

## Member States' support essential for an effective UN, says outgoing political chief

After nearly six years as the top United Nations political affairs official, Jeffrey Feltman on Thursday spoke to the press for the last time as the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, spotlighting the importance of multilateralism and the support of UN Member countries for the Organization's vital work.

"The list of [complex challenges](#) that Member States face today is enormous," said Mr. Feltman, noting that these challenges are addressed "much more effectively" through a multilateral system.

The support of the world body's 193 Member States is essential, "for the multilateral system, for the institution and for the Organization itself."

Mr. Feltman said he was concerned that some leaders were questioning whether a multilateral system was the right way to move forward.

"Frankly, if a leader is not committed to rule of law in his or her own country, how committed can we expect that leader to be to the United Nations itself?" he asked.

The outgoing political chief also underscored the importance of the Secretary-General's reform agenda in making the UN more effective, more transparent and "to show Member States that this Organization can evolve to address today's challenges."

Turning to Syria, which he called "the most tragic example" of the international community's failure "to address a peace and security, humanitarian, and human rights catastrophe," Mr. Feltman said he saw that crisis as "more of a reason for us to recommit ourselves to pursue peace and justice, with even more determination and holding those responsible for crimes accountable."

In December, Mr. Feltman's [visited](#) the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during a time of extremely high tension. While there, he highlighted the need to prevent miscalculations and open channels of communications to reduce risking an escalation.

"I don't want to claim a bigger role for the United Nations than it actually had in the relative thaw since then," Mr. Feltman told the press. "But I do think that the confidence and trust in the UN the parties have demonstrated, and all that represents, is further evidence of why we do need to keep the multilateral system strong, why we need the rules-based system."

Earlier in the day, Secretary-General António Guterres paid tribute to Mr.

Feltman's "[extraordinary dedication](#), an enormous intelligence and a total commitment to the UN, to its values, and to peace and security in the world."

The [Department of Political Affairs](#) monitors and assesses political developments globally to help detect and defuse crises before they happen. Its chief advises the Secretary-General on global peace and security issues, while overseeing field-based political missions carrying out peacemaking, preventive diplomacy and peace-building activities in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Mr. Feltman's successor, [Rosemary DiCarlo](#), appointed yesterday by the Secretary-General, will be the first woman to hold the position.