

At UN, countries pledge to be guided by Mandela's legacy in working for a better world

The United Nations General Assembly on Monday honoured Nelson Mandela with a pledge to build a just, peaceful and prosperous world and to revive the values for which the former South African President and anti-apartheid campaigner stood.

At the [Nelson Mandela Peace Summit](#), held in New York, Member States adopted the first resolution of the [General Assembly's 73rd session](#), "committing to demonstrate mutual respect, tolerance, understanding and reconciliation in [their] relations."

"We resolve to move beyond words in the promotion of peaceful, just, inclusive and non-discriminatory societies, stressing the importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women and the meaningful participation of youth in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security," read the resolution.

Member States, many represented by their heads of State and government, also reiterated the importance of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and said that they remain committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner.

Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security – General Assembly resolution

"Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. We reaffirm our pledge that no one will be left behind," they resolved.

Addressing the Summit, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [spoke](#) of the growing pressure against human rights around the world, and urged everyone to draw inspiration from Nelson Mandela's wisdom, courage and fortitude, to face the challenges.

"[That] is the only way to build the just, peaceful and prosperous world envisioned in the United Nations Charter, the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)," said Mr. Guterres.

"Madiba was a global citizen whose legacy must continue to guide us," he added.

Today's Peace Summit coincides with the centenary year of Mr. Mandela's

birth.



UN Photo/Cia Pak

From left: Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, the President of South Africa; María Fernanda Espinosa, the President of the General Assembly; and Secretary-General António Guterres unveil the statue of Nelson Mandela at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Unveiling of Nelson Mandela's statue

Earlier in the day, a statue of Nelson Mandela was unveiled at UN Headquarters by Mr. Guterres alongside Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, the President of South Africa, and María Fernanda Espinosa, the President of the current session of the General Assembly.

Gifted by South Africa to the UN, the life-size statue shows Madiba with his arms outstretched and bears his warm and broad smile.

Speaking at the unveiling, Secretary-General Guterres [highlighted](#) Mr. Mandela's humility as a hallmark of his greatness.

"When he achieved the pinnacle of power as president of his beloved country, Madiba set an example that still resounds throughout Africa and the world – he stepped down after one term, confident in the durability of South Africa's newfound democracy ... He did not pursue power for its own sake, but simply as a means of service," said the UN chief.

Also speaking at the unveiling, Ms. Espinosa [recalled](#) Mr. Mandela's first landmark speech at the UN, in 1994, in which he spoke of the interdependence of all nations and asked what can and must leaders do to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere.

"It is my hope that the placement of this statue – within the physical boundaries of the UN territory – will serve as an inspiration and reminder to

all Member States,” added the Assembly President.

“A reminder that our differences are to be celebrated; that our work is wholly and unreservedly for the people for whom we serve; and that our efforts, in whatever form they take, should always be guided by the inspiration and the promise that Mandela has left us.”