

**Statement by the President of the Republic of Estonia, H.E. Mr. Alar Karis
at the Summit of the Future 22 September 2024**

President Yang,

Secretary-General Guterres,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Estonia expresses its gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. We thank the Secretary-General for advocating a vision of strong multilateralism. We also commend Germany and Namibia for their enormous work in co-facilitating the Pact for the Future and bringing it successfully to a conclusion. The Pact aims to bring much-needed efficiency and reliability to what we do in the United Nations and multilateral arena. It is now our new guidebook for a better, more peaceful and just future.

However, I deeply regret that the text was watered down considerably due to the efforts of spoilers, led by Russia. Without finding a remedy in the future to overcome this hostile practise, we will not make our kids believe in grand international institutions like the United Nations!

Mr. President,

By adopting the Pact, we also reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the rules, norms and standards set by international law, including, in particular speaking in this room - the UN Charter.

However, by the end of the day the Pact for the Future, is simply a document with words and, I hope, good intentions. How we are going to implement this document is what will determine our common future. Whatever we do, the human rights, fundamental freedoms and the international law must always be at the heart of our global co-existence and cooperation. Because, without upholding the UN Charter and the rule of law, many of us might be deprived of a future at all.

Over the last years we have witnessed the highest number of global crises and conflicts. We have witnessed brutal full-scale aggression against sovereign country by a permanent member of the Security Council in utter disregard of the UN Charter. That frustrates our societies. This screams for change.

Focusing on the Pact, we must first reform the Security Council. It is important to deter and delegitimise aggression as a rogue tool of the statecraft. To deter crimes against humanity, war crimes... All the UN members need to demand more accountability on the Council to make sure no one can shield their own punishment for a crime with a veto right. In this context, it is also high time to strengthen General Assembly's role and responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Second, let us make every effort - from additional finance to capacity building - to bridge all divide between and within countries. Particularly, the digital divide. So that we can all as equals, and here I will emphasise especially our girls and women, step into the future. Thankfully, we have the Global Digital Compact to guide us to that.

One of the consequences of inaction within the UN is a strong wane of multilateralism. Let us revive it! We have to find more opportunities for cooperation on fundamental issues between all states. Let us open doors to the civil society and youth for meaningful engagement in all our discussions and decision-making, as it is them, who hold the key information from the ground. This is crucial for avoiding deeper crises and wars.

Mr President,

Dag Hammarskjöld (former UN Secretary General) once said: “The UN wasn’t created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”. Perhaps we cannot achieve perfection, but we must ensure that we save people from war, famine, torture and injustice. Fruitful discussions and good intentions only, will not get us there. Without doing anything and staying paralysed, nothing will happen and we will see further erosion of trust in the UN and multilateralism. Nothing is for granted. For a world to be peaceful and just, nonstop hard work is needed, even if we don’t see immediate results. Only by staying focused and moving forward with practical steps in implementing the agreed actions of the Pact for the Future, we will prove to our people that the UN still provides a layer of security we all need.

Let us make our kids believe in grand international institutions like the United Nations!