



**Address by**  
**His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**  
**President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana**  
**to the 80th Session of the General Assembly of the**  
**United Nations**  
**September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025**

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Friends

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Madam President, on your election as President of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I also record my profound appreciation to His Excellency Philemon Yang of Cameroon, whose distinguished stewardship and steady hand guided the 79th Session.

Today, as we mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter, we find ourselves at a crossroads.

This Organization, our Organization, has delivered.

From creating international law, promoting development and human rights, to resolving disputes, providing humanitarian aid and advancing self-determination and independence. The fact remains, over these eight decades, we have worked together for the greater good.

From 51 Member States in 1945 to 193 today, the UN has established itself as the premier organization for multilateralism.

In fact, it is difficult to imagine our world without the United Nations.

However, as it is with anniversaries, we must reflect honestly and candidly. Where are we at 80?

Conflicts are raging as geopolitical tensions intensify, food insecurity is worsening, displacement is growing, human rights are being ignored, and climate change is threatening lives and livelihoods.

Our Sustainable Development Goals are imperiled by shrinking development and budget support! Spending on peacekeeping budgets is diminishing and humanitarian costs are soaring. Meanwhile, global military spending in 2024 saw its steepest annual increase since the Cold War.

President,

The United Nations' noble mission to maintain international peace and security will ring hollow if it allows power to triumph over principle and might to override right.

In remaining faithful to its Charter, the United Nations must ensure that the survival and progress of humanity are not mortgaged to the ambitions of the powerful.

The collective will of our membership must be reflected in the institutions and governance structures of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

It is precisely when the ideals of the United Nations are tested by horrific realities that the collective must act in defence of the UN Charter and international law.

At present, a dark shadow looms over this 80th Session of the General Assembly; Genocide in Palestine, annexation of Ukrainian territory, persecution of women in Afghanistan, humanitarian catastrophe in Sudan, brutal gang violence in Haiti, increased transnational organized crime, trafficking and illegal migration.

All this, as new challenges are emerging - cybercrime, cyber terrorism, and the pandemic of misinformation and disinformation, alongside the abuse of social media.

**President,**

Whilst we reiterate our condemnation of the attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 7, 2023 and again call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, Israel's actions have long shattered any pretense of legitimate self-defense. What we are witnessing is not warfare, but mass extermination—a systematic slaughter and displacement of Palestinian men, women, and children. Those who escape the bombs and bullets are condemned to die slowly, starved of food, water, and hope. This is a war crime.

The international community must not remain paralysed, while an entire people is annihilated. Impunity must never triumph over justice.

We must take urgent action to halt the genocide, return the hostages and accelerate our efforts towards the Two-State Solution. We urge Qatar, Egypt and the United States to continue their efforts in this regard.

Further, the situation in Ukraine remains of utmost concern. Guyana reiterates its call for an end to the Russia-Ukraine war and reaffirms its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Equally, the international community must act decisively in Haiti, where gang violence, displacement, and shortages of food and medicine have pushed the nation into deepening despair. Restoring security is the foremost priority, requiring strict enforcement of the arms embargo and robust support for a UN-authorized mission.

I emphasize that without urgent humanitarian funding and a Haitian-led and owned political process, stability will remain elusive. We must address the root causes of Haiti's continuing troubles, including its historical debt burdens which stymies its development prospects and upliftment of its peoples. As President Macron acknowledged, making Haiti pay for its independence was unjust. This is a welcome step.

President,

Turning to my own country.

Guyana, a small and peaceful state. We have endured repeated threats and aggression from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The territorial controversy between our states is now before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which has twice affirmed its jurisdiction, and which in 2023, issued provisional measures ordering Venezuela to refrain from altering the status quo.

Yet, Venezuela persists with unilateral laws and threats of annexation, flagrantly violating international law, the UN Charter, and the very principles that sustain global order.

If the rights of a small state can be trampled upon, and legally binding orders ignored, what protection remains for any nation under international law? Yet, Guyana continues to repose confidence in international law.

For us, the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference are not negotiable.

We will not cower to coercion, intimidation, or unilateral action.

We thank our international partners and allies for their solidarity.



President

At 80, the time has come for a frank conversation on Cuba; One that would lead to the prosperity of its people, optimizing the full potential Cuba offers to its people and the rest of the world. Central to this dialogue is the lifting of the embargo on Cuba and its removal from the list as a State Sponsor of terrorism.

Also important to our region is our collective effort against drug trafficking, human trafficking and illegal migration. We support efforts by the international community in addressing these crimes that are destroying the lives of our people, especially young people.

The region must continue to champion efforts to enhance democracy, promote good governance and respect the will of the people in determining governments of their choice through free and fair elections.

## **President**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The declaration remains a blueprint for achieving gender equality which, despite transformative strides, remains significantly unrealized in most parts of the world.

In Guyana, the dividends of strategic investments in leadership and capacity building for women and girls, are evident. More women have assumed leadership roles in government, in parliament and in public and private sectors.

We have achieved gender parity in education at all levels and advanced the socio-economic empowerment of women through land and home ownership and diverse job opportunities in traditional and emerging sectors.

