

UN News Daily Guide: health focus, youth and tech for development, gender violence, water in Mongolia

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.

Africa's voice must be heard, says Eswatini leader, calling for UN reforms to make continent key player in peace and security

With Africa absorbing the most United Nations peacekeeping missions, King Mswati III, of Eswatini, said the continent's voice must be featured "prominently and permanently" at the UN, advocating for increased participation of Africa in the work of the world Organization, particularly the Security Council.

"Africa calls for the allocation of not less than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership – including the right of veto; and five non-permanent seats, in the United Nations Security Council," King Mswati III told the Assembly's annual general debate on Wednesday.

Turning to development, he said that with strong national leadership and international cooperation, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), ensuring social welfare, gender equality, and tackling many other issues in Africa is within reach.

"We remain confident that the [Goals] and Agenda 2063 of the African Union will continue to give us the proper guidance and impetus necessary to eradicate poverty and create inclusive and sustainable development for all," King Mswati said in his address to the Assembly's annual general debate.

He went on to say that although these goals have been put in place

'imbalances' remain. It, therefore, is up to the UN and its Member States to 'play a meaningful role in supporting developing countries.'

Following the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ([CEDAW](#)), great strides have been undertaken in removing gender inequality. Eswatini has 'enacted the sexual offences and domestic violence act' with an eye to protecting women from domestic violence and sexual assault.

"We sincerely hope that the commendable reform efforts of the Secretary General will help support and reinforce our efforts in accessing external resources and securing sustainable funding mechanism, that will assist us advance towards realization of the SDGs by 2030"

He told the assembly that the kingdom had celebrated its fiftieth anniversary during which time the nation decided to revert to "our original name, which is Eswatini. Since time immemorial the name for the Kingdom has always been Eswatini."

In closing, Mswati left the Assembly with words of thanks and appreciation for UN support, but also urged the Assembly to not leave Africa behind, remarking: 'her voice must be heard.'

[Full statement available here.](#)

[UK's May stresses global cooperation at UN General Assembly](#)

United Kingdom Prime Minister Theresa May warned world leaders at the United Nations on Wednesday that only global cooperation can tackle global challenges such as climate change and unequal economic growth, avoiding the pitfalls of totalitarianism, war, and intolerance that marked the last century.

"We have to show there is a better way to meet the concerns of our people. That way lies in global cooperation between strong and accountable states based on open economies and inclusive societies," she told Heads of State and Government on the second day of the UN General Assembly's annual general debate.

Highlighting the dangers of authoritarianism and the warping of natural patriotism into aggressive nationalism, she lambasted Russia.

"We see this when States like Russia flagrantly breach international norms – from the seizing of sovereign territory to the reckless use of chemical

weapons on the streets of Britain,” she said, referring to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine, and the Novichok nerve agent attack on a former Russian intelligence officer and his daughter in the English town of Salisbury.

In a speech in which she used the word global 15 times and cooperation seven, Mrs. May stressed that cooperation and competition are not mutually exclusive. “Only global cooperation based on a set of agreed rules can ensure competition is fair and does not succumb to protectionism, with its certain path to lost jobs and international confrontation,” she said.

“We see this cooperation here today at this UN,” she added, laying out three main pillars to advance fair globalization.

“We must recognize the legitimacy of people’s concerns and act to build a global economy that works for everyone. We must invest in the patient work of building open societies in which everyone has a stake in the future. And we must act to uphold the international rules-based system – and stand up for our values by protecting those who may suffer when it is violated,” she said.

On the first, she noted that the pace of globalization has left too many people behind, and she called for investing in industries of the future to create new jobs from low carbon technologies to Artificial Intelligence, and providing the education these require.

Secondly, she stressed the need to build countries, not only economies, which work for everyone with inclusive societies where every citizen has a stake in the future, where transparency and accountability are paramount with an independent judiciary, free and fair elections, and a free and open media.

Mrs. May said the UK vote to leave the European Union (EU) was not a rejection of multilateralism or international cooperation, but a clear demand for decisions and accountability to lie closer to home.

On the third issue of an international rules-based system, she stressed the “moral imperative” of reacting forcefully to any violations.

