

Session 1

Vision of Türkiye's Century: Türkiye as a System-Building Actor



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Cevdet Yılmaz, Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye

Moderator

Alican Ayanlar, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Prof. Haluk Görgün, President, Defence Industry Agency, Republic of Türkiye

Dr. Valeria Giannotta, Director, CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye

Prof. Burhanettin Duran, General Coordinator, SETA

Alex Salmond, Former First Minister of Scotland

Key Takeaways

- Türkiye's foreign policy is characterised by a philosophy of reformism, emphasising the need for restructuring international systems and institutions to better address contemporary challenges.
- Türkiye demonstrates a nuanced understanding of global dynamics, balancing between multilateralism and multipolarity while advocating for regional integration and economic cooperation.
- President Erdogan's call for reform within the United Nations, encapsulated in the slogan "the world is bigger than five," seeks to address the issue of veto power immobilising the UN, particularly evident in recent crises like Gaza.
- Türkiye's foreign policy is guided by a humanitarian approach, focusing on revisiting fundamental values and promoting collective action in times of crisis, as seen in initiatives like the Green Deal and efforts towards a two-state solution in Gaza.
- Türkiye's approach to global challenges is pragmatic, flexible, and adaptable, acknowledging the necessity of considering diverse interests while pursuing common goals. This pragmatic stance underscores the importance of achieving a win-win outcome in international affairs.

Summary of the Session

The session explored the foundational principles guiding Turkish foreign policy, notably centred around reversioning, reformism, and rebuilding. Speakers highlighted the breakdown of the post-World War II international system, leading to a state of potential chaos in global affairs.

President Erdogan's assertion at the United Nations, "The world is bigger than five," signified a pivotal moment in reshaping global perceptions of Türkiye's leadership, particularly within Europe. The discussion underscored Türkiye's advancements in the defence industry, spotlighting achievements in drone technology, autonomous planes, and satellite communications.

As global power dynamics shift and multilateralism's impact becomes more pronounced, the session delved into Türkiye's future trajectory and its evolving role on the world stage. Questions were raised regarding Europe's role and Türkiye's ability to assert its message amid perceived European hesitation.

The session concluded with a brief reflection on the Turkish defence industry's contribution to diplomatic objectives, encompassing both soft and hard power dynamics. Despite the vast scope of Turkish policy over the century, the session provided valuable insights into Türkiye's aspirations and its emergence as a significant global actor.

Keynote Speech by Dr. Cevdet Yılmaz

Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye

As we have marked the centenary of our Republic this year, we are eagerly anticipating the next century with great enthusiasm. In the words of President Erdogan. The century of Türkiye is a comprehensive roadmap that will raise our country above the level of contemporary civilisations. An important dimension of this comprehensive roadmap is to consolidate Türkiye's global role as a problem-solving, transforming and system-building actor in pursuit of a more effective international system. The current global climate is characterised by a multitude of uncertainties, unpredictability, crises and conflicts. Unfortunately, the escalation of competition among great powers and the erosion of multilateralism alongside universal values has aggravated political, economic, social and cultural polarisation globally and regionally. With its political determination and growing capabilities.

Türkiye is certainly well-positioned to be one of the architects of balance in the coming future. With 261 diplomatic and consular missions, Türkiye has the fifth-largest diplomatic network globally. Our Century of Türkiye Vision entails the use of this extensive network effectively for the resolution of global and regional problems. With the strong and visionary leadership of President Erdogan. Prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts is the number one priority for Turkish foreign policy. As a result of our solution-oriented and proactive approach, we have a leading role in conflict resolution and mediation. Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, we have been striving to keep both our Russian and Ukrainian friends at the table by emphasising that there are no winners in war and no losers in peace. Mr. Erdogan is a rare leader who can speak both with President Putin and President Zelensky, and we believe that this is not a liability but an asset for our friends all over the world. We maintain our efforts to end the war through diplomacy and dialogue, on the basis of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity. Through the Black Sea Initiative, which we launched together with the United Nations, we contributed to global food security.

On the other hand, Israel's indiscriminate attacks on Gaza that have claimed the lives of more than 15,000 people have once again exposed the shortcomings of the global system.