To enable women to participate equally and competitively in the workforce, government is offering childcare support which will include day and night care centers for children.

President,

Survival of our people, our economies, and our planet depends on accelerating action on the Sustainable Development Goals. It requires a people-centered approach that prioritizes ending poverty and hunger, ensuring protection of children, support for persons with disabilities and empowerment of young people.

Peace, stability, and sustainable development cannot exist in isolation from the urgent need to address climate change, which poses an existential threat to the most vulnerable and to our shared future.

Guyana repeats the call for accelerated, unified global action to limit global warming.

We continue to match our words with actions; protecting our forests, investing in sea and river defenses, improving drainage and irrigation, and restoring mangrove ecosystems to protect our people, our land, and our livelihoods.

Our *Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030* demonstrates that economic growth and environmental stewardship can advance hand in hand. As the first country certified under the REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard, and a successful seller of carbon credits, we are demonstrating that nature has tangible value and that innovation and responsibility can be rewarded.

We call on the international community to deliver predictable, accessible climate finance, to support adaptation and resilience, and to embrace nature-based solutions.

President,

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet the slow pace of implementation and regression in many areas sound a stark warning that the promise of 2030 is at risk.

Guyana calls for renewed global commitment to financing for development, including fulfilling Official Development Assistance pledges, mobilizing domestic resources, and addressing the crippling debt burdens that hinder progress in many developing nations.

Addressing these development challenges requires recognizing that the health of our ecosystems is inseparable from the achievement of the SDGs.

Guyana proudly convened the inaugural Global Biodiversity Alliance Summit in Georgetown in July 2025, uniting over 140 countries, organizations, community groups, indigenous leaders, scientists, and financial institutions. *The Georgetown Declaration*, endorsed by this broad coalition of stakeholders, sends a clear and urgent message that biodiversity is a global public good, and its protection must be woven into national development plans, climate strategies, and financial frameworks.

Building on the global pledge to double protected areas by 2025 and achieve the “30 by 30” goal by 2030, the Summit underscored the urgent need for innovative financing mechanisms including biodiversity credits, green bonds, debt-for-nature swaps to fund nature’s protection.

Guyana is actively exploring biodiversity credits to create sustainable income streams for forest communities, building on our carbon credit success.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Yale Center for Biodiversity and Global Change to co-develop a National Biodiversity Information System, a digital backbone for data-driven conservation.

Guyana is demonstrating that economic development and environmental stewardship can advance together. By using natural gas as a bridge away from heavy fuel oil and investing in hydropower, solar, wind, and other renewables, we aim to lower electricity costs for our citizens and businesses while ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy.

Guyana is pursuing an ambitious energy infrastructure and investment plan. While climate change is an existential threat, the reality is that the world still requires energy, sourced from petroleum to power growth and development, for which there is growing demand.

This is essential for the survival of our economies. AI and digitization are accelerating this demand at an extraordinary pace.

As you are aware, Guyana is quickly becoming one of the world's largest energy producers per capita, carefully balancing its green footprint with energy production.

We will use our vast gas reserves, through a transformational gas to energy project. We will use this resource, taking advantage of our strategic geographic location to establish an AI hyperscale data center.

Large AI data centers are rarely found in similar sized territories. As such, implementing a project of this scale is of immense pride for Guyana. This investment will improve the competitiveness of our region, accelerate digitization, build out a fintech ecosystem, modernize the service delivery platform of government and accelerate private investment, bringing new job opportunities.



We recognize the indispensable nature of AI in our collective future. However, while there are immense benefits, there is no clarity on equity, access and applicability. Regulations, ethical standards and governance mechanisms are urgently needed. In this regard, we welcome the recent UN General Assembly decision to establish two global AI governance mechanisms.

President

I now turn to food security. Guyana is actively leading efforts to advance the CARICOM Agri-food Systems Agenda through “Vision 2030,” aiming to boost food production, end hunger, and ensure food security across the Caribbean Community. Our experience demonstrates that strategic investment and political will can transform national and regional food systems.

Guyana calls for the transformation of global food systems to be more resilient, sustainable, and equitable by strengthening local production and reducing dependence on volatile markets.

Guyana stands ready to share its experience and partner with others to ensure nutritious food for all.

President

As the United Nations commemorates its 80th anniversary, let us recall that this Organization was conceived not in comfort but in crisis, forged from the ashes of war to serve as the conscience and compass of humanity.

Eight decades later, that duty has not dimmed; it has only grown more urgent.

If the UN is to remain humanity's best hope, it must stand firm against aggression and remain fully engaged with the great questions of our time. We must be bold in recognizing the necessity for institutional adjustments that will advance the organization's success.

Our generation will be judged not by the eloquence of our declarations, but by the substance of our deeds. From the ruins of Gaza to the streets of Haiti, from Kiev to the drowning coasts of small island states, the peoples of the world cry out for more than words.

To honour eighty years of promise is to act with courage, to match principle with action, and to bind ourselves once more to the dream of a world united, not by fear or force, but by shared destiny and enduring hope.

I thank you.