

PGA Address to the Sixth Committee

17 October 2024, 10:30 a.m., Trusteeship Council Chamber

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address the Sixth Committee.

I begin by congratulating the chair, His Excellency Mr. Rui Vinhas, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations and the members of the bureau on their election, and wish them well in steering the work of the Committee.

As President of the General Assembly, I have made the promotion of justice and international law a priority for the 79th session.

This priority draws inspiration from the United Nations Charter, the bedrock of our multilateral system, and guides our efforts to create a more just, peaceful world for everyone, everywhere.

We meet at an opportune time, when we can build from the momentum of the Pact for the Future, which we adopted at the start of the 79th session.

The Pact offers a powerful blueprint for strengthening multilateralism and the rule of law at the international level, towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I welcome that the Pact recognizes the contributions of the International Court of Justice, the United Nations' principal judicial organ, and reaffirms States' obligations to comply with its decisions.

It also calls for measures to ensure the Court can effectively continue to discharge its mandate.

I urge all Member States to support this call and to renew our collective commitment to upholding justice and the rule of law.

We also meet at a time when the importance of the rule of law is especially evident, considering rising global conflicts, geopolitical instability and widespread human suffering.

In my vision statement, I stressed that the General Assembly—our most inclusive global forum, remains one of the few places where States, despite differences, collectively address pressing global challenges.

In that spirit, I urge Member States to embrace dialogue and unite to resolve conflicts, advance global peace, and uphold international law.

Excellencies,

Let us also recall that respect for and adherence to international law is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Global lawlessness erodes progress on sustainable development, weakens respect for human rights, and threatens our shared prosperity.

These interlinkages underscore the vital importance of the Sixth Committee.

In my vision statement, I appealed to the membership to strive to promote human dignity everywhere and for everyone. And a fundamental part of that endeavour must include, necessarily, the development of, and respect for, international law.

Through the Sixth Committee and the International Law Commission, the United Nations remains critical in developing and promoting international law.

It is also a critical forum to advance the causes that matter to us all. The fight against impunity, the protection of civilians affected by disasters, including climate change, among many others.

In the time since the International Law Commission recommended the elaboration of a convention based on its draft articles on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, the world has seen an increase in conflicts.

Equally concerning has been the increase of widespread human suffering and a disregard of international law associated with these conflicts.

It has thus become even more urgent that the discussions on this matter see progress.

Similarly, increased and more devastating disasters continue to wreak havoc and suffering around the world. The frequency and severity of these disasters is also increasing

In this regard, the International Law Commission's recommendation to draft a convention on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, along with its draft articles, remains a crucial undertaking that the international community must pursue.

As the world faces new challenges, from technological advances to climate change, the significance of this work only increases.

I therefore urge all of you, in the spirit and tradition of the Sixth Committee, to work toward finding consensus on the way forward on both the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity as well as on the protection of persons in the events of disasters.

For a success in this regard will also be a success for the United Nations as a whole, benefiting millions of people around the world.

It is the "raison d'être" of our multilateral system and I would encourage you to seize the moment.

Excellencies,

While the international order may not be perfect, the rules-based system remains an indispensable pillar of global governance.

This system holds immense value in addressing the rising tensions and conflicts that threaten international peace and security.

The work of this Committee will contribute significantly to building a world that is more peaceful, just, and stable.

However, this work must extend beyond words.

It must be followed by decisive, concrete actions, driven by our shared commitment to create lasting change.

I urge all of you to engage in meaningful dialogue, collaborate constructively, and take bold steps to address the pressing challenges before us.

Let me conclude by wishing you all productive and insightful deliberations in the days ahead.

Thank you.
