

[A more flexible UN can have real, positive impact on the ground, Latvia tells Assembly](#)

20 September 2017 – The President of Latvia, Raimonds Vejonis, told the General Assembly today that while the United Nations remains the central forum for multilateralism and a rules-based global order, if the Organization is more transparent and flexible it could “bring positive, real influence to people on the ground.”

Mr. Vejonis noted that for people to fully realize their potential, they need a stable and secure environment – adding that UN resources often go to managing and responding to crises, instead of preventing them. He emphasized that conflict prevention must be at the core of UN action, saying “saving human lives and upholding human dignity must be our common priority.”

He expressed Latvia’s deep concern over nuclear proliferation, strongly condemning all nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches by Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. While saying that a peaceful and diplomatic solution to this situation is a “a priority,” he noted that in the meantime, “all States must fully implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions.” Mr. Vejonis also reiterated Latvia’s call for “long overdue” Council reform and encouraged “especially the veto-wielding members” to move beyond their domestic interests to address global challenges.

He spoke about the rules-based security order in Europe, underscoring the territorial integrity of independent States, and calling Russia’s “unprovoked aggression against its neighbours” a serious breach of international security rules.

The Latvian President concluded by underscoring that all Member States must work together to ensure that the UN adapt to a changing global environment, focus on priorities and deliver results.

[Full statement available here](#)

[UN must reform, ‘win our trust’ by proving it can deliver, UK leader tells General Assembly](#)

20 September 2017 – The world is currently facing a raft of challenges “that

test who we are,” the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom told the General Assembly, noting that while many, such terrorism – which struck her country five times this year – did not recognize international borders, they could be addressed by a strong, agile United Nations that upholds global order and values.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly’s annual general debate, Theresa May noted that climate change is degrading and depleting the planet, and millions were fleeing their homes in search of a better life. Moreover, there are massive inequalities around the world and weaknesses in the global trading system, both of which are pushing some countries towards protectionism.

“As the global system struggles to adapt, some countries are deliberately flouting international rules,” she said, citing the “unforgivable use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime,” and the threat of nuclear weapons use by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Calling on countries to defend the international order and the values of fairness, justice and human rights underpinning the multilateral system – including through agreements such as the Paris Accord and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – she said the international system, with the United Nations at its heart, is the “amplifying force” for those values.

Indeed, “we have to strive harder” to defend and reform the UN, she stressed, and those who flouted the rules and spirit of the Organization must be held to account. Noting that the United Kingdom had long supported the UN, she nevertheless said the Organization suffers from a gap between its purposes and their delivery.

“Member States must embark on the Secretary General’s reform agenda,” she said, calling for better cooperation, improved gender equality and reduced competition on the ground. As an outward-looking, “global Britain” – and the world’s second largest donor – the United Kingdom would continue to support the Organization.

However, said stated: “The UN and its agencies must win our trust” by proving they can deliver. In that regard, the UK would now set aside 30 per cent of its funding, to be paid only to those parts of the UN that achieve sufficient results.

UN must lead global battle against counterfeit medicines, Congo tells

General Assembly

20 September 2017 – The Republic of Congo today called for a United Nations-wide global battle against the proliferation of counterfeit and sub-standard medicines, warning the General Assembly on the second day of its 72nd annual General Debate that Africa was particularly vulnerable.

“The proliferation of counterfeit and sub-standard medicines presents more and more a serious and multi-tentacled threat to the world, and in particular for developing countries, President Denis Sassou Nguesso said, noting that the scourge claims 800,000 lives a year, according to the UN World Health Organization, and the traffic also funds international terrorism.

“About 10 per cent of medicines currently in use in the world are believed to be counterfeit, with the figure rising to 40 percent in Africa and the countries of the South, and even 60 per cent in some regions,” he said.

“In addition to the efforts of the World Health Organization, far-reaching action should be taken at the level of the UN General Assembly to draw up a global strategy to fight this peril,” he added, stressing the need for substantial funds.

On other challenges, he cited the growing reach of terrorism, new tensions on the Korean peninsula, fighting in Syria and Iraq, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well crises in Africa in Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Libya and South Sudan.

[Full statement \(in French\) available here](#)

At UN Assembly, South American leaders urge commitment with global development goals

20 September 2017 – Addressing the general debate at the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, leaders from South American countries urged the global community for greater cooperation and collaboration in addressing a range of pressing issues – from poverty to security challenges.

Underscoring the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), David Granger, the President of Guyana, said that the Goals represent the international community’s collective desire and determination to eradicate hunger and poverty, and ensure equal opportunities in education, employment and social justice for both men and women.

