



81ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (22-28 SEPTEMBER 2026)

High-Level Week Special Edition | New York Headquarters



“Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All.”

The outgoing Secretary-General, António Guterres, opened the 81st session of the UN General Assembly by warning that the world’s “fault lines” are widening, with wars, geopolitical divisions, inequality, the climate crisis, and rapid technological change placing increasing pressure on international cooperation. He framed these challenges as interconnected expressions of a broader question: how power is distributed, who controls it, and how it is used. According to Guterres, power is shifting among States, becoming increasingly concentrated in private corporations and individuals, and increasingly being transferred to artificial intelligence and autonomous technologies. He argued that existing global institutions must adapt to these new realities.

A major focus of the Assembly was therefore the need to strengthen multilateralism and ensure that power is governed by international law rather than force or coercion. Guterres presented a world—where different centres of influence coexist within shared rules and international institutions—as an alternative to fragmentation and rivalry. He called for stronger and more representative global governance, including reform of the UN Security Council, while emphasising the UN Charter, human rights, humanitarian protection, and accountability as essential foundations for international cooperation.

“Superpowers must
recognize that their
power isn’t so super.
Their power has limits.”

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General



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High-Level Week: Key Declarations from the UNGA leaders

Throughout the week, world leaders took the platform to address multilateral reform, regional sovereignty, and the breakdown of international institutions:



Peace & Security

“ Leaders emphasized the need to end ongoing conflicts through diplomacy, political solutions, respect for international law, and stronger protection of civilians. Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and other conflicts highlighted concerns about humanitarian access, displacement, violations of international law and the limits of existing international institutions. The Assembly President called for prevention, peacebuilding, civilian protection, women's participation in peace processes and stronger UN peacekeeping. ”



Her Excellency Mia Amor Mottley
Prime Minister-Barbados



Artificial Intelligence

“ Leaders debated how to capture AI's benefits while preventing risks such as inequality, bias, surveillance, misinformation, loss of jobs, lack of accountability and autonomous weapons. The emphasis is increasingly on international governance of AI, including implementation of the Global Digital Compact (International agreement on digital issues), scientific cooperation, transparency, safety standards and ensuring developing countries are not excluded from technological progress. Guterres stressed that AI must remain under human responsibility and that life-and-death decisions should not be delegated to machines. ”



His Highness Prince Faisal bin
Farhan Al Saud
Minister for Foreign Affairs
-Saudi Arabia



Climate Crisis

“ Climate change was addressed as both an environmental and a development, security and justice issue. Leaders focused on climate resilience, adaptation, loss and damage, sustainable development, the transition to clean energy and financing for vulnerable countries. UNGA 81 also placed particular attention on the existential threat of sea-level rise and the need for a just transition that does not leave vulnerable communities behind. ”



His Excellency Boris Vasir
Marchegiani Carrero
Permanent Representative to the
United Nations-Costa Rica

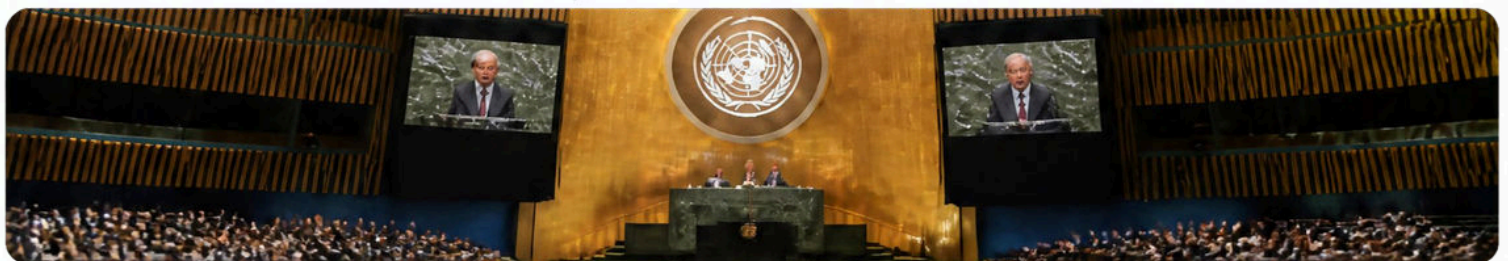


Inequality

“ Leaders connected inequality with unequal access to development, financing, education, healthcare, decent work and political influence. A recurring concern is that developing countries and countries in vulnerable situations face greater obstacles to achieving the SDGs, including debt and financing gaps. Discussions also emphasized gender equality and the need to ensure that development leaves no country or community behind. ”