“When barbarous acts and aggression go unchecked – dictators and terrorists are emboldened. So, we must have the confidence to act,” she declared, citing the military action taken by the UK, France and the United States when the Syrian regime used chemical weapons on its people in April, and the expulsion by the UK, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the EU and other allies of over 150 Russian intelligence officers in response to the Salisbury attack.

In Myanmar, after the damning report of the [UN fact-finding mission](#) on the appalling atrocities repeatedly inflicted by the “Burmese military” on the Rohingya, Shan and Kachin peoples since 2011, “we should show the same confidence to hold accountable those responsible,” she said.

“But accountability alone is not enough. We must do more collectively to prevent such atrocities in the first place, and address the causes of instability that can give rise to them. The United Nations has a critical

role to play.”

[Full statement available here.](#)

In UN address, Ukraine President denounces Russia's 'aggressive expansionist policies'

Devoting most of his speech before the United Nations General Assembly to castigating Russia for what he said was its “2014 annexation of Crimea” and backing separatists fighting in the Ukraine’s east, Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, said that only international action will stop Moscow’s “aggressive expansionist policies.”

“As I deliver my speech, reports have brought sad news of another human life just lost on the frontlines of the war inflicted upon my country by a permanent member of the UN Security Council.” he said on Wednesday,

He blamed “Russia’s hostile attacks” for turning Ukraine children into orphans, internally displacing over 1.5 million people and torturing patriots in prisons.

“This has been a daily reality for Ukrainians for four years now,” he continued. “Thousands of deaths, destruction, displacement and human suffering,” which has tested Ukraine’s determination, solidarity, resilience and faith.

The Head of State observed that under Russian occupation, “Crimea has turned into a military stronghold threatening security and stability in the entire wider Black Sea region,” saying that the increasing militarization of Crimea deserves the Assembly’s attention and “prompt reaction.”

He underscored that Russia is punishes Ukraine for making a sovereign decision to live in a free world based on democratic values.

“The UN shall not be silent when the values and principles rooted in its Charter and the entire body of international law are being violated by a veto country,” he argued, calling UN action “not just a challenge,” but a chance to make the Organization relevant.

According Mr. Poroshenko, international developments over the last decade have “seriously undermined” respect for peace and international law and staying silent when international norms are breached encouraged continued destructive policies.

“Let me be clear on this point,” he told the Assembly, “nothing will stop Moscow from continuing its aggressive expansionist policies if it does not face a united stand of the international community.”

He noted that while the Security Council has discussed the situation in Ukraine, Russia has veto power to block any action against it.

Mr. Poroshenko sought Security Council reform as “an important contribution to the ongoing UN-wide change,” saying “the abuse of the veto right is a brake that often does not allow our Organization to really act.”

[Full statement available here.](#)

[Yemen in the grip of war imposed by Iran-backed militia, country's President tells UN assembly](#)

The Yemeni Government is striving to restore peace, security and stability and provide essential services to its people, while the country remains gripped by a war imposed by Iran- and Hizbullah-backed armed militias, Yemen's President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour told world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday.

In his address, President Hadi explained that the challenges faced by his country is not a political crisis and cannot be contained by dialogue, urging international community to bring pressure on Iran so that it halts its intervention in Yemen.

Yemen is fully ready for a sustainable peace based on national, regional and international terms of reference, he said, adding that it is not an advocate for war and vengeance.

The State should be restored, and the coup ended, stated the President, underscoring that peace can only be obtained by implementing the relevant international resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), which calls on the Huthis to withdraw and hand over their weapons.

President Hadi also highlighted his Government's efforts to protect civilians, especially women and children and said that it has instructed the country's military not to recruit children as well as to rehabilitate those that have been detained while in the ranks of the rebels.

Despite limited resources, Yemen continues to participate in the fight against terrorism and the Government will not step back from any measures

that would counter the financing of terrorism and money laundering, he said.

In conclusion, the President of Yemen thanked Saudi Arabia, applauding its key role in alleviating the humanitarian crisis in his country, and also added his thanks to humanitarian organizations in the Arab coalition countries and various UN bodies for their humanitarian assistance.

Since 2015, fighting has been ongoing in Yemen between forces loyal to President Hadi supported by a Saudi-led coalition and Houthi rebels.

[Full statement \(in Arabic\) available here.](#)