot be accepted.

We are at the critical milestone. “Summit of the Future” is an extraordinary opportunity to renew and improve the trust between nations, bolster our existing commitments towards peace and stability, including the commitment to the UN Charter, and to renew and reinvigorate multilateralism. It is also a unique chance to chart a new path ahead – towards a future where we, our children, and the future generations can thrive and be safe.

The task ahead is to make sure we internalize the commitments that will be set out by adopting the Pact for the Future. The Pact should address pressing international issues, accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and prompt reforms of the UN system. It should include a forward-looking vision, with concrete measures and timelines, rather than focusing on what has already been agreed. It is time to deliver concrete results. We need tangible progress and we need to ensure that the actions are taken forward and implemented.

Reviving multilateralism must be seen as an inclusive process, working with private sector, civil society, NGOs, youth, regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements. It should embrace and reflect on new technologies and innovations, address equal opportunities and unleash the potential of youth, women and girls.

Inclusive cooperation is also very important for small states, Slovenia being one of them. We can serve as bridge-builders, as glue that can reunite. We can be honest brokers and this is what Slovenia is bringing to the table.

Today, the Security Council is highly polarized, its internal dynamics fully reflects the wider geopolitical setting (after Russian aggression on Ukraine, situation in the Middle East). The urgent work on crucial international issues is thus challenging, since the ability to reach consensus is diminishing, unfortunately at the expense of the suffering and loss of lives of innocent people. The current elected (non-permanent) members of the UN Security Council, including Slovenia, share the ambition to move things forward.

We believe that the elected members of the Security Council bring fresh energy and a new perspective in the work of the body. Because of our diverse origin, priorities and experience, elected members bring insights from various regions that can contribute to international efforts.

As we come together for the Bled Strategic Forum, I wish each of us a constructive and inspiring dialogue on how to shape a better world for our future generations. Let this podium in Bled be a catalyst for innovative solutions and meaningful cooperation. Only together, we have the power to create long lasting positive change. ■

Welcome by Nataša Pirc Musar,

President, Republic of Slovenia



Welcome to the Bled Strategic Forum. Here in Bled, a beautiful alpine gem in Slovenia, we have gathered from all corners of the world to discuss the many challenges all nations are currently facing. The security, peace, and prosperity we used to enjoy in Europe contrast starkly with life in our vicinity and in many parts of the world. We need to look beyond our narrow confines, understand and empathize with others, and find solutions in the spirit of multilateralism. The first step is always to understand the challenges, followed by an exchange of opinions and open dialogue. I hope we can find fresh solutions to the challenges we are facing and even pave the way for an agreement on implementing them.

It has been nearly twenty years since the Bled Strategic Forum was organised for the first time. Its main objectives were to create an opportunity for an open exchange of views on the key challenges Europe and the world are facing. At past forums, current foreign policy issues and global challenges were addressed, together with a special focus on key European topics. World leaders and statesmen have joined us, enriching our comprehension with their contributions.

We live in a complex world that is interconnected and interdependent. Humanity's challenges are immense and there are no simple solutions. Let us use the Bled Strategic Forum for an open exchange of opinions and discussions and take a step towards understanding each other and making decisions that are acceptable to all, leading to a better tomorrow. Enjoy the debates and let's seize the opportunity presented to us. ■

Welcome by Tanja Fajon,

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia



Dear readers, dear visitors, The Bled Strategic Forum is here again, and with it a new issue of our traditional gazette. This year it has a refreshed look and a new layout, to help the readers navigate easily the topics covered.

I am honoured that our contributors and distinguished guests are once again eminent personalities whose reflections and contributions will enrich the themes and discussions of this internationally established political platform.

The title of this year's forum is “A World of Parallel Realities”, but don't forget that while you are reading and exchanging views in the halls, the swans are swimming in the lake outside and Bled custard slices are being baked.

Try to enjoy the best of both parallel worlds here in Bled, this beautiful Slovenian pearl. ■