

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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