

Speech

The United Kingdom does not stand up for one nation's rights, whilst ignoring others. But acts resolutely, with the UN Charter as our compass: UK National Statement at the UN General Assembly

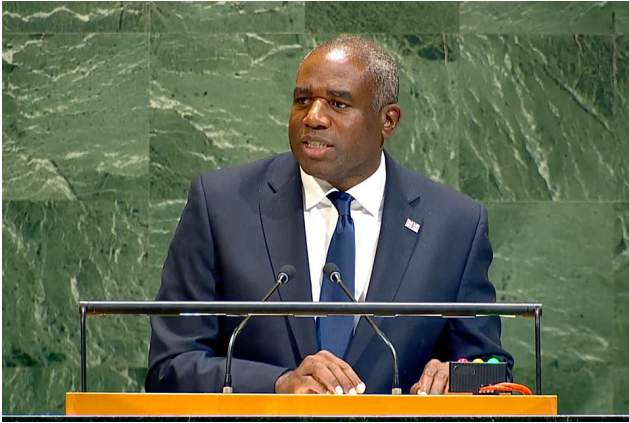
Statement by The Rt Hon David Lammy, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice and Deputy Prime Minister, at the UN General Assembly General Debate of the 80th Session

From: [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office\)](#) and [The Rt Hon David Lammy MP \(/government/people/david-lammy\)](#)

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Your Excellencies, colleagues, and friends,

“Having witnessed the United Nations’ work throughout his life, His Majesty The King has asked me to offer a personal message of his congratulations to the U.N. on its eightieth anniversary. The U.N. is a powerful testament to our collective determination for a better world.

The King recalls that, on the eve of the first U.N. General Assembly, His Majesty’s grandfather, King George VI, told the delegates gathered in London: “in the long course of our history, no more important meeting has ever taken place within its boundaries.”

Millions of people across the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the wider international community share the view that the UN’s founding principles and the work of its Organisations remain essential, particularly as the world must face new and pressing challenges.

Let us reaffirm these principles as the United Nations responds to today’s realities and evolves for tomorrow’s challenges.”

My friends, today I echo His Majesty’s sentiments.

And I join him in celebrating the remarkable institution’s proud 80 years.

As we reaffirm our historic commitment to the United Nations.

We must face the challenges of the present.

A present in which we, in the United Kingdom, do not stand up for one nation’s rights, whilst ignoring others.

But act resolutely, with the Charter as our compass.

This is why I want to address directly the Israeli-Palestinian tragedy.

What is happening in Gaza is indefensible.

It is inhumane.

It is utterly unjustifiable.

And it must end now.

The people of Palestine, whose state we proudly recognised this week, and the people of Israel, deserve better.

Better than the horrific acts by Hamas on October 7th that left children without their parents, and parents without their children.

Better than the torment of families waiting desperately for the return of their loved ones from the most barbaric captivity.

Better than the fanatical rule by Hamas, a vile, pitiless terrorist organisation that must have no future in Gaza.

Better than Israel's denial of life-saving humanitarian aid and the catastrophic famine that it has caused.

As Israel escalates its military operations and displaces Palestinian families, again and again and again.

There can be no answer to these horrors but concerted diplomatic action.

To keep the hope of peace alive as we work with leaders from across the region and beyond.

In support of the US's efforts to build a consensus around a durable plan for peace.

We commend the momentum achieved by the United States, Arab and Muslim States.

Annexation must be prevented, a process for peace advanced and this terrible, terrible war ended.

There can be no answer except for the hostages out, now.

Aid in, now.

And a ceasefire, now.

And I vow to you that we will not rest until this day has come.

And there are two states living side by side in peace and security.

Friends, we stand with Palestine because we believe in the values of the UN Charter.

In equal rights, self-determination, and the dignity of all peoples.

We stand with Ukraine because we must defend the core values of the UN Charter.

Sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the respect for international law.

And because the world will suffer if aggression is allowed to pay.

We must all strive for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, which maintains the integrity of our UN Charter and sees Ukraine emerge from Russia's brutal war as a sovereign, secure, and independent nation.

President Zelenskyy has shown his commitment to that peace at every turn, while President Putin savagely rains down ever more missiles and drones on the Ukrainian people.

Our message to Ukraine is clear:

We will stand with you today, tomorrow, and one hundred years from now.

We also stand with the people of Sudan, because we never forget the values of the UN Charter.

Of human rights and the pursuit of peace, for all men and women.

This is a conflict waged against Sudan's civilian population.

Millions displaced, more facing famine.

As I speak, the long-besieged city of El Fasher is falling.

Its people facing unspeakable atrocities.

