

UN STEERS WORLD TOWARDS PEACE

By John Ricks Kayizzi

The United Nations (UN) marks 80 years today. The organisation, whose operations are steered by the secretary-general, has turned out to be one of the most relevant global bodies during our time.

Currently headed by António Guterres, the UN works to help countries end the horrors of conflict to forge sustainable peace.

In his speech, delivered recently to the UN Security Council to mark 80 years since the UN was founded, Guterres said for the last eight decades, people from all over the world have placed their trust in the UN to save them from the scourge of war.

"The privilege to sit at this table carries a duty – above all – to honour the faith of those people. And to channel the resources so often spent on war, to the causes of development and peace," he said.

Guterres said on many pivotal occasions, the Security Council has delivered on the task of peace building and ensuring security for the billions of people around the world.

"Together, you have helped Cambodia emerge from genocide and South Africa from apartheid. You deployed missions that helped bring peace to Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Liberia and beyond and built a lasting global framework to combat terrorism.

Above all, Guterres said, "you have given us 80 years without the chaos of a great power war."

He termed the council as a vital necessity and a powerful force for good.

"But at the same time, the UN Security Council's legitimacy is fragile. Too often, we have seen members of this body act outside the principles of the charter – principles we have all freely agreed to as sovereign nations."

The secretary-general further said when such a thing happens, it not only stalls action in the moment, but erodes trust in the entire UN project.

"When one nation flouts the rules, others think they have a licence to do the same. And history tells us, with brutal clarity, where that road leads," he said, adding: "Reform of the Security



Guterres (front-left) during the UN Security Council meeting on the one-year anniversary of Ukraine, Russia war at the UN headquarters in 2023

YOU HAVE HELPED CAMBODIA EMERGE FROM GENOCIDE AND SOUTH AFRICA FROM APARTHEID. YOU DEPLOYED MISSIONS THAT HELPED BRING PEACE TO SIERRA LEONE, TIMOR-LESTE, LIBERIA AND BEYOND

Council is imperative, and long overdue for the maintenance of global order and safety."

AFRICA'S MEMBERSHIP

Guterres said almost half of all UN peacekeeping missions – along with numerous special political missions – take place in Africa, yet the continent has no permanent voice at this table.

"The Pact for the Future calls on us to correct this imbalance as a matter of urgency. It also highlights the under-representation of Latin America and the Caribbean, while the Asia-Pacific region – home to more than half of humanity – holds only one permanent seat," he said.

Guterres added that the expansion of the membership is not only about justice, but also about results.

"It has the potential to undo deadlocks, and offer stability in our increasingly multipolar world. I have also noted with interest the proposals of France and the UK to limit the exercise of the veto, and encourage this chamber to examine them."

He reminded the members that the Security Council is not about hegemony and empires, but about parents who have lost their children, refugees flung far from their homes, and soldiers who have sacrificed their limbs.

"In every shadow of this chamber, you are surrounded by the ghosts of the dead. But beside them stands something else – the hopes of the living. Listen closely and you will hear the cries of your citizens who rally for peace; the whispers of families who long for safety."

LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS

Guterres' peacemaking efforts as UN secretary-general have focused on preventive diplomacy, mediation and large-scale reform of the UN's peace and security apparatus. They include the following:

Guterres consistently emphasises conflict prevention and mediation, fronting early action and the use of the UN's "good offices" to prevent crises from escalating.

He pioneered the Black

Sea Grain Initiative. Through intensive diplomatic efforts, the UN and Turkey brokered an agreement between Ukraine and Russia in July

2022 to enable vital grain and fertiliser exports from Ukrainian ports, addressing global food security concerns.

The UN boss has also appealed for mediation to end crises and reduce human suffering in numerous conflict zones including Ethiopia-Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen.

Through his efforts, the UN continues to support inclusive political processes and brokered ceasefires through special envoys. Guterres repeatedly stresses that there is no military solution to these complex conflicts.

He has also played a major role in de-escalation of military anarchy in the DR Congo. Guterres has appealed for all signatories to the peace, security and co-operation Framework to honour their commitments and end the violence in the eastern region.

He has also urged de-escalation of tensions in high-stakes situations, such as those involving North Korea's nuclear programme

and the Middle East, warning of the profound risk of miscalculation.

The secretary-general has fronted an initiative dubbed "Action for Peacekeeping". This initiative aims to strengthen UN peacekeeping operations and partnerships, focusing on making missions more effective and ensuring the safety of peacekeepers.

In 2023, Guterres launched a new agenda for peace, policy brief which calls for a revitalised multi-lateralism to address modern threats, including strengthening collective security, transforming gender dynamics in peace and security, and tackling the links between climate, peace, and security.

In order to ensure a peaceful world, Guterres has for many years advocated disarmament by highlighting the imbalance where the world spends vast sums on weapons while underfunding peacebuilding efforts. He has henceforth called for a reduction in the human cost of weapons.

