Statement by

H.E. Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia

at

the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on
Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

24 April 2019
Madam President,

Thank you for convening this debate and for your personal commitment to strengthen multilateralism and to make the United Nations relevant for all. Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Madam President,

Latvia has been and remains a strong supporter of multilateralism. In an interdependent and globalized world we can address and resolve global problems only through multilateral means, including dialogue and international cooperation.

History shows that a strong multilateral, inclusive, rules-based international order is essential for the maintenance of global peace and security. It must be our joint responsibility to defend and strengthen it.

The United Nations is, and will be, the central forum for multilateralism and a rules-based global order. This is the place where all nations come together to carry our shared responsibility to deliver peace and security, advance human rights and sustainable development, and cooperate for a better future.

Since regaining of independence and accession to the United Nations in 1991, Latvia has always been a staunch supporter of international law and promoter of the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We are convinced that these principles are fundamental for maintaining the international order based on predictability, stability and security of states.
The relations between states must be exclusively based on law and dialogue, and not force and coercion. Territorial integrity and sovereignty, as enshrined in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, must be respected by all UN Member States. Latvia will continue to defend these fundamental principles.

One of the UN’s achievements has been to develop and strengthen international law, including by adopting many important multilateral treaties. For example, Arms Trade Treaty, currently presided by Latvia, is an example of a comprehensive and uniform response to existing challenges – in this case, negative impacts of conventional arms trade. Latvia also strongly values the work of international organizations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, including OPCW and IAEA. They facilitate transparency, accountability and the rules-based order, which is particularly important in times when international norms are challenged.

Madam President,

As the only truly global organization, the United Nations must be able to effectively respond to the serious global issues - conflicts, humanitarian crises, the threat of terrorism, climate change, inequalities and poverty – to name a few. Individuals and their need for peace and a decent life are at the center of all these challenges. We must be able to deliver on these needs – as individual nations and as the United Nations.

Latvia strongly believes that multilateralism can drive positive change for future generations. Yes, multilateral diplomacy can be challenging. But even with different views among Member States, important global agreements, including the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement on
Climate Change, have been achieved, recognizing the pressing need to act now - for the benefit of peoples and the planet.

However, for the credibility of the multilateral system we all must ensure the success of these agendas by acting and by implementing them. Not only saying all the right words, but with practical actions!

Another challenge to the credibility and effectiveness is that too often resources are spent on managing and responding to crises, instead of preventing them. The world has seen inaction of the UN when its members cannot agree on a collective response or action. Latvia believes that early action of the UN in situations of concern is critical, and conflict prevention has the rightful place at the center of the UN agenda.

We wish to see the United Nations more effective, more transparent, and more flexible, so it can bring positive, real influence to people on the ground. We support the ongoing reform agenda of the UN Secretary-General.

To conclude - Latvia believes that upcoming high-level meetings in September, as well as the 75th anniversary of the United Nations next year provide excellent opportunities for boosting positive dynamics in the strengthening of the multilateral system. Latvia is ready to contribute to it.

Thank you.