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President, Now is no time for business as usual at the United Nations. The international community is facing unprecedented challenges and must respond. I am here because I think that this Organization matters. It is an Organization that now faces daily challenges to its political authority and management missions. My country, Ireland, has kept faith with the United Nations since we joined as a young republic that had fought hard for its own independence and saw being a Member of the United Nation as fundamental to its future and the future security of its people. Over 60 years later, we still do. Our faith has not been misplaced, and it is as strong today as ever. However, we certainly have something to say about the future of the Organization and the role we believe it must play in reducing suffering across the globe and securing a shared peace and security and prosperity for everybody. Given our history as a small country, with its own troubled past, we see very clearly the advantages of a rules-based order in international affairs. It is because Ireland is small, outward-looking and heavily dependent on external trade for our own well-being that we pursue an active foreign policy. As Ireland's experience in the European Union has shown us, we are far stronger acting collectively than we are acting alone. Partnership and cooperation has brought peace and prosperity to the European continent. In fact, for Ireland, our membership of the European Union, working closely with other member States, has strengthened our independence and self-confidence and security rather than diminished it. It is therefore through collective actions that we reinforce our own security and well-being, which is what the United Nations needs to be all about. The case for international cooperation and multilateralism is compelling. By working together, we lay foundations of trust, align our perspectives more closely and accept our differences more willingly. Perhaps most importantly, we build habits of cooperation that better allow us to address the common threats and opportunities that we should be facing together. The alternatives — unilateralism, transactional diplomacy, protectionism and confrontation — are not, in fact, viable at all. Their short-term populist appeal obscures their long-term cost. Surely we have learned that from history. We are living in an era when local and global challenges are intersecting with increasing

force. Today's problems do not carry passports or recognize international borders. There are no unilateral solutions to the vast majority of the global challenges that we face together. Local and regional issues, from climate change, migration, armed conflict and hunger to the destruction of the marine environment in certain parts of the world, often become global issues, including in corners of the world that are far from the origins of the problems. The enormous scale of the challenges that face the world might lead some to question whether multilateralism and the United Nations are up to the task. My response is that we can be, and we must be. When properly mobilized, when we pull together and move from debating halls like this Hall to actually getting things done on the ground, we can move mountains together. The United Nations delivers extraordinary results, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The United Nations has led the global effort to eradicate smallpox, end apartheid, promote arms control, save the lives of millions of children through UNICEF and protect our cultural heritage through UNESCO. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a stand-out recent achievement. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have the power and potential to transform our world, addressing the root causes of poverty, inequality and instability. However, their potential can be realized only through a strong and confident multilateral system that empowers Member States to reach the ambitious but necessary targets we have set ourselves. Having played an important role in facilitating agreement on the SDGs in 2015, Ireland is committed to their implementation, domestically and through our foreign policy. Failure should not be an option here. The United Nations is the fulcrum upon which we can leverage the change required. However, the walls dividing the three pillars of the United Nations — development, human rights, and peace and security — have in the past impeded our efforts to accelerate sustainable development. In my view, the SDGs represent a fundamental breakthrough, recognizing the many aspects of sustainable development that straddle those pillars. As we move forward on implementation, we must break down the Organization's institutional silos, which sometimes hinder progress. Since we gathered here a year ago, we appointed António Guterres as Secretary-General. Ireland believes that he has the skills, experience and, perhaps most importantly, the compassion to do a very tough

but hugely important job. The difficult international environment demands, more than ever, brave and principled leadership. We welcome the clear direction the Secretary-General is providing and the steps he is taking to reform the Organization. While we, the Member States, have expressed confidence that the Secretary-General has the abilities to lead the United Nations forward at a time when the world is crying out for better multilateral engagement, we must allow him to lead. It is very tempting for Member States, particularly large ones, to micromanage the work of the Secretariat, but such an approach is likely to impede and not enhance reform. However, it is not enough that only the internal mechanisms of the United Nations meet twenty-first century standards. United Nations political bodies must also reflect today's world and realities. Nowhere is that more evident than with regard to the composition of the Security Council. The Security Council does not reflect the world that has evolved since the United Nations was established in 1945. Quite plainly, we would be hard pressed to find any entity, public or private, anywhere in the world that remains so untouched by the changes and realities of the world around it. Vast areas of our world are either insufficiently represented or not represented at all on the Security Council. In our view, the need to increase the size of the Council is clear. Ireland sees the obvious need for a much stronger African representation on the Council, so that there can be a greater African say in the Council decisions that affect their continent. We would also favour consideration of a designated seat for small island developing States. Those changes are politically controversial, but we cannot ignore them forever. The makeup of the Security Council is not the only problem. Let us be clear and honest. While the use or threat of the veto remains in place, as it does today, the work of the Council is often impeded and the United Nations can be paralysed in its capacity to respond to the gravest crises facing the international community.