However, advancement of these Goals, he noted, is obstructed by violations of human rights, as well as by conflicts and violence that is displacing many from their homes, adding that the challenge before the UN is “to resolve to reinforce respect for the rights of citizens within the governance structures of [its] Member States.”

He also underscored the need to combat the impact of climate change, and expressed his country’s commitment to the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

“Climate change is not a fiction of a few extremists,” said the President, noting that most recently, Caribbean islands and North American countries had felt the devastating impact of five successive hurricanes.

Also in his remarks, the Guyanese President reiterated that humanity must continue to striving for peace and highlighted the important role the UN through the International Criminal Court and the Security Council have in ensuring peace and respect for justice.

“Peace for the world’s peoples is the mandate of the UN. It can be achieved by addressing the world’s humanitarian crises, promoting justice within and between nations and resolving long-standing conflicts between states,” he concluded.

[Full statement available here](#)



Horacio Manuel Cartes Jara, President of Paraguay, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also speaking today, Horacio Manuel Cartes Jara, the President of Paraguay, underscored the importance of the UN in confronting global challenges such as poverty and inequality, climate change, transnational crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Reaffirming his country’s commitment for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, President Cartes Jara urged all States, and in particular those with greater responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, to take all necessary measures to preserve the planet from the consequences of global warming.

“In Paraguay, we have taken a social responsibility perspective, by fostering greater production of clean and renewable energy,” he said.

The President also informed the Assembly of Paraguay’s efforts to implement the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, including building an innovative and inclusive institutional architecture to advance progress towards the [SDGs](#) and targets.

He also spoke of work in his country to combat poverty, build opportunities for the indigenous and rural communities, promote greater investments, as well as increase transparency and efficiency in Government processes.

Turning to the crisis emanating from the nuclear weapon development programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the President reiterated Paraguay's condemnation of the nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK, in clear defiance of its international obligations, and urged a "firm rejection" by the UN General Assembly of such acts by the country.

[Full statement available here](#)



Lenin Moreno Garcés, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the General Assembly today, President Lenín Moreno Garcés of Ecuador said the road to achieving peace and successfully implementing the SDG's depends on cooperation and dialogue.

Reflecting on misuse of resources, the President asked: "How could it be possible that resources allocated to implementing the SDG's have been wasted on the absurdity of war?"

He added that fallout from conflicts extends beyond economic damages – they also rob people of "true freedom and democracy."

For this reason, he said, it is important to respect sovereignty of States and reject the notion that militarism is the solution, which, he stressed "brings suffering, pain and death."

Also in his remarks, Mr. Garcés informed the General Assembly of a temporary bilateral ceasefire signed just a few days ago in the Ecuadorian capital, Quito, between Government of Colombia and an armed group, as an example of regional strides towards achieving peace.

In conclusion, the President expressed optimism about coexisting in "a more human, and just world," can be attributed to the power of dialogue, political decision-making power, and collective action.

[Full statement \(in Spanish\) available here](#)

UN has 'narrow window of opportunity' to turn the tide on raft of global ills, warns Ukraine President

relations, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human rights violations and environmental fragility are but a few of today's global challenges, the President of Ukraine to the United Nations General Assembly, calling on the world body to "act now" to tackle those and pressing concerns.

"Now is the time to act, and although only a narrow window of opportunity exists, the United Nations should be at the forefront of that process," Petro Poroshenko told delegates in New York for the Assembly's 72nd annual general debate.

He said Ukraine could not have agreed more with the call for the universal respect of sovereignty, as expressed in the General Assembly Hall yesterday. And while the UN was founded on the principles of peace and security, based on sovereignty and respect for borders, those principles had been flagrantly violated by a permanent Security Council member against his country.

"Ukraine has suffered from conflict for the last three years, resulting in the deaths of 10,000 people and the occupation of seven per cent of its territory, while 20 per cent of the economy has been seized, destroyed or simply stolen," Mr. Poroshenko explained, adding that the "most horrific [action] was the Kremlin's tactic to increase human suffering."

He said Russia has violated Security Council resolutions and ignored requests from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) for full access to the occupied parts of Crimea. "The situation requires a proper response from the international community," he said, noting that Russia is not contributing to international security, but is rather its biggest threat, "as it is in conflict with almost all its neighbours and has undermined every effort to restore Ukraine's sovereignty."

For decades, Ukraine had been a resolute contributor to global peace and security, he said, notably by giving up its nuclear arsenal. An advocate for non proliferation, Ukraine resolutely condemned the recent actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, he said, also expressing deep concern over the conflict in Syria. Concerned by the numerous, unresolved conflicts in Africa, he expressed Ukraine's commitment to the [2030 Agenda](#) and implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#).