Collective punishment of Palestinian people, Bombing of civilians, children, refugee camps, hospitals, and, the mosque, church and all the rest. All these actually, erode the moral ground of the international system. And also, we firmly believe that these actions are against humanity, they are humanitarian crimes as well as war crimes. And we believe that the Netanyahu government, with all its collaborators, should be accountable for these crimes before international courts. To address this crisis, we mobilise the international community from the outside.

As a voice of conscience and justice, we took an active stance in cooperation and consultation with our regional and global partners and led the efforts with the Organisation of Islamic Communities, as well as the United Nations. Türkiye relentlessly continues its efforts for a lasting ceasefire, unhindered and scaled-up humanitarian access to Gaza and a lasting peace. What we need is not a humanitarian pose or anything like that. We need a real ceasefire that will lead to a political process for a permanent solution to this problem. The extraordinary joint OIC Arab League Summit of 11th November 2023 mandated a group of foreign ministers, including our Foreign Minister, to take international action to stop the war in Gaza and achieve lasting peace. And lasting peace cannot be possible without a just peace. Without

a deal that is fair and equitable between Palestinians and Israelis. The lasting and just solution to the conflict is the true embodiment of an independent, sovereign and geographically contiguous state of Palestine on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. In order to contribute to such a deal, Türkiye has suggested the establishment of a guarantee mechanism and announced its readiness to assume responsibility in this regard, along with other relevant countries.

While striving for a lasting solution to the conflict, Türkiye is also working round the clock to alleviate the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian people. We have not only responded to the flash appeal of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, but we have also mobilised our own means to send humanitarian aid. Upon the bombing of hospitals in Gaza, we brought some patients to Türkiye for treatment, and we will continue to spare no effort to assist Palestinians in need. Türkiye will maintain all these efforts for a fairer global system in the period ahead. We believe that Gaza is a testing ground for countries that will show their stands for humanitarian criteria as well as for their approach to the international multilateral system. And unfortunately, some of the countries so far have not passed this test. Distinguished guest. The central location of Türkiye offers promising possibilities for deepening regional cooperation in terms of energy, transport and logistics connectivity. We have developed an extensive global network of cooperation through high-level cooperation councils, inter-governmental summits and other multilateral regional formations. These mechanisms are instrumental in developing all aspects of our external affairs, including political, economic, cultural, security, transportation, energy, health, and so forth. Türkiye supports regional ownership and solutions for regional problems. It is also our experience that sometimes powers outside the regions affect negatively rather than positively. The developments in the regions. It is better to leave some problems to the actors in the region rather than interfere from outside. Therefore while developing our bilateral relations, we also prioritise regional multilateral platforms. We are a founding member of several regional organisations and initiatives such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation, the Southeast European Cooperation Process and the European Cooperation Organisation. We played an important role in the organisation of Turkic states to make the Turkic world stronger together and to promote

Turkic cooperation. However, our foreign policy vision is not limited to our vicinity. Türkiye maintains close ties with the countries in the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, South Caucasus, and South and Central Asia. Türkiye's global outreach extends beyond our immediate geography encompassing various regions with the African Partnership Policy, the opening to Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia in a new initiative. In the context of regional and global peace and security. We have always actively contributed to UN, NATO and EU missions. Türkiye is among the top five allies that have made the most significant contributions to NATO missions in various regions. The latest example is the NATO key for the command that we assumed in October 2023.

Türkiye plays a pivotal role also in combating terrorism. Terrorists constitute the most pressing threat to peace and security in our region. Whether their name is FETÖ PKK, YPG or DAESH, we have been effectively countering terrorism in all of its manifestations. We continue to encourage our allies and partners around the world to adopt a resolute position in this urgent matter. Unfortunately, we also observed that some of our allies prefer to work with some terrorist organisations against others. And we believe that this is the wrong policy, the wrong way to go. Rather than collaborating with terrorist organisations against each other. What we need to do is to collaborate as states against all terrorist organisations.

Humanity is plagued by various scourges, including ethnic and religious hatred, discrimination, extremism, xenophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism and other forms of exclusion are also causes of concern. In addressing such widespread menaces, we stressed the need for transparency, diversity dialogue and inclusive policies. With this perspective, Türkiye has assumed a leading role in initiatives to foster mutual respect and common values among different cultures and religions. We believe that Jerusalem historically has these characteristics. Unfortunately, some of the groups try to homogenise Jerusalem with one single faith dominating and excluding others. This is not the true character of Jerusalem. Jerusalem should cover Muslims, Christians and Jews living together. In history, we achieved this and in future, I believe, we can also achieve this, with all relevant different groups, regions, religions and communities. The solution to all global challenges depends on collective efforts through cooperation and effective multilateralism.

