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STATEMENT BY
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THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE

28th February, 2022
General Assembly Hall
United Nations
New York

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,

Let me begin by thanking you for your respective leadership and for convening this emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the grave threat to international peace and security as a result of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, a member of this Organisation.

We have met here under the shadows of the dark clouds of war in Europe, which test the resolve of our diplomacy and our collective ability to turn the instruments of war into pillars of peace.

The situation we are faced with in Ukraine is grave, and we must all acknowledge that. The foundations of trust, that have made the Charter of the United Nations the indispensable instrument of the international order, have been assailed in a reckless manner. Inaction on our part in roundly condemning the actions of the Russian Federation and reaffirming our support for the Charter of our Organisation, and its collective security mechanism, would further undermine the pillars that have held our world together, regardless of its imperfection.

Indeed, across this Hall and throughout our Organisation's history, there is enough blame to go round. When it has suited powerful States, the Charter has been thrown out of the window and unilateral actions taken without due regard. However, when old wounds are opened, it would bleed just as fresh wounds. It is in this regard, and conscious that there is never enough blame to make us stand neutral to the cause of peace and the preservation of our United Nations, that we deem it our duty to make all efforts for peace. The Charter is our beacon of hope, and where States sail off the turbulent waters of war and destruction, we must point them back to the lighthouse of peace.

Mr. President,

As I said in the Security Council on Sunday afternoon, after the adoption of the resolution for this Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, it is important that we come into this debate with sobriety. This is not just our obligation to the present generation and the civilization we have fashioned for our contemporary world. It is the debt and respect we owe to all those whose blood and toil speak to us from the many graves of the two world wars. We must mean it when we say never again in our lifetimes and in succeeding generations should the world be put through the scourge of war

The Security Council was constrained from acting and it is now our responsibility as an Assembly to act and act we must.

We should therefore support the call for peace. From this hall, the Russian Federation must hear our call for an immediate ceasefire, a withdrawal of its troops from Ukraine and a recommitment to diplomacy and dialogue. The parties to the conflict must respect the principles of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. The interest of civilian populations must be placed above all else and humanitarian agencies must be granted safe corridors to assist those most in need, especially children, women and the aged.

In this regard, I note the dire situation of 90 Ghanaian students and others in Sumy, Ukraine and urge a humanitarian pause for them and others in similar situations to leave Ukraine with the support of the UN agencies and the International Federation of the Red Cross.

Like many others in this Organisation, Ghana enjoys long-standing relations of friendship with the Russian Federation, but we have been forthright in our condemnation. It takes true friendship to be candid with one another, on matters of principles and values; to expect behavior that greatness requires. The Russian Federation may well have had its security concerns, but it chose to express its concern in the wrong way. Threatening the use of force is wrong and unacceptable; threatening aggression is wrong and unacceptable; and attacking a neighbor under pretext is wrong and unacceptable. The path of war is not the way one should establish its national positions, and it is not an option this Assembly can accept.

In condemning the aggression of the Russia Federation, however, we should not close off the path of dialogue. Ours is the vocation of peace. We must therefore recommit ourselves to dialogue to ensure that this war is ended, and as soon as possible.

We are horrified by the brutal attacks in Ukraine, regret the many innocent lives that have been lost and are pained by this needless loss, from a war that was not necessary.

We therefore call on Ukraine, the Russian Federation and all other parties to give an opportunity for the dialogue that since yesterday commenced at the borders of Belarus, without compromising Ukraine's inalienable rights as a sovereign and independent nation. For Ghana there is no doubt that our commitment to Ukraine is total in the preservation of its sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

We hope that the adoption of this resolution, would make all parties to understand that there is no other option than dialogue in addressing the critical situation we are confronted with in Ukraine.

Let us, therefore, say our bit in this Hall but also deeply reflect on how outside of this hall, in our own capitals and in other capitals, we can recommit the parties to dialogue and diplomacy to avert the catastrophe of war. We have a responsibility to act as purveyors of peace and that time is now.

I thank you.