



**Statement delivered by the
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**General Debate of the 80th Session of the United
Nations General Assembly**

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Thank you, **Madame President.**

For eight decades ... the United Nations has endured.

A beacon of hope for the world.

A defender of dignity and freedom.

A shield against aggression—whether for the mighty, or the small.

And a foundation for cooperation... that has lifted millions out of poverty... and given humanity a chance to move forward, together.

Yet, the vision penned 80 years ago remains unfulfilled.

Peoples and nations continue to suffer under oppressive regimes.

We face new, threats—from criminal networks to planetary and technological challenges—that overwhelm natural systems, economies, and even basic human rights.

These are global challenges.

They don't stop at borders.

And no matter how powerful a nation may be—none of us can meet them alone.

Now, more than ever, we need to work together.

Now, more than ever, we need the United Nations.

And if the UN has fallen short of its promise... it's not because the idea is flawed, it's because too often, its members—including the most powerful among us—have failed to act

And we see the cost of that failure today.

The world is facing more conflicts than at any time in recent decades.

This year alone, six nuclear powers have been drawn into conflict—in Asia, in Europe, and in the Middle East.

Military spending rose by 9 percent to \$2.7 trillion last year even as global insecurity deepened.

That is more than half the GDP of all the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan, dragging on year after year.

Hundreds of thousands dead.

Millions displaced, orphaned, left with nothing.

The images should compel us to act.

And yet too often the UN is actively blocked from doing its job.

In Gaza, one of the largest man-made humanitarian crises grows worse day by day.

The UN's relief agency—lifeline to millions—is being pushed to the brink.

And the two-state solution...the vision of peace this body has long supported..., is slipping away.

In Sudan, a UN embargo has not stopped the killing.

In Haiti, gangs have overrun the country.

Political turmoil deepens.

And a mission meant to restore order—Kenyan led, backed by the UN--remains underfunded, and under-resourced.

These are only a few of many crises.

And in each of them, weapons flow.

Drugs flow.

Violence crosses borders.

And governments are left weaker, peace fleeting.

These are not isolated tragedies.

They are a warning.

They reveal a pattern of international indifference, disregard for international law, impunity, a tolerance of inhumanity and deepening cynicism.

So the question before us is simple: do we allow this cycle to continue, or will we summon the will—together—to break it?

Over the last two weeks, my country, has chosen to act with restraint and caution, in the face of repeated aggressive and provocative actions by our neighbour Guatemala at our southern boundary.

Actions which seek to challenge Belize's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Actions that do not accord with the obligations of states not to exacerbate or extend a dispute before the International Court of Justice.

Latin America and the Caribbean are committed to maintaining our region as a zone of peace – an area free of nuclear weapons, an area where conflicts are prevented through dialogue.

It is for this reason that we are concerned about the serious implications of utilising military tactics against civilian vessels in the Caribbean Sea.

Madame President,

For forty-four years of independence, Belize has been a peaceful and welcoming nation.

We have been a refuge—for those fleeing war and terror from countries near and far.

Per capita, we have absorbed more immigrants than any other country in our region.

These new Belizeans have enriched our society and enjoy equal protection under the law.

Every Belizean also benefits from free primary education and accessible free or low-cost healthcare.

Through *Plan Belize 2.0*, we are building on that foundation by expanding tuition coverage, improving healthcare, raising the minimum wage, creating more decent jobs and widening access to housing.

We have an ambitious energy transition plan that places Belize on track to surpass net zero through innovative financing that turns our forests and reefs into investments for conservation.

But ambition comes at a cost.

My government has chosen fiscal discipline even as we pursue this bold agenda.

Belize is the fifth most vulnerable Small Island Developing State to climate risk, ranked second in the world for impacts from extreme weather.

Rising seas are already displacing some coastal communities, extreme heat strains our energy systems, and unpredictable rainfall threatens our farmers.

Fishers must now travel farther and risk more for declining catches in warming seas.

Food security is under threat.

So too are the health of our people, their livelihoods, and the survival of our ecosystems.

This is our lived reality—it is not science fiction, it is not abstract theory, it is a danger to our overall security.

Madame President,

Our world is so intricately interconnected; disruption anywhere reverberates everywhere.

Geopolitical and geoeconomic competition are consequential globally.

So too is the persistence of disease, hunger, poverty and the inequalities amongst peoples and nations.

Small states like my own then, must vigilantly guard against restive neighbours seeking to sustain territorial claims through military provocation or aggression.

This is not the world that the founders of the UN envisioned.

Instead, it is a world embattled.

A world divided.

And yet, it is not a world without solutions.

Over 80 years, nations have agreed on laws and policies to defend human rights, pursue sustainable development, promote disarmament, and protect the vulnerable and our environment.

We have built strong institutions that remain vital, even if reform is overdue.

But we cannot face today's challenges by relying on legacy alone.

