

# Nordic leaders call for reform that places UN at the centre of global multilateralism

22 September 2017 – A reformed and strengthened United Nations is more than ever necessary to tackle the host of challenges confronting the world, from conflicts and terrorism to climate change and sustainable development, Nordic ministers told the General Assembly today.

“The need for a United Nations that seeks to save us from humanity’s worst impulses remains. However, in these days of uncertainty we must also learn from, and build on, what is positive in our world, and in the United Nations,” Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström told the Assembly’s 72nd annual general debate.

“This is the moment for multilateralism, not unilateralism. We must grasp it or risk the consequences. The United Nations is at the centre of this effort. It is a tailor-made space for the world to find the solutions to the common challenges of our time. And, despite the sometimes justified, criticisms, it is clear that we still believe in the United Nations’ power.”

Founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and promote better standards of life in larger freedom, the UN has prevented a repetition of the catastrophic wars that preceded its founding, she noted. Extreme poverty has fallen to an historic low, life expectancy continues to climb and millions of people are reached every year with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

“The broad support for the Secretary-General’s reform agenda illustrates the importance we attach to an effective United Nations, its role at the centre of multilateralism, and as a platform for the delivery of our common commitments,” Ms. Wallström stressed.

[Full statement available here](#)



Gudlaugur Thor Thordharson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Icelandic Foreign Minister Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson also recalled the UN’s founding amid the catastrophe of world war.

“Just as this great building was renovated so successfully a few years ago, so too must the UN be renovated and made fit for purpose in the modern era.

“We strongly support the work of the Secretary-General in management reform,

development reform, and his sustaining peace agenda,” he said.

“We live in a world of opportunity: Never have we had such potential to end poverty and hunger, to end human rights violation, to focus on the people striving for a decent life. We can either succeed or we can fail. It is a choice, it is a decision. This is our responsibility, this is our task.”

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## [Hungary, at UN, says roots of terrorism must be tackled; warns ‘migratory waves’ bring terrorists to Europe](#)

22 September 2017 – The migration crisis and associated threat of terrorism are the greatest threats ever faced by the European Union, Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary, told the United Nations today, denouncing those that encourage ‘waves’ of migrants, which were only putting thousands of people in danger.

“Western Europe used to be the most secure and safest region globally,” he said in his address to the General Assembly’s annual general debate. Indeed, he said that only a few years ago, events in the Middle East would not have happened in Europe.

But the current fear of terrorist attacks was now a part of daily life –as beaches, concert halls and shopping malls have become “venues of execution” – a direct consequence of the massive influx of illegal migrants over the last two and half years.

Some 1.5 million illegal migrants had entered the European Union without any control, Mr. Szijjártó continued, which had given terrorist organizations the chance to send their fighters to the European continent. “We have to admit that social integration procedures in Western Europe failed. Some integration processes of former migrants have been unsuccessful, and in many places, parallel societies have been constructed.”

“It is shocking that after the barbaric terrorist attacks in Europe and massive violations of nation and international law, and after thousands have lost their lives on the Mediterranean Sea and elsewhere,” there are still leaders of international organizations and representatives of large countries who emphasized that migration was favourable and to be encouraged.

That was “extremely unacceptable and irresponsible behaviour,” he said.

Encouraging migratory waves, knowing that terrorist organizations will take advantage' had only placed thousands of people into danger. All States had a fundamental right to guarantee security for their people and to protect their borders.

He went on to recall that Hungary was a Christian country that was obliged to help people in need. The rights of people must be restored where they had been violated, he said, and people must be helped to return home as soon as possible. The solution to the migration crisis was in tackling the causes of conflict and stopping terrorist organizations.

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## [At UN, Cuba urges relief to assist storm-hit Caribbean; cites 'setback' in bilateral relations with US](#)

22 September 2017 – In the wake of successive hurricanes Irma and Maria, which tore through the Caribbean and left communities in desperate conditions, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla urged the international community to “give the highest priority to this situation and mobilize resources to assist the small Caribbean Island States and territories.”

Expressing heartfelt sympathies all those affected – including in Mexico which was hit with two earthquakes this month, and the United States, where Hurricane Harvey had struck several southern states – he went on to describe the scene in Cuba, speaking of heart-touching moments from the disaster that also carried a message of hope, scenes such as rescuers saving a girl and giving her back to her mother and of strangers helping one another.

Conveying his country's gratitude for the offers of assistance from the global community, he also offered strength to neighbouring islands which were also hit hard by the hurricanes and natural disasters.

Turning next to political matters, Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla referred to the address by the US President at the General Assembly earlier in the week, t noted statistics on extreme poverty, hunger and refugee crises, asking how could global challenges be overcome with an “America first” view.

Calling the new Cuban policy of the US “a setback” in bilateral relations, he said it undermined the basis established two years ago for advancing ties characterized by respect and equality. He condemned the “disrespectful, offensive and interventionist” statement made against Cuba by that country's President, reminding him that the US had no moral authority to judge Cuba.

Despite longstanding tensions with the US, the Minister expressed that he

believed in the possibility for coexistence and respect between the two nations.

