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EAM's statement at the General Debate of the 80th session of the UNGA (September 27, 2025)

 September 27, 2025

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaskar from the people of Bharat.

We are gathered here eight decades since the founding of this unique body.

The UN Charter calls on us not just to prevent war, but to build peace; not just to defend rights, but to uphold the dignity of every human being. It challenges us to stand as good neighbours, uniting our strength so that generations to come inherit a world of justice, of progress and of lasting freedom.

Madam President,

Forces unleashed by history since the founding of the UN propelled this body forward. As decolonization advanced, the world began to return to its natural diversity. The membership of the United Nations quadrupled and the organization's role and remit grew significantly.

In the era of globalization, its agenda evolved even further. Development goals took centre-stage, even as climate change emerged as a shared priority. Trade acquired greater prominence, while food and health access were recognized as essential to global well-being. Where security was concerned, the UN undertook peacekeeping operations and promoted disarmament discussions. As a result, the UN became a natural platform to debate key global issues.

Madam President,

We must ask ourselves today: how has the UN lived up to expectations? And just look at the state of the world.

There are two significant conflicts underway – one in Ukraine, and the other in the Middle East/West Asia. Innumerable other hotspots don't even make the news.

The slow progress of the SDG Agenda 2030 presents a sorry picture.

On climate change, the reality is of recirculated commitments and creative accounting. If climate action itself is questioned, what hope is there for climate justice?

When a 'once in a century' pandemic hits us, we saw open discrimination in access to vaccines and to travel.

Energy and food security have been the first casualties of conflict and disruption, especially since 2022. Better-off societies insulated themselves by having the first call. The resource-stressed ones scrambled to survive, only to hear sanctimonious lectures thereafter.

When it came to trade, non-market practices gamed rules and regimes. The resulting concentration exposed the world to leveraging. On top of that, we now see tariff volatility and uncertain market access. As a result, de-risking is a growing compulsion; whether from limited sources of supply or over-dependence on a particular market.

Economic concerns have other dimensions as well. Heightened technology control is one. The grip on supply chains and critical minerals is another. The shaping of connectivity is no less sensitive. Protection of key sea lanes has become a challenge. Restricting the evolution of a global workplace is an issue.

Each makes a compelling case for more international cooperation, not less. But are we really headed in that direction? And where has the UN actually made a difference?

Madam President,

As members of the UN, we meet here as sovereign equals. That is not formalism, but a recognition of the inherent diversity of our world. Understandably, we have different history, traditions, heritage and culture. For them to co-exist, for them to enrich each other, it is imperative that we foster understanding and respect.

This will only happen when we resist political interference and economic pressures, when narratives are free of prejudice, when double standards are abjured and when pluralism is truly appreciated.

Madam President, Excellencies,

While asserting our rights, we must also firmly face up to threats. Countering terrorism is a particular priority because it synthesizes bigotry, violence, intolerance and fear. India has confronted this challenge since independence, having a neighbour that is an epicentre of global terrorism. For decades now, major international terrorist attacks are traced back to that one country. UN's designated lists of terrorists are replete with its nationals. The most recent example of cross-border barbarism was the murder of innocent tourists in Pahalgam in April this year. India exercised its right to defend its people against terrorism and brought its organizers and perpetrators to justice.

Because terrorism is a shared threat, Madam President, it is essential that there is much deeper international cooperation. When nations openly declare terrorism as state policy, when terror hubs operate on an industrial scale, when terrorists are publicly glorified, then such actions must be unequivocally condemned. The financing of terrorism must be choked, even as prominent terrorists are sanctioned. Relentless pressure must be applied on the entire terrorism eco-system. Those who condone nations that sponsor terror will find that it comes back to bite them.

Madam President,

An objective report card will show that the UN is in a state of crisis. When peace is under threat from conflicts, when development is derailed by lack of resources, when human rights are violated by terrorism, the UN remains gridlocked. As its ability to forge common ground diminishes, belief in multilateralism also recedes.