Thriving Together: Responsibilities, Actions and Solutions

Türkiye collaborates with other nations in defending our shared values and fulfilling our shared responsibilities in establishing an inclusive, equitable and effective international system based on solidarity. Such a system places a high priority on human welfare whilst tackling economic disparities and promoting global peace, security, stability and prosperity. With this understanding, we contribute to the work of G20, which provides a platform for advanced and emerging economies to seek solutions to global economic problems. Supporting the least developed countries is a priority for Türkiye as a pioneer in global humanitarian assistance, and we are proud to be one of the leading countries in development assistance.

Our president coined the motto 'A fairer world is possible and the world is bigger than five', under which Türkiye has been advocating for the reform of the UN Security Council, the UN and other multilateral organisations. Indeed, these mottos are not just a call for the reform of institutions, they are a call for a fairer world in terms of economy, social balances, environmental concerns and so forth. The aim is to make them fit for today's purposes and necessities. The world has changed, the institutions are old and we have to make them overlap. These calls have already resonated in many countries. Strengthening international institutions is an important aspect of this agenda. The UN must fulfil its global role to serve humanity.

Türkiye, with the impact of growth-supporting policies and measures, has differentiated itself positively and proven as a resilient player in global value chains. This year, our GDP will be around \$1.1 trillion, and with this magnitude, Türkiye will be the 17th largest economy in the world. In purchasing power parity terms we are the 11th largest economy and we continue with our growth perspective as a developing country. We are pleased to observe that confidence in our economic stability has strengthened after the elections this year. Political uncertainties are gone. Policy uncertainties have been eliminated with our medium-term programmes and 12 development programmes, and we continue with our development process. But of course, we do not define development just as economic growth. Economic growth is just part of this process. Development alongside economic growth requires social justice as well as environmental, of course, concerns. Our plan covers the 2023 vision and aspires to create a strong, prosperous, environment friendly and disaster-resistant Türkiye producing high-added value

based on advanced technology and sustaining fair income distribution in the century of Türkiye. With the new plan, the priority will be macroeconomic and financial stability as well as balanced growth, along with a permanent improvement in the current account balance and a strong public finance balance. The primary focus will be on the disaster-resilient living areas, leveraging Türkiye's economic and social gains, especially in the face of potential disasters.

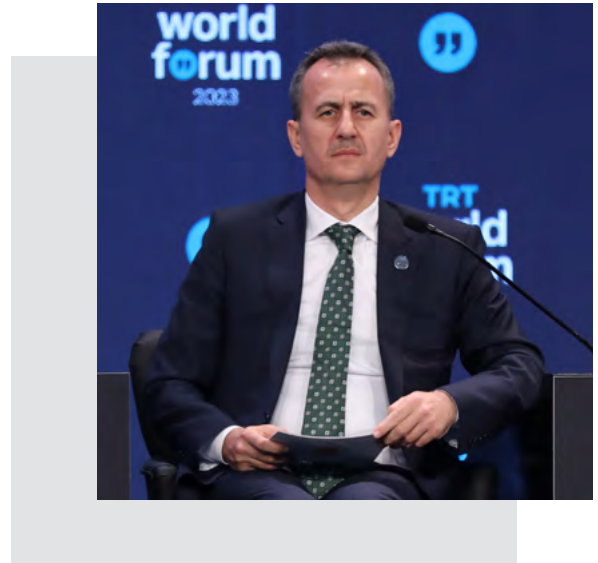
We believe that the world should not spend its resources on conflicts, wars or unnecessary confrontations. What we need to do is to spend more resources on economic development, social justice and environmental improvements. Our policies will continue to be conducted on a rule-based and predictable basis. Strengthening coordination and harmony between monetary, fiscal and income policies as well as structural reforms. We continue to follow a roadmap that will ensure sustainable economic growth on the basis of investment, production, employment and exports. With its rising capability via a diplomatic network, institutionalised relations and political determination, Türkiye remains well suited as a problem solver, system improver and transformer actor in the region and international affairs at the turn of the century of Türkiye. And we expect our friends and allies to recognise Türkiye's new position as such. The world may be fragmented, but Türkiye's position is crystal clear in working actively towards peace at home and peace in the world. Distinguished guests. To conclude, I sincerely hope that this forum will contribute to the security, welfare and social justice of people and also the well-being of the planet all over the world under the motto Thriving Together.



