

## At UN Assembly, Ecuador pledges support for world's 'abandoned people' and persons with disabilities

Taking the podium at the United Nations General Assembly's annual debate, Lenin Moreno Garcés, President of Ecuador, opened his [address](#) stressing that the principal of "cause and effect" can provide an opportunity for societies to change their circumstances.

Noting that international policies that are born at the UN, "the most important of the world forums," he said that the international community could help "conceive history as something that can be modified."

Mr. Moreno Garcés cited deprived, abandoned and suffering people as "part of the daily landscape," saying politics are successful when they serve everyone, especially "the poorest and the abandoned."

The President introduced his Government's plan, 'A Lifetime,' as serving the entire life cycle of his people from health to housing, and from women's advancement to elderly care.

He stressed the need of fulfilling commitments, beginning with out the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

"The more we strive for our Nations – United – to touch people's lives, we will strengthen the future," said the President, noting the importance of multilateralism.

He shared his personal story of suffering an assault 20 years ago that cost him the mobility of his legs, saying "I see the world from the height of the heart," referring to his stature in a wheelchair.

"This is not just my story, but that of one billion people in the world," the President continued, calling the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), and its optional protocol, "the best guarantee that, together, we will develop a commitment." He pointed out that for the next two years, Ecuador would take on the presidency of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention.

He asserted that his country would "contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disability... so that we are a truly inclusive United Nations," not just physically but also their rights – in discussions, resolutions and UN initiatives.

Turning to migration, he drew attention to the 6,000 Venezuelans that arrive to Ecuador each day, including children with measles, diphtheria and polio, urging the Venezuelan's to "resolve their crisis with frank, inclusive dialogue."

He noted that the Global Migration Pact was up for adoption in December, in Marrakesh, saying “We cannot let that pact become a dead letter.”

“Inclusion has no borders,” and all people have the right to life and happiness, underscored Mr. Moreno Garces.

He flagged that the UN was created to preserve the human rights of the world’s citizens.

“Rights can only be guaranteed, in the context of solid institutions, with ample freedom of expression... fundamental elements of democracies,” he said, acknowledging the UN’s “immense responsibility” and assuring Ecuador’s support to the UN.

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## [Increasing hostilities in Libya taking heavy toll on civilians, warns UN relief official](#)

The top United Nations relief official in Libya has voiced deep alarm at the humanitarian impact of increasing hostilities in Tripoli, which has led over two days to the deaths of 11 people, most of them civilians, and the wounding of 18 others.

Ongoing clashes between different militias in the Libyan capital have trapped many civilians and displaced numerous families, according to the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#).

An estimated 5,000 families, including 1,700 in just the past two days, have sought refuge with relatives in safer parts of the city and its outskirts since fighting commenced on 26 August.

“Many are afraid to leave their homes because of looting by armed groups or criminal elements. As the fighting escalates, the number of civilians affected by violence is bound to increase,” UN Humanitarian Coordinator Maria Ribeiro said in a statement.

“In addition, the clashes have led to a breakdown in basic services such as electricity and water.”

The Humanitarian Country Team in Libya warned of the dire consequences of the compounded humanitarian crisis in Tripoli, and called for unconditional, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to the affected civilians in Tripoli.

It urged all parties to the conflict to take measures to protect civilians

and civilian installations.

On 4 September, a ceasefire agreement was signed by the armed groups in Tripoli under the auspices of UN Special Representative, Ghassan Salamé, and the UN Support Mission in Libya ([UNSMIL](#)).

However, an increasing number of violations of the ceasefire has led to the death of dozens of civilians.

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## **‘Multilateralism is the only answer to the challenges we face,’ UN Assembly President tells world leaders**

With a call to multilateralism and shared work towards sustainable development and equality for all, María Fernanda Espinosa formally inaugurated the seventy-third general debate of the of the United Nations General Assembly.

Ms Espinosa, the President of the General Assembly, affirmed on Tuesday that the contribution of the United Nations to humanity has been immense, citing the principles that govern the international coexistence emanated from the forum she leads.

“The reality is that the work of the United Nations remains as relevant as it was 73 years ago. Multilateralism is the only possible answer to the global problems we face. Weakening or putting it in question only generates instability and bewilderment, distrust and polarization,” she said.

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Ms. Espinosa also highlighted the interconnectedness of the current world as a characteristic that forces global dialogue and multilateral responses to problems, proposing that UN Member States take up the multilateral agenda with a renewed commitment.

## Three principles

To advance that agenda, Ms. Espinosa spotlighted three principles: global leadership, shared responsibility and collective action.

“I invite you to be inspired by the Andean millennial principle of the *minga*, which refers to collective construction and shared work, to achieve a benefit for the community. Let us then make a global minga for the construction of more peaceful and egalitarian societies, more sustainable and resilient,” she declared.

Turning to the Assembly’s priorities for the coming years, she said cited gender equality and women’s empowerment; the implementation of the global pacts on migration and refugees; the creation of decent work opportunities for all; and environmental protection and compliance with climate change mitigation agreements.

She also NOTED strengthening the political commitment with people with disabilities; the revitalization of the UN; and the role of young people in conflict prevention.

## A more peaceful world order

Ms. Espinosa called for more attention to be paid to the needs of the most vulnerable countries, so that they can reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensure respect of human rights.

Finally, she urged leaders gathered in the Assembly to live up to the needs of the people and to build a more peaceful, secure and humane world order that guarantees the dignity of the people.

“Let us then build a United Nations that is more relevant to all people,” the Assembly President concluded.