Central to the erosion of UN's credibility has been resistance to reform. Most members strongly desire change; but the process is being made an obstacle to the outcome. It is imperative that we see through this cynicism and purposefully address the reform agenda. The historical injustice done to Africa should be redressed. Both permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council must be expanded. A reformed Council must be truly representative. And India stands ready to assume greater responsibilities.

Madam President,

Today, the predicament of the Global South is especially acute. Bharat, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, believes that it has both a duty to contribute and an obligation to motivate. That is why we have undertaken more than 600 major development projects in 78 countries, as well as innumerable community-based initiatives. They range from large infrastructure to small livelihoods, from capacity building to people's welfare, from concrete assets to education and training.

Turbulent times require that we step forward during moments of crisis. India has been forthcoming in that regard, especially in its immediate vicinity. Whether it is finance, food, fertilizer or fuel, we have responded to the urgent requirements of our

neighbours.

Madam President,

Climate events and conflicts have created a demand for HADR assistance. Reflecting our growing capabilities, Bharat has endeavoured to be a 'First Responder'. Be it essential medicines or relief supplies, the operations of field hospitals or limb fitment camps, these efforts covered 19 nations last year. The people of Afghanistan and those of Myanmar saw India extend its hand during recent earthquakes.

Our efforts at ensuring safe commerce, combating piracy and preventing attacks on shipping in the northern Arabian Sea also bear mention.

And the Indian tradition of UN Peacekeeping Operations continues in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Western Sahara, Central African Republic, Golan Heights, Cyprus, Lebanon, Abyei, South Sudan and Somalia.

To put it clearly: our soldiers ensure peacekeeping, our sailors protect maritime shipping, our security counters terrorism, our doctors and teachers facilitate human development the world over, our industry produces affordable products, our techies promote digitization and our training facilities are open to the world. These remain the core of our foreign policy.

Madam President,

Each one of us has the opportunity of contributing to peace and prosperity. In the case of conflicts, especially Ukraine and Gaza, even those not directly involved have felt its impact. Nations who can engage all sides must step-up in the search for solutions. India calls for an end to hostilities and will support any initiative that will help restore peace.

The last decade in Bharat has also seen transformative changes due to the vision of Prime Minister Modi. Our digital public infrastructure has redefined governance and enabled delivery of public services on an unprecedented scale. Our start-up ecosystem, innovation culture and micro-finance are changing the face of society. Our rapidly growing infrastructure facilitates both ease of doing business and ease of living for citizens. India remains committed to sharing its experiences and tools with others on their journey of development.

Artificial Intelligence as a horizontal and cross-cutting technology has a particular promise for development. India's approach is to harness it responsibly for human welfare. Inclusion and impact will be the watch words for the Summit that India will host in 2026.

Madam President,

Bharat approaches the contemporary world, guided by three key concepts:

One, Atmanirbharta or self-reliance. That means developing our own capabilities, building our own strengths and nurturing our own talent. We see its results already, be it in manufacturing, in space programmes, in pharma production or in digital applications. Make, innovate and design in India also benefit the world.

Two, Atmaraksha or securing oneself. We remain determined to protect our people and secure their interests, at home and abroad. That means zero-tolerance for terrorism, robust defence of our borders, forging partnerships beyond and assisting our community abroad.

And three, Atmavishwas or self-confidence. As the most populous nation, as a civilizational state, as a rapidly growing major economy, we are confident about who we are, and what we will be. Bharat will always maintain its freedom of choice. And will always be a voice of the Global South.

Madam President,

These are certainly challenging times for the international community. Many of our assumptions and expectations no longer hold. In such circumstances, it is imperative to stay strong, to hold firm and to deepen friendships.

International cooperation must prevail because islands of prosperity cannot flourish in an ocean of turbulence. A world order requires common purpose, as it does empathy for others. That is where we look to the United Nations.

Madam President,

Every member who can make this world a better place must have the opportunity to do their utmost. And for that to happen, reformed multilateralism is the obvious way. The ninth decade of the UN must be one of leadership and hope.

Bharat will do its fair share, and more.

I thank you.

**New York
September 27, 2025**

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