

No country can solve its challenges 'in isolation,' Gambia President tells UN Assembly

Amid complex global multilateral challenges, Adama Barrow, President of the Gambia, told the United Nations Assembly on Tuesday that “no country can thrive or solve all its challenges in isolation.”

“Our salvation, as human beings, lies in [strengthening](#) our multilateral institutions and fostering greater international cooperation to collectively address global challenges,” he said, noting that the UN “uniquely provides the opportunity to achieve this goal.”

He observed that during this time of multiple global challenges, the UN’s work is being undermined through inadequate funding.

“Those of us who value the UN, as well as those who have benefitted immensely from its work, should be at the forefront to call upon all Member States to step up support for the Organization,” he exhorted.

Underscoring the UN’s lead role in solving global challenges, Mr. Barrow said it is “our task is to ensure [the UN] has the required capacity, influence and effectiveness.”

He stressed that decisions and actions rooted in a rules-based international system, which is underpinned by multilateral agreements, form the basis of successful relations between and among nations – from tackling climate change and terrorism to addressing disarmament, trade, development and other concerns.

“As leaders, we have the shared responsibility to promote a world order that prioritizes peace over insecurity; a world order that eliminates the growing inequalities around the world; and a world order that brings us sustainable development,” he added.

Reflecting on the Gambia, Mr. Barrow flagged the country’s new comprehensive National Development Plan (2018-2021), which employs key priorities, such as infrastructural development, agricultural transformation, macroeconomic stability, job creation and employment as a means for the country to oversee its own destiny.

“The Plan also seeks to consolidate our democratic gains through good governance, rule of law and respect for human and people s rights,” he explained.

In pursuing of a fully-transformed Gambia, the President recognized the importance of engaging with The Gambian Diaspora, which he referred to as “The Eighth Region of The Gambia.”

“Our Diaspora strategy seeks to explore and utilize the skills, talent and resources of Gambians everywhere for the successful implementation of the National Development Plan,” he stated.

He also urged for incentives to curb youth migration, hoping that the adoption of the new Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in December would offer better educational and job opportunities.

As a part of the Sahel region, he expressed optimism for the new [UN Support Plan for the Sahel](#) in addressing the challenges of development in there as well as fostering peace, security and cross-border relations.

“We envisage that this strategy will yield important dividends for Africa, especially towards the maintenance of peace and security and the elimination of terrorism in the region,” the President said.

He commended Ethiopia and Eritrea for their efforts to bring peace to the Horn of Africa, saying: “They have set an example for the rest of the continent to emulate.”

[***Full statement is available here.***](#)

[**Developing countries ‘losing out’ in a world not governed by laws, Egyptian President says at UN Assembly**](#)

The nations losing out the most in a world not governed by laws or the founding principles of United Nations, are developing countries, the President of Egypt told leaders at the General Assembly on Tuesday, outlining priorities that must be addressed to meet the aspirations of people everywhere.

“Egypt, like the vast majority of the world’s peoples and nations, has a vested interest in restoring the credibility of the multilateral system with the United Nations at its forefront,” the country’s President, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, highlighted at the annual general debate of the General Assembly.

Enumerating challenges faced by people in developing countries, especially for the Group of 77 and China, which his country currently chairs, President al-Sisi summarized Egypt’s vision to renew global commitment to multilateralism, as well as for the UN to regain its effectiveness.

The principles, he explained, include ensuring protection of the integrity of nations; committing to peaceful and sustainable solutions to international

conflicts; and committing to sustainable development as a necessary precondition for a stable world order.

Implementing these principles, added the Egyptian leader, requires strengthened partnership between UN and regional organizations; bolstered cooperation to counter terrorism and terrorist narratives through a comprehensive international framework; and improving the shortcomings in the international community's handling of human rights issues.

Ensuring these actions is all the more important for the developing world, which constitutes the majority of the global population, and "thus have the greatest interest in enhancing the role of the United Nations," said President al-Sisi.

[Full statement available here.](#)

Nigerian President calls for global action on climate change, Lake Chad crisis

A variety of "festering" causes and effects surround crises around the world, Nigeria's President, Muhammadu Buhari, said on Tuesday, speaking on the first day of the high-level portion of the United Nations General Assembly's annual general debate.

"Most crises usually have a variety of [festering causes](#) and effects," he explained.

"It is the failure to address them early and effectively that lead to out-of-control conflicts," he argued, noting that solutions include collective national and international actions.

Speaking about the fight against international and local terrorism, "Boko Haram and Al Shabaab come to mind."

"Terrorist insurgencies, particularly in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, are partly fueled by local factors and dynamics, but have been increasingly powered by the international Jihadi Movement, namely runaway fighters from Iraq and Syria, and arms from the disintegration of Libya," he told the Assembly.

