



**Statement delivered by the
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Prime Minister of Belize**

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Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. President,

Allow me first to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the eighty-first session, and to assure you of Belize's full support.

For more than eighty years, this Organisation has done what no single nation could.

It has held back conflict where it could and named it where it could not.

It has given the powerless a language of rights.

It has built, one instrument at a time, the body of international law on which every State in this Hall, large or small, now depends.

It has survived a Cold War, as it has division and doubt, because each generation that came through its doors understood the same simple truth: no nation, however powerful, can secure peace, prosperity or a habitable planet on its own.

That was true in 1945.

It is truer today.

The Charter is hope.

It speaks to our common humanity.

It speaks to the rule of law, to the dignity of every person, to the sovereign equality of States, and to our duty to keep the peace.

These are not the words of one region or one era.

They belong to all of us; they bind all of us.

Few in this Hall would question that mission.

But let us be honest with one another.

Not one of us could fault the people we represent for questioning its delivery.

The world is on course to exceed the 1.5-degree threshold.

Rising seas threaten coastlines, communities and, for some Members, the very territory of the State.

The loss of biodiversity weakens the forests, reefs and mangroves on which our economies depend.

These pressures unfold alongside armed conflict, disrupted supply chains, declining official development assistance and rising debt.

Households face higher food and energy bills.

Governments face higher borrowing costs.

Countries striving to finance the Sustainable Development Goals must absorb shocks they did not create and cannot fairly insure against.

Artificial intelligence adds a further layer.

Well governed, it can widen access to knowledge and improve public services.

Poorly governed, it can deepen inequality, expose critical systems, displace workers and leave developing countries dependent on technologies and rules designed elsewhere.

National legislation alone cannot govern a technology that crosses every border.

These dangers are real.

But danger is not destiny.

We are not without answers.

Indeed, Mr. President, the United Nations has already placed them in our hands.

We have the Paris Agreement,

We have the 2030 Agenda, and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS.

We have the law of the sea regime, and the Declaration on Sea-Level Rise.

And we have a global dialogue, under this Organization, on the governance of artificial intelligence.

The United Nations is doing its part.

The question before us is whether we will use these tools — whether *we* have the will to deliver.

Mr. President,

Belize is determined to do so.

We are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals.

And we are making measurable progress.

Multidimensional poverty stands at 19.1 per cent and unemployment at 1.9 per cent.

Public debt has been brought to 66.6 per cent of GDP and, for the first time in a generation, it is on a sustainable path.

These figures are not abstractions.

They are Belizeans at work, families with greater purchasing power, and a Government with room to invest in the future.

Vamos bien.

We are doing well.

But we have further to go.

That is the purpose of the next phase of our national strategy: to create jobs, reduce vulnerability, reduce exposure to imported energy, protect the ecosystems, and equip Belizeans to compete in a changing economy.

Implementation of Plan Belize 2.0 is under way.

Alongside it, my Government has launched the Belize Compact, a landmark grant partnership with the United States that will strengthen our energy security and build the skills of our young people for the workforce of tomorrow.

But the risks are growing.

Hurricanes are more intense.

Weather patterns are less predictable, which makes anticipatory action more complex.

New stressors, such as the unprecedented influx of sargassum along our coast, have no ready-made responses.

Managing them requires innovation, capable institutions and strategies that are properly financed.

Yet even the best national effort will fall short without coordinated international cooperation.

Mr. President,

We are less than four years from 2030.

It is time to consider what follows the Sustainable Development Goals.

The next framework must carry forward what remains undelivered and it must rest on a fairer foundation.

The demand for reparatory justice is no longer a marginal whisper in this Assembly.

It is here, at the centre and it is not going away.

This Assembly has rightly and finally declared slavery as the gravest crime against humanity.

But this recognition is only the beginning of an obligation.

And the obligation is that we must not build the next chapter of development on the foundations of the last.

If we are to be honest about that foundation, then we would acknowledge that the of wealth of the industrial age largely came from the labour of enslaved and colonised peoples, and its rewards flowed almost entirely away from them.

When independence came, the flags changed.

The structures did not.

The terms of trade did not change.

The cost of capital did not change.

Who sits at the table when the rules are written did not change.

The imbalance was not undone; it was inherited.

Now we stand at the threshold of yet another transformation.

Technology is moving faster than any framework we have yet devised to govern it.

Will we do it differently this time, or will we do it again?

Because the question before us is not whether new inequalities may arise.

It is whether the old ones will be written into the code, into who owns the data, who sets the standards, who captures the value, and who, once more, is left to carry the cost.

We do not have to accept that outcome.

A development framework is a choice.

It can be designed to serve the common good, and measured against what our people actually need: dignity, opportunity, and a fair share in what they help to create.

Or it can be left to reproduce what came before and call it progress.

We have the knowledge to choose the first path.

What is needed now is the will.

This, Mr. President, is where trust in multilateralism is won or lost.

Belize has shown that debt can be reduced, that conservation can be financed innovatively and that national reform can succeed.

Yet we still borrow in a system that prices our vulnerability as risk, rather than treating resilience as an investment.

Belize does not seek special treatment.

We seek accurate treatment.

Income per capita does not reveal how much of an economy sits in a hurricane's path, what it costs to serve dispersed communities, or how quickly a climate shock can reverse fiscal gains.

The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index must become a working instrument across the international financial system: in eligibility for concessional finance, in debt sustainability analysis, and in the decisions of the institutions that allocate capital.

Vulnerability should be legible in financial decision-making without small States being required to prosecute their own case again and again.