The people of El Fasher, and all across Sudan, need the international community to come together.

To make renewed efforts to achieve peace.

And allow aid to reach those who desperately need it now.

We do all this with our Charter as our guide in the name of the equal rights of men and women and nations large and small.

The United Nations and its reform are vital.

Because we need our United Nations more than ever to confront these tragedies and to face our historic opportunity.

As we are living through a moment of revelation.

A new technological frontier is coming into view.

We are entering a bracing new era of promise, power and potential.

You know my friends, to live through the Industrial Revolution was to see the first iron bridges that mankind had made, the first railways, the first smokestacks.

And to live today through the technological revolution, as we are, it is to witness the coming of the internet, the spread of smartphones, and now, the dawn of super-powerful AI.

This is a lightning strike of change.

A technological revolution which our leading scientists think could only be compared to the Industrial Revolution, compressed into a decade.

This is a moment of truth, for us, our institutions, and our ability to work together, and I believe we must act.

I see promise on this technological frontier.

AI is the most powerful new lever we have to advance the Charter's vision of social progress and better standards of life.

This is why it is at the very heart of my own country's growth plan.

I believe that by embracing artificial intelligence, we can all build better businesses, we can better fight crime.

Look for example at dirty money.

By spotting fraud in real time, we can crack down on illicit finance, a fight we will lead at a UK-hosted summit next year.

And AI is not hypothetically making lives better; it is already saving them.

At Imperial College, a new AI stethoscope detects major heart conditions in seconds, in our National Health Service, AI mammogram trials double the speed of diagnosis, and AI research tools are unlocking new drug combos to fight cancer.

On the horizon, the promise of fusion power, powering limitless servers through quantum computing, enabling ever stronger AI, could unleash ever more advanced biotech.

This is the defining opportunity of our generation.

And we must run towards it, with hope.

I believe in this promise.

I believe in our UN values.

Which is why this promise must now be shared.

We are witnessing a truly historic surge in investment in AI.

This investment promises outstanding productivity gains, and with it, growth of historic proportions.

Yet while this promise may well be diffuse, for now it remains concentrated.

But there is not just possibility on the technological frontier, there are profound challenges as well.

As AI is being used to consolidate repression, fuel disinformation, empower criminals.

Across the internet, authoritarian states, notably Russia, are manipulating large-scale language models so that chatbots answer in the voice of their propaganda across the world.

Organised crime is using AI to supercharge their scams, deceiving victims on an unprecedented scale.

This is the truth.

AI can empower freedom, or it can entrench repression.

AI can empower truth, or it can entrench lies.

AI can empower law, or it can empower crime.

Only by cooperation together can we set artificial intelligence on the right millennia-defining course.

So my question is this.

How can we most effectively share the glittering prizes of this new era across our global community?

Well this is how.

We must invest, invest, invest.

We must partner, partner, partner.

Because without a concerted effort, we risk a world of ever deeper inequality, where the benefits of this technology fail to reach those who

need it the most.

That revolution in health care, that revolution in education, that revolution in opportunity, this we must share.

This is the world we face.

And we take it and its challenges as it is.

But never lose sight of the world as it could be.

This is why our approach to foreign policy is one of progressive realism, patiently advancing progress through pragmatism and persistence.

I see this in the United Nations as it approaches the technological frontier.

I salute the Secretary-General for championing the Global Digital Compact, which embodies both progress and realism.

And this is why I commend the new Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, which will provide evidence-based assessments to all.

And I welcome the new Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

It is in this spirit of progressive realism that the UK champions AI as a bridge builder across the Atlantic, across the Commonwealth, and across continents.

Seeking everywhere to share its extraordinary potential.

This is why we invest so heavily in the AI Security Institute with more dedicated researchers than anywhere else in the world.

And this is why we launched OpenBind and its gigantic dataset.

And this is why we champion AI for Development.

Working with ten African partners, creating AI ecosystems that empower thousands of communities to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

And this drives our Digital Access programmes, which seeks to narrow the technological divide for millions.

I have seen this happening with my own eyes.

I have been so moved to see in Africa, the continent of my ancestors, the young entrepreneurs using artificial intelligence to launch and scale so many businesses that I know will astonish the world.

Like the UK-funded start-up, Vinsighte, supported by our Assistive Technologies Programme, which is using its AI-powered app to help thousands of blind Nigerian students read, learn and live more independently.

This is the promise of tech.

The promise of growth.

The promise of a better world.

A better tomorrow turns on one pivotal question.

Can we seize the potential in the technological revolution?

Can we commit to forging AI as a force for freedom, prosperity, and human dignity?

I believe we can, together.

And together, we must.

Thank you very much indeed.

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