On a brighter note, he drew inspiration from "the remarkable leadership" of Ethiopia and Eritrea to restore peace between them.

According to Mr. Buhari, their "remarkable show of Statesmanship" has

galvanized neighbouring countries, including Djibouti and Somalia to push for peace in the subregion.

He noted that a topical consequence of global conflict is the irregular migration of affected people from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa to Europe.

“Irregular migration entails huge avoidable loss of human lives, puts strains on services in host countries and communities, and fuels anti-immigrant and racist sentiments in Europe,” he stated.

Against that backdrop, Nigeria welcomed “the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the first-ever [Global Compact](#) for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,” and look forward to its adoption in Marrakech later this year – “to protect the rights of migrants worldwide, while addressing the concerns of countries of ‘origin,’ ‘transit,’ or ‘destination’.”

Calling migration “a constant in human affairs,” he stated that Africa was grateful to the countries that treated migrants with compassion and humanity, “notably Germany, Italy and France.”

Mr. Buhari also cited climate change, “one of the greatest challenges of our time,” as another reason for irregular migration, noting that it has “drastically shrunk Lake Chad” and was “parching” otherwise fertile, arable lands.

“The Lake was a major source of livelihood to more than 45 million inhabitants of the region,” he said, explaining that its shrinking has taken jobs, rendered people poor and vulnerable, and exposed to extremists and terrorist elements.

This instability has also intensified internal displacements, leading to intense economic competition, especially between farmers and herdsmen.

Mr. Buhari called for rededicated international engagement to address the root causes of conflicts in the region.

“What is required is continuous and robust UN cooperation with national Governments and sub-regional and regional organizations, such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, to enhance capacity in conflict prevention, conflict management and peace building,” the President concluded.

[Full statement available here.](#)

[UN News Daily Guide: more major speeches, migration and human rights, beating TB](#)

Every year, in September, global leaders and change-makers gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York for two weeks, to discuss the burning issues of our time and set the global agenda for the year ahead. The 73rd session of the [UN General Assembly](#) opened this week and the body's annual high-level segment – formally known as the 'general debate' – begins on Tuesday, 25 September, where every country's leader gets to address the world.

[Violence against the LGBTI community: UN focuses on 'need to challenge hatred'](#)

As the United Nations celebrates [70 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), a high-level event on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary killings of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) persons around the world, heard event moderator and Executive Director of OutRight Action International, Jessica Stern, describe the challenges facing the community as nothing short of a "global crisis".

"It should be obvious that there are many different ways to be a human being," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [Michelle Bachelet](#), told the meeting. "We need to respect and embrace these differences – not criminalize them, not attack people, not deprive them of equal rights or the protection of the law, just because they are seen as 'different'".

Though there is a gap in data collection, according to the UN independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, [Victor Madrigal-Borloz](#), "every day, millions of lesbians, gays, bisexual, trans and other gender non-conforming people, are subjected to acts of great cruelty based solely on who they are or who they choose to love or desire."

This cruel treatment includes killings, violent attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, forced marriage, denial of rights to assembly and expression, medical violence and discrimination in accessing health care. LGBTI people also face discrimination in education, employment, and housing. In seven countries, same sex relationships are punishable by death, in complete violation of fundamental human rights.

“There should be nothing ‘controversial’ about stopping people being murdered, or executed by agents of the State, simply because of who they are or whom they love,” stressed Ms. Bachelet. “Tackling extreme violence does not require new norms,” she added.

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To date, only one UN General Assembly resolution addressing violence includes explicit reference to sexual orientation and gender identity, while none refer to sex characteristics.

The resolution on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions urges States to “protect the life of all people” and calls upon States to “investigate killings based on discriminatory grounds”, with “sexual orientation and gender identity” mentioned in that context.

“Most countries do not track homophobic and transphobic crimes. The result is impunity,” regretted the UN human rights chief. “Too many victims go without recognition, remedy or justice. Too many perpetrators are free to strike again, undeterred by the prospect of rule of law.

Ms. Bachelet welcomed recent legislative changes that have happened in Chile – her own country, which she was twice elected to lead – and India, noting that “this important discussion is taking place all over the world”.

“But we need more. We need to change minds,” she insisted, stressing that “education, education, education” would be the only way to roll back prejudice and hate, which are “at the core of the killings and violence against the LGBTI community.”

Among the speakers of the event was Robin Hammond, world renown National Geographic photographer, and author of the powerful photo-series ‘Where Love is Illegal’; a collection of stories of discrimination and survival. “Inaction means death,” he said, having witnessed first-hand the suffering of LGBTI people across the world.

“How many more must be raped and mutilated and murdered before we can say never again?”, he asked.