In the pursuit of larger freedom and dignity for all, let us act with urgency to rescue the development agenda, leaving no one behind.

For our part, Belize will spare no effort.

Through *Plan Belize 2.0* and the implementation of our *NDCs 3.0*, we are working to lift our people out of poverty and to secure a healthy environment.

But we cannot do it alone.

We need international support that has been promised. The *Compromiso de Sevilla* offers us a chance to re-energize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A chance to renew commitments especially to Small Island Developing States.

This is why Belize calls for the urgent attention to the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS.

We must mainstream the multi-dimensional vulnerability index.

We must expand access to grants and concessional finance not more debt, and we must strengthen SIDS participation in global financial decision making.

At COP30 in Belem, Belize urges the G20—responsible for 80 percent of emissions—to commit to more ambitious emissions reductions targets.

Developed nations and development banks must lead the mobilisation of 1.3 trillion dollars in climate finance and prioritize SIDS, whose adaptation and loss-and-damage needs are most urgent.

It is high time---past time--for the global financial system to reward environmental stewardship, to recognize the true value of our natural assets for long-term resilience.

Consider this: 30 percent of the world's ocean lie within the jurisdiction of small island developing states, much under some form of protection.

These marine environments help regulate the global climate, yet we receive little for our efforts.

Only one percent of climate finance flows to SIDS, half of which are loans.

Meanwhile the fossil fuel industry, with trillions of dollars in subsidies, annually is not just perverse, it is dangerous.

Let us reverse this by investing more, much more in nature based and nature positive solutions.

With only five years remaining to achieve the SDGs, urgency is paramount.

Madam President

Realizing the ambition of leaving no one behind requires the involvement of everyone.

Yet the UN still excludes one critical actor: the people of Taiwan.

Taiwan is a thriving democracy with global leadership in high-tech innovation—semiconductors, AI, biotechnology, renewable energy—all vital to global supply chain security and sustainable development.

Taiwan already contributes to the SDGs, assisting partners with advanced technology.

We therefore urge the United Nations to find appropriate ways to recognize Taiwan as an indispensable partner in our shared pursuit of sustainable development.

Madame President,

The people of Haiti deserve our urgent and united support to completely expunge the criminal gangs that have attempted to overrun that country and to ensure they are brought to justice.

A workable path forward for Haiti exists but it requires sustained security assistance, resources, and a coherent international response.

We must act now.

Madame President,

Each nation must be free to define its own path.

The International Court of Justice has affirmed that self-determination is a peremptory norm.

We must end the denial of this right to the people of Western Sahara whose plight the world continues to ignore.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba must end and Cuba must immediately be removed from the list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism.

It is illegal, inhumane, and contrary to the UN Charter.

And the genocide in Palestine must stop now.

What hope can a child in Gaza have for tomorrow, when their home is destroyed, their family murdered, their future erased?

What hope can there be if their right to self-determination is extinguished?

The UN once confronted apartheid in South Africa—with declarations, sanctions, conventions, and suspension of the regime from this Assembly.

We must draw that lesson again.

No regime that desecrates the Charter and destroys a people has a place in this Hall.

And that is why the rule of law must prevail.
No man, no country stands above the law of nations.
Belize took its seat in this Assembly in 1981, less than half
a century ago.

Our Membership was a milestone for our sovereignty.

Global recognition of Belizean sovereignty also meant full
recognition of our territory.

We stand firm in the conviction that the boundaries of that
territory were agreed in 1859, more than a century and a
half ago. Our anthem proclaims it: *“From the proud Rio
Hondo to the old Sarstoon, through coral isle, over blue lagoon.”*

Though our territory is contested, we remain firm, not
belligerent.

Tested, but not subdued.

Threatened, but not deterred.

Because the rule of law is on our side.

Together with Guatemala, we submitted our dispute to the
ICJ in 2019. We await the Court’s decision.

We trust that justice will prevail.

In the meantime, we reiterate our demand that Guatemala desists from any provocative behaviour which has the potential to affect our otherwise friendly bilateral relations.

We reiterate our invitation to Guatemala to work with Belize in designing confidence building measures for the Sarstoon river and maritime spaces.

Madame President,

Belize believes in our common humanity and in the existence of the common good.

Equity and justice are our guiding principles.

As we commemorate the 80th anniversary of this great institution, let us not only reflect on the past but recommit ourselves to its future.

Let us affirm—together—that multilateralism is not an option but an obligation.

That the rule of law is not an aspiration but a necessity.

That the dignity of every human being is not negotiable but inviolate.

Belize pledges to do its part: to stand for law over force, for cooperation over division, for justice over impunity.

And we call on every Member State to do the same.

Only then can we make real the promise of the Charter—peace, prosperity, and larger freedom—for all peoples, in every nation, for generations yet to come.

Thank you.