Haluk Görgün

Professor; President, Defence Industry Agency, Republic of Türkiye

Prof. Haluk Görgün completed his undergraduate and graduate education in Electrical Engineering Department of Yıldız Technical University and his Ph.D. in Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, USA in 2003. As the founder and chairman of the Control and Automation Engineering Department, he established postgraduate programs and chaired the department (2009-2013). His influence extended to international roles, such as being Türkiye's Delegate to the EU 7th Framework Program (2007-2010). Prof. Görgün held key positions at UNIDO, Yıldız Technical University, and served as Editor of YTÜ Sigma Journal of Engineering and Science (2010-2013). Elected to Türkiye Academy of Sciences in 2013, he later became Rector at Gebze Technical University (2014-2018). Known for fostering university-industry cooperation, he received awards during his tenure. His diverse contributions led to his appointment as a Member of YÖK in 2023. Prof. Görgün's leadership extended to ASELSAN, where he served as Chairman of the Board (2018-2023). His distinguished career culminated in his appointment as the President of Defence Industries in 2023.



- Türkiye's primary objective is to establish a robust national defence industry to effectively meet the needs of our armed forces, security operations, and organisations. This entails modernising equipment and resources, utilising our national resources to their fullest potential. In the subsequent stage, spanning approximately 10 to 20 years, starting from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, our approach shifted from relying solely on ready-made procurements to embracing joint production and collaboration at a coal production level.
- When assessing the success of our endeavours and examining the processes and agendas within the defence sector, we adopt a comprehensive approach, considering strategic perspectives. We move away from traditional methods, aligning functions and progress accordingly, while also introducing new projects and platforms. In determining our strategic objectives, we prioritise meeting the needs of our defence and security forces, alongside considerations such as exports, financial resource management, digital transformation, and the dual use of defence and civil applications. Emphasising groundbreaking technologies, our focus remains primarily on sustainability.
- It's crucial to adopt a holistic approach and develop a comprehensive strategy for the defence sector. This involves establishing a normative structure where stakeholders are empowered to deliver services with a focus on high efficiency, guided by a shared vision. By mobilising their potential and capabilities towards common goals, we foster motivation and collective effort. Additionally, we prioritise the involvement of SMEs not only in equipment provision but also as integral parts of the system. Human capacity building is paramount, and we collaborate closely with universities and institutes, offering various courses and engaging with technical high schools to nurture talent and expertise.
- We place our confidence in the capabilities of our young and dynamic resources, which we perceive as Türkiye's greatest asset. Through their contributions, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of ensuring Türkiye's complete independence and solidifying its position as a global power. Aligned with President Erdogan's leadership, we are committed to taking bold steps towards achieving these objectives, and we hold unwavering faith in our success.

Valeria Giannotta

PhD; Director, CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye

Valeria Giannotta is the academic and scientific director of the Observatory on Türkiye, CeSPI (Centre Studies of International Politics), based in Rome. She studied in Milan at Catholic University where she obtained her PhD in Institution and Politics. Since 2009 she has been active as an academic in Istanbul, Gaziantep and Ankara. As an expert in Türkiye, she engages in high-level strategic meetings and contributes regularly to media and think tanks. In 2017 she was awarded 'Cavaliere della Stella d'Italia' by the Presidency of the Republic of Italy for her analytical objectivity and efforts in supporting Italian diplomacy in Türkiye.