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## [Ebola-hit DRC faces ‘perfect storm’ as uptick in violence halts WHO operation](#)

A “perfect storm” of active conflict and traumatized communities in Ebola-affected areas of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) could enable the deadly disease to spread, but there are “no plans” to pull UN workers out of the country despite concerns for their security, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) said on Tuesday.

“We are now extremely concerned, that several factors may be coming together over the next weeks to months to create a potential perfect storm,” said [Dr Peter Salama](#), WHO Deputy Director-General for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “A perfect storm of active conflict, limiting our ability to access civilians, distress by segments of the community, already traumatized by decades of conflict and of murder.”

The senior WHO official’s comments follow a spate of attacks, including one that killed at least 21 civilians on Saturday in the city of Beni, where WHO’s Ebola-response teams are based.

Several factors may be coming together over the next weeks to months to create a potential perfect storm – *Dr. Peter Salama, WHO*

“We’ve seen attacks now on August 24, September 3, 9, 11, 16, 21 and most recently and most dramatically September 22 in the city itself of Beni,” he said. He said that Beni was the base for the agency’s base for the “entire operation.”

Apart from the worrying targeting of civilians, Dr. Salama expressed concern that in the aftermath of the latest attack, outraged communities had declared Beni a “ville morte” so that mourners can grieve, effectively suspending UN operations.

“We’ve heard this morning, that that ‘ville morte’, which was yesterday, has now been extended right through to Friday of this week,” he said, “which basically means for the UN family, including WHO, a lockdown in Beni. Our operations are in effect suspended.”

The development meant that on Monday, WHO staff were able to reach only 20 per cent of the contacts they wanted to, in and around Beni, Dr Salama said.

Butembo could also declare a “ville morte” in coming days in sympathy with the people of Beni, he said, potentially increasing the chances of the situation deteriorating rapidly.

“If we do see unsafe burials that can’t be responded to and symptomatic people that can’t be accessed, we can see this situation deteriorating very quickly,” Dr. Salama said.

In addition to many people’s fear of Ebola, the WHO senior official explained that the situation was being further complicated by local politicians who “exploited and manipulated” them prior to upcoming elections.

Social media reaction to the outbreak was also adding to a “range of conspiracy theories”, Dr Salama said, adding that people have been “actively fleeing” health-workers, including in places where there have been a large number of cases in recent weeks.

In the nearly two months since the outbreak was declared, there have been 150 confirmed and probable cases of the disease, and 100 people have died, as of

23 September. Ebola's symptoms include high fever and vomiting, which make it difficult to treat, because it resembles many other illnesses in its early stages.

Speaking to journalists at the UN in Geneva, Dr Salama noted that the international response to the major public health threat had been excellent and that donors have responded "very quickly and generously" to this latest outbreak, which is DRC's tenth since the 1970s.

This progress risks being undone by the uptick in violence in the Kivus region, which is home to more than 100 armed groups, he said, before noting that neighbouring countries now also face an increased risk of the disease spreading.

### **'There are no plans for WHO or UN staff to pull out'**

"We call on the international community to continue to fund the response," he said, "both in North Kivu, but also, and this is increasingly important, in the neighbouring provinces of the Kivus and Ituri, and in surrounding countries."

One of the armed groups in DRC which pose a threat to civilians and the international response to Ebola, the ADF – Allied Democratic Forces – has sufficient military capacity to ambush blue helmets from the UN's Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) and government forces – the FARDC.

"The ADF in particular has enormous capabilities," Dr Salama said. "They've been able to overrun entire FARDC-bases in and around Beni, they've been able to ambush (UN) forces."

Asked whether the increasing violence may force WHO to leave the area, Dr Salama said that there were "no plans" to do so and that only a "very significant presence" of the UN and its partners could stop the disease.

"There are no plans for WHO or UN staff to pull out," he added. "You know the UN philosophy is to stay and deliver under all circumstances unless we become direct targets of violence."

"I don't believe...we can stop Ebola without a very significant presence of UN and partners, despite the fact that the Ministry of Health has exerted great leadership and is doing an extremely good job in this response," he added.

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**[World needs commitment to rules-based order, Secretary-General Guterres](#)**

## tells UN Assembly

Facing a world where trust – trust in national institutions, trust among States and trust in the rules-based global order – is at a breaking point, Secretary-General António Guterres set the stage for the 73rd general debate of the United Nations with a call to rebuild solidarity, repair broke trust and reinvigorate the spirit of multilateralism.

“As guardians of the common good, we also have a duty to promote and support a reformed, reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system,” said the Secretary-General, addressing the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN Headquarters on Tuesday.

“We need commitment to a rules-based order, with the United Nations at its centre and with the different institutions and treaties that bring the Charter to life ... There is no way forward but collective, common-sense action for the common good.”

Mr. Guterres’ annual opening message, which draws from his [yearly report](#) on the work of the Organization, also highlighted the persisting challenges facing the people and the planet, including the seemingly unending conflicts in Syria and Yemen, the suffering of the Rohingya people and the threat of terrorism, non-proliferation and the use of chemical weapons.

He also drew attention to increasing inequality and the “discrimination and demagoguery” faced by migrants and refugees, in the context of clearly insufficient international cooperation.

“It is our common duty to reverse these trends and resolve these challenges. We need to move ahead based on facts, not fear – on reason, not illusion. Prevention must be at the centre of all we do,” stressed Mr. Guterres.

“This session of the General Assembly is a real opportunity for progress.”

***More to follow.***