Her Excellency Victoria Louise Hallum
Permanent Representative to the United
Nations- New Zealand



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UNGA -LEADERS

MAIN QUOTES / CHALLENGES/ COMMITMENTS

QUOTES FROM UNGA 81

TRUST & THE UN

"Outside these walls, people are not asking whether the United Nations still exists. They are asking whether it works."

PEACE

"Peace must be built. And it is our shared responsibility to build it."

INTERNATIONAL LAW

"The power of law must prevail over the law of power."

CLIMATE

"Sea-level rise is ultimately about people. About our heritage, our identity and the world we leave to our children."

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

"The danger is not technology. The danger is technology without accountability."

HUMAN DIGNITY

"Our responsibility is to help ensure that artificial intelligence serves humanity, advancing human dignity, sustainable development, peace and shared prosperity."

FUTURE GENERATIONS

"We make a vow to tomorrow's generations: To choose peace over peril, and dialogue over devastation."

GLOBAL COOPERATION

"The greatest power is not the power to dominate. It is the power to build a future that works for everyone."

INEQUALITY

"Equality is not a dream; it is a decision."

AI & HUMANITY

"The question is whether all of us will have a voice in how that transformation unfolds."

DIALOGUE OVER DIVISION

"Let us choose dialogue over division; respect over contempt; and solidarity over hatred."



CHALLENGES IDENTIFY BY UNGA LEADERS

- Armed conflicts & threats to peace
- Weakening of international law & accountability
- Geopolitical fragmentation & declining trust
- Growing inequality & unequal development
- The SDGs falling behind
- Climate change & environmental degradation
- Climate finance & climate justice
- Artificial intelligence & technological governance
- Digital divide & unequal access to technology
- Human rights & shrinking humanitarian space
- Gender inequality
- UN institutional reform
- Disinformation, hate speech & information integrity
- Future pandemics & global health preparedness

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COMMITMENTS :

During the 81st session of the UN General Assembly, world leaders called for stronger international cooperation to confront growing global challenges. From peace and civilian protection to climate action, health, human rights, sustainable development and responsible AI, the General Debate highlighted the urgent need to rebuild trust, reduce inequality and strengthen international institutions. As global challenges become increasingly interconnected, leaders stressed that cooperation and diplomacy remain essential to shaping a safer, more sustainable future.



President Khalilur Rahman-Closing remarks



UN-NGO Rep. and intern attend 2026 UNGA assembly

CLOSING REMARKS:

At the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, peace remained at the heart of discussions. Leaders stressed that peace should not be seen as a distant hope, but as an urgent responsibility. This means upholding the UN Charter, respecting international law, and protecting civilians.

At the same time, the world is running out of time to achieve development goals. Only a small share of the Sustainable Development Goals is currently on track. President Rahman called for stronger action, emphasising that “the answer must be a resounding yes.”

Inequality was another major concern. Countries facing the heaviest debt burdens, greatest climate risks, and least fiscal space often have the weakest voice in global economic institutions. These pressures are closely linked to human rights. Human rights face their greatest test when protection becomes most difficult, especially for civilians, minorities, migrants, and refugees. The same applies to women and girls seeking equal access to education, employment, and public life.

Artificial intelligence has also become a major issue in global discussions. This year, 128 delegations addressed it, compared with only five four years ago. This growing attention reflects concerns about control, accountability, and fair access.

Underlying all these challenges is a deeper crisis of trust. President Rahman stressed that trust cannot be demanded or imposed. It must be earned by ensuring that words and actions consistently match.