- Türkiye's journey towards Europe traces back to the 1960s with the Ankara agreements marking the beginning. Subsequently, in 1999, the creation of the customs union further cemented this path, followed by the allocation of candidate membership and the initiation of negotiation processes in 2005. However, these negotiations were hindered from the outset by the Cyprus issue, which remains a critical challenge in Türkiye's foreign policy efforts to attain full recognition within the European framework.
- Türkiye demonstrates a heightened awareness of the evolving dynamics within the international system compared to other global actors. The recent significant meeting underscores Türkiye's recognition of shifting regional dynamics. Additionally, Türkiye's efforts towards normalisation with previously contentious partners, such as Egypt and Israel, further exemplify this awareness. However, despite these strides, setbacks reminiscent of past tensions have arisen once more, albeit not due to Türkiye's actions this time.
- Türkiye has emerged as a significant international donor of humanitarian aid in recent times. If my memory serves me right, the amount of humanitarian aid provided globally amounted to \$8 billion or more. Notably, Türkiye's humanitarian aid is impartial, devoid of any religious or cultural preferences. Following the pandemic, Türkiye extended assistance to over 100 countries, with Italy being the recipient of the first shipment of medical equipment. This aid was particularly crucial for Italy during its darkest hours, as Europe's support seemed lacking. Türkiye's swift response provided a beacon of hope during a time of despair.



- In Europe and the wider Western sphere, there is a glaring absence of leadership and vision, which has reached a critical level, especially in light of the recent Israel-Palestine conflict. Despite some positive signals from certain European offices regarding finding a resolution, the perception of Türkiye as a negotiator in this specific issue may not be as favourable as it was during the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Unlike the situation with Russia and Ukraine, where both sides accepted Türkiye's role as a mediator, the classification of Hamas as a terrorist organisation by many European and Western countries complicates Türkiye's perceived neutrality in negotiations between Hamas and Israel. This difference in perception may hinder Türkiye's acceptance as a mediator in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- The Turkish state and political elite demonstrate a keen awareness of international dynamics, with President Erdogan notably vocal about the imperative of reforming the UN security system. Erdogan highlights the discrepancy between the current power distribution and the evolving international landscape. Türkiye actively engages in proposing initiatives and raising awareness within the UN system. A prime example is the advocacy efforts of First Lady Emine Erdoğan, whose resolution on the zero waste initiative was successfully passed on December 14, 2022. This underscores Türkiye's proactive stance, as it strives to promote global awareness and share best practices on an international platform.

Burhanettin Duran

Professor; General Coordinator, SETA

Prof. Dr. Burhanettin Duran received his BA in Political Science and International Relations from Bogazici University in 1993 and his PhD in Political Science from Bilkent University in 2001. He was a visiting scholar at George Mason University in 2010-2011. He worked for Bilkent University and Sakarya University as a research assistant and assistant professor between 1993 and 2009. Prof. Duran has been focusing on transforming Islamism, Turkish political thought, Turkish domestic politics, Turkish foreign policy and Middle Eastern politics. Currently Prof. Duran is a professor at Ibn Haldun University and General Coordinator of the SETA Foundation. On October 9th, 2018, Prof. Dr. Duran was appointed as a Turkish Presidency Security and Foreign Policies Council member.

- Türkiye's foreign policy approach is often subject to debate, with some characterising it as revisionist or revolutionary. However, I advocate for a stance of reformism. Reformism entails actively contributing to the reconstruction of the international system to establish a new world order. While Türkiye is supportive of certain aspects of the status quo, such as the need for effective international and regional mechanisms to address issues ranging from climate change to conflict prevention, there is a call for reform within these institutions. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan frequently advocates for a fairer world order, emphasising that "the world is bigger than five," signifying a push for reformism. Additionally, Türkiye remains open to cooperation, inclusiveness, and multilateralism in various matters, guided by the principle of advancing mutual interests, which is imperative for Türkiye's strategic goals.
- The world currently faces the looming spectre of chaos, with the potential for new wars and conflicts, compounded by the challenges of addressing pressing issues like climate change. The inadequacies of world leaders in effectively resolving such problems have become evident, as seen during the pandemics, the war in Ukraine, and conflicts in Gaza. In response, Türkiye's foreign policy adopts a humanitarian approach that emphasises the importance of revisiting and prioritising fundamental values as the cornerstone of our collective future. This approach is grounded in pragmatism, flexibility, and the ability to adapt to global changes. While ideals are important, pragmatic considerations acknowledge the necessity of addressing the diverse interests of all stakeholders. Hence, Türkiye advocates



for a win-win approach that seeks to reconcile differing interests while pursuing common goals.

