

Leaders meeting at UN underscore need to fast-track climate action

19 September 2017 – Leaders from various levels of government, the private sector and civil society highlighted the need for climate action as they convened at United Nations Headquarters, where [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres warned that current pledges and plans are insufficient to keep global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees.

“Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and Maria and the massive floods in South Asia are just the most recent demonstration of [the urgency of tackling climate change](#),” said Mr. Guterres in his remarks to the Leaders’ Dialogue on Climate Change, held today on the margins of the high-level session of the General Assembly.

“Such events will only become more frequent and more savage, with more dramatic humanitarian and economic consequences,” he added.

In 2020, parties to the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, which entered force in 2016, will review progress made to date.

“By then, we need to make sure that we have substantially raised the bar of ambition,” Mr. Guterres said, outlining six issues to focus on: investment in clean technology; carbon pricing; the energy transition; risk mitigation; augmenting the contribution of sub-national actors and business; and mobilizing finance.

“Momentum is growing. Now let’s make it grow even more,” he said.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General addressed a gathering of global leaders from local governments, the private sector and civil society, which was also attended by California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr; UN Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change Michael R. Bloomberg; and former US Vice President Al Gore.



Secretary-General António Guterres, speaks at the High-Level Stakeholders Meeting on Climate Change, as Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (left), and Al Gore (right), Chairman of the Climate Reality Project listen. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

“Climate change is [not a distant problem](#) for future generations,” he told them. “It is here, now, and we need to deal with it.”

Both meetings were held to forge alliances for implementing the Paris Agreement in the run-up to a Climate Summit Mr. Guterres plans to hold in 2019.

[‘No room for double standards’ in combatting terrorism, stresses Egyptian President at UN Assembly](#)

19 September 2017 – Noting that comprehensively addressing terrorism is vital for the future of the regional and international order, the President of Egypt called today for an approach to do so that is based not only on eradication of terrorism but also of its root causes, as well as challenging its supporters and those that grant it safe havens.

“In all candidness, there is no room for any serious discussion on the credibility of any international system that applies double standards,” said Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, addressing the general debate of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

“Members of different international alliances should answer the questions we are raising, for answers are usually avoided by those who prefer duplicity in order to attain narrow political interests at the demise of States and at the expense of bloodshed by their people, which we shall not allow to be lost in vain under any circumstances.”

The President also noted that eliminating root causes of international crises and factors that endanger international stability necessitated implementing, in practice, the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility between members of the international community.

For settling disputes, he urged respect of international law and negotiations based on legal, historic and moral principles, as well as respect of sovereignty of states and principle of non-intervention in their internal affairs.

Concluding his address, President Al Sisi called for a moment of “truthful self-reflection” and recognition of the deficiencies that hinder the international system from delivering on the aspirations it was realized for.

“It is also an opportunity to renew our commitment to establish a more equitable international order, given that the attainment of justice globally remains a necessary condition to confront the immense challenges impacting our world today,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)

At UN, Colombian President says country's successful peace process could serve as model for others

19 September 2017 – In his final address to the United Nations General Assembly as President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos delivered a message of peace and highlighted the results of the agreement reached between his Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), which he described as a model for the rest of the world.

“If we were able to put an end to an armed conflict in Colombia that has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions of victims and displaced persons, there is hope for other ongoing conflicts in the world,” stated Mr. Santos Calderón in his address to delegations attending the Assembly’s annual general debate.

Colombia had succeeded thanks to political will and an awareness that peace is a necessary condition for both progress and happiness. Paying tribute to the United Nations, he said a special mission had been established by the Security Council to verify and monitor the disarmament of FARC, as well as the ceasefire between the guerrillas and the Government. More than 900,000 weapons had been destroyed and members of the former guerrilla groups had created a political movement to defend their ideas in a democratic manner.

“This is what a peace process is all about,” he exclaimed, “replacing bullets for votes and ending the use of weapons as a means for political pressure,” said Mr. Santos Calderón, explaining that in the coming days, another mission recently authorized by the Security Council would be established to reintegrate guerrillas into civil life, he said, and ensure security to both the former combatants and communities that had suffered from armed conflict. Turning to wider issues, he said expressed concern at the situation in Venezuela and the gradual dismantling of its democracy. He called upon the Secretary General and the international community to support the Venezuelan people. Turning to terrorism, he said it should be tackled with every means possible – military, political, intelligence and international cooperation – while its roots of fear, exclusion and hate must be replaced with love, compassion and respect for difference.

More broadly, the war on drugs had not yet been won and new strategies were needed, he said, pressing States to include human rights in their policies against drugs. Colombia’s vulnerability to climate change had paved the way for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

[Mali's President, at General Assembly, calls on world to help equip regional anti-terror force](#)

19 September 2017 – Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita took the podium of the General Assembly today to praise United Nations efforts in aiding his West African country recover from rebel attacks, and called on the international community to help fund a new five-nation force to combat terrorism in the region.

"I am duty-bound to hail the remarkable work of the civilian and military personnel of MINUSMA, who work in conditions that I know are difficult, even often perilous," he told the Assembly on the opening day of its 72nd annual general debate, referring to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

MINUSMA was established by the Security Council in 2013 after extremists took over part of the north of the country. The Mission currently has over 12,000 uniformed personnel and 1,350 civilians deployed to support the political processes and carry out security-related tasks in the country which has suffered from continuing rebel and terrorist attacks.

Mr. Keita said the UN Security Council-endorsed G5 Sahel group, comprising Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, is slated to deploy its first joint force next month to combat terrorism and drugs, arms and human trafficking throughout Africa's sub-Saharan Sahel region.

"I call on friendly countries and partner international organizations to support the G5 Sahel joint force with equipment, logistics, communications. Emergency medical evacuations and the fight against improvised explosive devices," he added.

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

[In wake of Hurricane Irma, UN launches \\$55 million plan to assist Cubans in need](#)

19 September 2017 – The United Nations system in Cuba today launched an action plan requiring \$55.8 million to address the urgent needs of over 2 million people severely affected by Irma, the strongest hurricane ever

reported in the Atlantic.

Earlier this month, Hurricane Irma left a wake of destruction on several islands in the Caribbean, affecting Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, the United States Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and other islands in the Caribbean Sea, affecting millions of people and resulting in massive economic damage across the region.

UN agencies have been assisting with response and recovery efforts, and the Organization launched a \$15.1 million regional humanitarian response plan, covering the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations impacted.

Initial assessments found that a number of critical areas in Cuba have been severely affected, including housing, access to potable water and electric power services, health and education institutions, roads and telecommunications.

The [plan of action](#) includes projects in shelter and early recovery; food security; water, hygiene and sanitation; health; education; and coordination. Special attention will be given to assisting priority groups such as the elderly, pregnant women and infants, and young children.