High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

Statement by
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Madame President,

First of all, I would like to thank you for convening this high-level event, celebrating the International Day of Multilateralism, and also for your dedication to this important topic.

The United Nations forms the foundation of effective multilateralism and the rules-based international order. Solutions created through a dialogue, in which all relevant actors can take part in a meaningful way, are more effective and durable than those reached only by a powerful few.

Still today, the Charter of the United Nations represents the most important multilateral treaty for regulating the relations between states. The UN System as a whole has evolved into a comprehensive framework of multilateralism, which covers virtually all aspects of the international life, including peace, security and development.

There is no better alternative to a common set of rules — and a universal respect for them. For smaller countries, this is self-evident. The respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states is vital.

When we rely on the normative framework that the UN represents, it strengthens our overall security, respect for human rights, the well-being of our citizens, and economic development. This is also the reason why defending rules-based international order has been one of my priorities as a foreign minister.

I would argue that the rules-based international order is the best possible alternative also for the great powers. Global challenges, such as climate change, cybercrime, terrorism, conflicts, humanitarian crises and migration affect us all, and no country is able to address them alone.

Madame President,
The norms and institutions that we have been building for decades are under increasing pressure. The role of the United Nations, and other international organizations, is being questioned. International treaties are being challenged and interpreted in ways, which jeopardize the gains and their potential.

Nowhere is this negative trend more pronounced – or more dangerous – than in international arms control. Reversing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is crucial. Also securing and strengthening the existing arms control architecture that has served us so well, must be a key priority for us in the coming months and years.

The world does not stand still. We need new multilateral rules and regulations. Digitalisation and artificial intelligence continue to change the world faster than we realize. To harness the opportunities and to tackle the challenges these new technologies will bring, we need ever-deeper cooperation to craft new, commonly agreed rules.

Madame President,

To have a functioning multilateral system, we need to ensure that the institutions work as effectively as possible. We should strive to make the present order more effective and more just. In this regard, I would like to commend the reforms launched by Secretary General Guterres. A transparent, efficient and accountable United Nations is fundamental for effective multilateralism.

I would also like to stress the importance of partnerships, not only in the traditional sense - meaning between states - but also with and among civil society, regional organisations, non-state actors, and the private sector.
Finland has made a conscious choice to work for a world order based on the rule of law - not on the law of the rulers – or the strongest. Human rights and the equal participation for all in the society have been key driving forces in our own development. The international law and rules-based international order is a foundation of our prosperity and a cornerstone of our security.

Madame President,

We remain fully committed to multilateralism and stand ready to work together with you all.

I thank you.