Concluding his address, he reiterated that the Cuban people will keep up their struggle to achieve the most just society possible. "We will continue to steadily advance down the path of revolutionary transformations that has been sovereignly chosen by all Cubans to further improve our socialism."

[\*Full statement available here\*](#)

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## **At UN Assembly, small island States press for action to mitigate impacts of climate change**

22 September 2017 – The President of Kiribati, Taneti Maamau, told the United Nations General Assembly that the theme of its current session – 'Focusing on People' – reminded world leaders of their responsibility to ensure that human lives, dignity and values prevail over "dollar value."

Indeed, the shared goal is to "provide a peaceful and secure world, without nuclear weapons, and to promote social progress, better living standards, human rights and dignity for all our citizens," he told the annual general debate.

Offering condolences to those affected by the recent string of natural disasters in the Caribbean, United States and Mexico, and elsewhere, he stressed that while the plight Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, the Maldives and other small island developing States may not capture global attention, those countries and their people continue to suffer daily from the impact of climate-driven disasters.

"The United Nations must focus on the most vulnerable and underprivileged members of our global family, such as the least developed countries and small island developing States," emphasized Mr. Maamau. "We must make sure they are not left behind in our global journey towards achieving the global development Agenda [...] We must make sure their voices are heard," he added.

Asserting that oceans have a strong connection to people, peace and prosperity, the President urged for the formulation of an international legally-binding instrument to manage the use of biological marine diversity beyond national jurisdiction. "We must ensure that urgent and collective action for conservation of our ocean is made so that we do not repeat the same mistake we made with our atmosphere," he stressed.

Mr. Maamau pointed out that in the quest for sustainable development, the

focus is often on economic fundamentals at the expense of human values. He urged compassion for the most vulnerable to transform the world's challenges, saying "Love, compassion, respect, understanding and kindness are priceless solutions to the mounting problems that we continue to battle."

[Full statement available here](#)



King Tupou VI of Tonga addresses the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the Assembly, King Tupou VI of Tonga shared his concerns over the conservation and sustainable use of global resources, underscoring the importance of partnerships in collectively achieving the targets, goals and objectives stipulated under international law and internationally-agreed outcomes.

Turning to the 2017 High-Level Political Forum, he highlighted the value of reviewing the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), commending the initiative to examine the complex sustainability challenges facing small island developing States. The King of Tonga fully supported Fiji's Presidency of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change this year, to strongly address the adverse impacts of climate change and the urgent need for innovation in adaptation for those island States, and called for the appointment of a UN Special Representative on Climate and Security.

"We have, and continue to, experience the negative impacts of ocean degradation to our livelihoods and culture due to the anthropogenic activities and inter-related devastating effects of climate change," he said.

To Tonga, the successful implementation of SDG 14 – on the ocean and its resources – is critical for the pathway towards sustainable development and its inter-connection with achieving other goals, such as those related to food security, water and sanitation, health, economic growth, and sustainable production and consumption.

He urged strong political will on mainstreaming ocean-related actions in international, regional and national development plans and strategies for the inclusive participation of all stakeholders. "We may be small islands [we are all] large ocean States," he stated.

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare of Solomon Islands addresses the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Manasseh Sogavare, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, spoke at length about the negative impacts of climate change, which are occurring at an

alarming rate on its shores, as presenting a clear and present danger.

“For us Pacific Island nations, climate change continues to be our enemy [and] we are invaded by this enemy every day,” he said.

He also condemned the recent testing of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea over the Pacific Ocean as an insult to the people of the Pacific. “We are ocean people. The sea is our sanctuary. It is the foundation of our heritage,” he underscored, denouncing any pollution and contamination of that ocean, which its peoples depend on for their livelihoods.

The Prime Minister highlighted that an unstable climate, and the subsequent displacement and relocation of people, can exacerbate some of the core drivers of conflict – such as migratory pressures, clash of cultures and competition for resources. “These are threats to the very existence of humanity and could very well morph into threats to global peace and security,” he said, adding that Pacific small island developing States have been requesting the Security Council to address the issue of climate change.

[Full statement available here](#)

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## [Global Goals a ‘blueprint’ for fair and equitable development, Kenya tells UN Assembly](#)

22 September 2017 – Speaking at the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, Kenya highlighted that the [2030 Agenda](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) have provided the globe with a blueprint for a more peaceful world and for making development and globalization “fair and equitable for all.”

In her address, Amina Chawahir Mohamed, the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Kenya said that her country a firm believer in multilateralism and that it acknowledges the UN’s “remarkable role” in sustaining peace and providing a platform for cooperation and solidarity among nations.

“We know the UN can do better,” she added, noting that the Organization must embrace reforms to adjust to current times, and be more accommodative, more democratic and more effective.

She also voiced concern at “exclusion of countries” at the Security Council, noting that it continues to be “dominated by a small club of countries.”

“This exclusion continues to undermine the legitimacy and even efficiency of the Council; while its operations, on the other hand, raise issues of accountability and transparency.”

Also in her address, the Cabinet Secretary informed the General Assembly of efforts within her country to accelerate implementation of the [SDGs](#) as well as the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change. She also spoke of Kenya’s assistance to refugees and on efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

[Full statement available here](#)