Mr. President,

The current erosion of international peace and security carries an uncomfortable echo of the League of Nations' final years.

The League did not collapse for want of noble principles but because member states abandoned those principles the moment they became inconvenient or constrained their power.

I therefore cannot speak candidly about multilateralism while looking away from where it is tested most severely.

I begin close to home.

Haiti's crisis is our crisis — Haiti is the Caribbean.

While there are grounds for hope in elections now scheduled for December, there is also grave concern over a spike in violence threatening that process.

Belize echoes the call of the CARICOM Eminent Persons Group.

The Gang Suppression Force must be urgently and fully deployed.

A Haitian-led, Haitian-owned political transition deserves a security environment in which it can actually succeed.

Belize stands with the people of Haiti, and with CARICOM, in asking for nothing less.

Belize stands also with Cuba.

The economic blockade against our sister nation, compounded by restrictions on fuel, has severely damaged the Cuban economy.

This crisis is unnecessary and unjustified.

Belize renews its call for the lifting of the blockade and for Cuba's removal from the list of State sponsors of terrorism.

In Palestine, the legal and moral test is unambiguous.

It is an affront to this Assembly and to humanity to be forced to listen to a man justify apartheid and genocide when he is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Our complicity lies in decades of failing to ensure Palestinian self determination and in refusing to treat Israel as what it is: a settler colonial state.

The genocide must end.

The apartheid must stop.

End the occupation and decolonise Palestine.

Our Charter summons us to act.

Our actions must extend to every conflict, and to every person displaced, destitute or in despair.

It extends to threats against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any Member State, as we witness in Ukraine.

If borders can be redrawn by force, then every border is provisional.

We are concerned, too, for the safety and security of the 23 million people of Taiwan, who have no seat and no voice in this Hall.

Taiwan is a friend of Belize.

For more than three decades she has walked with us on our development journey, not as a donor at a distance, but as a partner in the field.

Today that partnership is helping Belize close real gaps: in climate resilience, and in the technical capacity of our agricultural and public infrastructure sectors.

But Taiwan's contribution does not stop at the borders of her small and steadfast allies.

She sits at the heart of global supply chains.

She produces the most advanced semiconductors in the world.

She is a serious presence in artificial intelligence and the other technologies that will shape this century, and she has said plainly that she is ready to share that expertise and those resources with the wider international community.

Belize calls once more for Taiwan's meaningful participation in the United Nations system.

We hold no illusion that a small State can resolve these crises.

But smallness does not relieve us of the duty to speak.

Our voice joins every call for the protection of civilians, for accountability, and for the diplomacy that alone can secure durable peace.

Mr. President,

Forty-five years after independence, Belize continues to pursue the peaceful settlement of its territorial disputes with Guatemala and with Honduras.

Belize has chosen, and will always choose, law over force.

Belize informs this Assembly of a serious breach of international law committed on the night of 23 September 2026, when a Guatemalan military aircraft entered Belize's sovereign airspace and intentionally disabled its transponder.

This act violates the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, customary norms governing state aircraft, and the inviolability of territorial sovereignty protected under Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter.

This incursion is not an isolated event.

It forms part of a continuing pattern in which Guatemalan state vessels and personnel operate unlawfully in Belizean territorial waters of the Sarstoon River, which forms part of Belize's border with Guatemala, in defiance of obligations—binding on both Parties—to refrain from any action capable of aggravating or extending the dispute presently before the International Court of Justice.

The case is scheduled for hearing in February 2027.

Guatemala's conduct risks prejudicing the Court's authority and undermines the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes enshrined in Article 33 of the Charter.

Belize therefore calls upon Guatemala to immediately cease all incursions by air, land, or sea; to comply fully with its

obligations under the UN Charter, the Chicago Convention, and the OAS Confidence-Building Measures; and to respect the integrity of the ICJ process.

Belize further requests heightened monitoring by the United Nations and the OAS to ensure that no Member State uses military force or intimidation to influence judicial proceedings.

We await the Court's judgments with confidence, and we look forward to borders that are respected by all.

Mr. President,

This is a new dawn for my country, and a moment of renewal for this Organization.

This year the United Nations will select its tenth Secretary-General.

Belize proudly supports the candidacy of Her Excellency Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett of Guyana, a distinguished daughter of the Caribbean.

A Caribbean woman at the helm of the United Nations would be historic, but history alone is not the argument; her record is.

The next Secretary-General will inherit an institution under strain and a world impatient for results.

Small and vulnerable States must be placed at the centre of the Organization's work, not at the margins of decisions that determine our survival.

The United Nations must become more agile, more representative and better equipped to deliver.

A leaner United Nations is not automatically a better one.

Peace and security cannot be an afterthought to a budget exercise.

Human rights cannot be separated from development, nor development sustained without peace.

Reform must honour all three pillars of the Charter — peace and security, development and human rights — as one indivisible promise.

Mr. President,

Trust will be restored when commitments are kept and law is applied evenly without fear or favour.

Transformation will be fair when small States help to design the future, rather than learning of it afterwards.

Delivery will be real when it reaches beyond conference rooms into the life of a child, the livelihood of a farmer and the resilience of a nation.

Belize will do its part.

We will invest in our people, protect our natural capital, modernise our economy, and choose dialogue over division and law over force.

We ask this Assembly, and its next leadership, to meet the same standard.

Let the smallest voice be heard as clearly as the largest.

Let agreements become action.

Let this United Nations prove that cooperation is not weakness, but the highest expression of our common strength.

Long live Belize. Long live the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. President.