- Two conflicting trends dominate world politics: the push towards multilateralism and inclusiveness, driven by the necessity for humanity as a whole, and the trend towards multipolarity, fuelled by great power rivalry. In light of this reality, it is imperative to identify mutual interests among diverse nation-states. Türkiye recognises and acknowledges this dynamic, positioning itself as one of the leading nations adept at adapting to the evolving global landscape.
- In addition to navigating global power dynamics, Türkiye actively promotes regional integration, economic cooperation, and connectivity. Initiatives such as positioning itself as an energy hub and addressing supply chain issues underscore Türkiye's commitment to fostering regional stability and prosperity. Moreover, Türkiye endeavours to enhance existing international institutions and regional mechanisms, advocating for reforms that would bolster their effectiveness in resolving global challenges.
- Türkiye's commitment to addressing the Green Deal issue exemplifies the potential for collaborative action in times of crisis, echoing the motto of the TRT World Forum: "Thriving Together." This ethos underscores the belief that collective efforts can yield positive outcomes. Similarly, in addressing the crisis in Gaza, Türkiye advocates for a solution that promotes a two-state framework, ensuring security for both Israel and Palestine. President Erdogan employs leader-to-leader diplomacy in his efforts to facilitate dialogue and resolution.

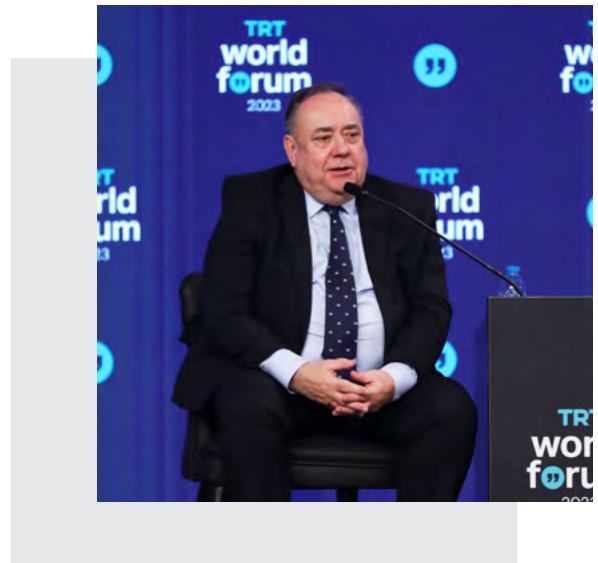
Alex Salmond

Former First Minister of Scotland

Alex Salmond is the former First Minister of Scotland (2007-2014) who, after winning a landslide in the Scottish Parliamentary election of 2011, introduced the first referendum on Scottish independence in 2014. Mr Salmond led the SNP for 20 years, taking it from the political fringes to replace the Labour Party as the dominant force in Scottish politics, and made history by becoming the first SNP Scottish First Minister in 2007.

More recently he has concentrated on broadcast journalism on television and radio while his political memoir *The Dream Shall Never Die* topped the Sunday Times best seller. His many awards include Scottish Politician of the Year on multiple occasions, Spectator Politician of the Year, Pink Politician of the Year, Coppieters Award for service to Scotland and Europe and the top international Green Politician. Mr Salmond's alma mater is the University of St Andrews and he is a visiting Professor of Economics at Strathclyde University and also holds an honorary Doctorate from the University of Glasgow.

- Calls for reforming the United Nations have echoed since its inception in 1945, often revolving around bureaucratic changes and streamlining processes. However, the mantra "the world is bigger than five," epitomises a powerful, politically charged slogan that transcends mere rhetoric. Türkiye's President Erdoğan's approach goes beyond mere inclusion in the Security Council, instead addressing the issue of veto power immobilising the United Nations. This was starkly evident in the recent Gaza crisis, where despite the overwhelming support from two-thirds or more of the General Council, effective action was stymied by the veto power wielded by a single nation.
- I believe that the phrase "the world is bigger than five" hints at a potential solution, namely, reaching a point where the veto power within the United Nations can be circumvented. This would entail establishing a threshold of support within the General Council, beyond which certain resolutions—such as those addressing critical issues like Gaza—could not be vetoed, regardless of individual nations' objections.



- This forum boasts high-profile media executives and distinguished individuals, yet we mustn't forget that we are all human beings. It's undeniably uplifting for us, as individuals, to wake up each morning and be greeted with news of progress—be it through radio, television, or social media. In a world often overshadowed by disaster and suffering, witnessing progressive developments is truly heartening.