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UWA congratulates the United Nations on 80 Years of Global Impact

As the United Nations marks 80 years of dedicated service under the theme "Building Our Future Together," Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) proudly joins the global community in celebrating this remarkable milestone.

For eight decades, the United Nations has been a beacon of peace, progress, and sustainable development—uniting nations and institutions in pursuit of a better world for people and the planet. Uganda Wildlife Authority commends the UN for its visionary leadership in advancing global cooperation and environmental stewardship.

UWA acknowledges its strong partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whose support has strengthened wildlife conservation and sustainable development in Uganda. Through this collaboration, UNDP has enhanced UWA's surveillance and anti-poaching operations by providing park monitoring drones and other innovations that improve the protection of wildlife and management of protected areas.

The partnership has also advanced sustainable livelihoods for communities neighbouring national parks, reducing human-wildlife conflict and fostering coexistence. Uganda Wildlife Authority remains committed to working with the UN and its agencies to promote the Sustainable Development Goals and build a greener, safer, and more prosperous future for all.

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The UN country team in Uganda also held a retreat to discuss internal reforms and better alignment with national priorities as part of the system-wide UN80 initiative to enhance effectiveness and accountability.

Uganda has been a member state since October 25, 1962, shortly after gaining independence, and has since played an active role in the organisation. UN agencies like Unicef, United Nations Development Programme, World Food Programme and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provide significant humanitarian and development funding and support, particularly in health services, refugee assistance, and climate-smart agriculture.

BACKGROUND

For eight decades and counting, the UN has worked to help countries end the horrors of conflict and forge sustainable peace. The UN, which stands up for justice and respect for human rights, also documents human rights violations worldwide.

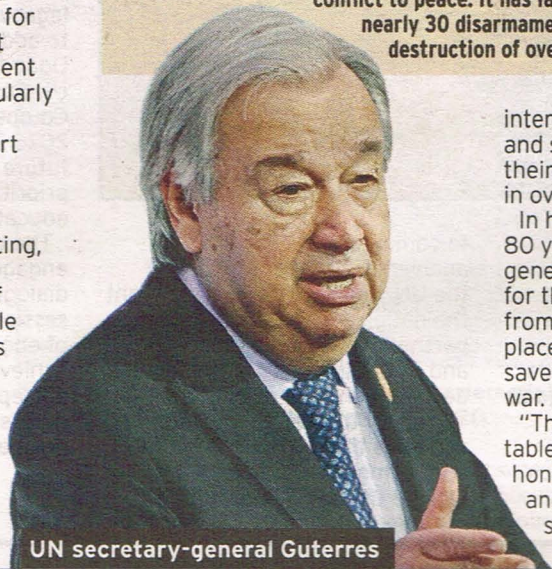
It advocates robust human rights protections, promotes compliance with

UGANDA MAKES PROGRESS ON SDGs

UN80 INITIATIVE

In March 2025, the UN Secretary-general, António Guterres, launched the UN80 Initiative to transform how the UN works – identifying efficiencies, reviewing how mandates are implemented and examining potential structural changes and programme realignment within the UN system.

The UN currently deploys tens of thousands of peacekeepers across 11 operations to help countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. It has facilitated the adoption of nearly 30 disarmament treaties and ensured the destruction of over 55 million landmines.

**UN secretary-general Guterres**

international laws and standards, and supports governments in their reform efforts through work in over 90 countries.

In his message commemorating 80 years, the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, said for the last eight decades, people from all over the world have placed their trust in the UN to save them from the scourge of war.

"The privilege to sit at this table carries a duty, above all, to honour the faith of those people, and to channel the resources so often spent on war, to

the causes of development and peace," he said.

This idea resonates with the iconic message linked to the UN, inscribed on the Isaiah Wall in Ralph Bunche Park, New York City, a quote from the Book of Isaiah: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Similarly, a bronze sculpture titled *Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares*, depicting a man hammering a sword into a plowshare, was gifted to the UN by the Soviet Union in 1959 and is located on the UN grounds.

LONG WALK TO PEACE

The UN was founded in 1945 after World War II to prevent future conflicts, with the UN Charter signed in San Francisco by 50 nations on June 26, 1945.

It officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, after the charter was ratified by the majority of signatories, including

the five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, the Soviet Union, the UK and US).

The organisation replaced the failed League of Nations and has since expanded its role to include protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, and promoting international law and sustainable development.

CHALLENGES

The UN faces a long list of challenges. These include the climate crisis, inequalities among people and rising poverty rates. To add to this list is terrorism and the nuclear threats, artificial intelligence, which has become ubiquitous, rushing ahead of regulation.

The UN members are also faced with an insurmountable challenge of meeting the SDGs and propelling the commitments contained in the UN75 Declaration.

Guided by the secretary-general's "Our Common Agenda" report, which calls for stronger global governance, multilateral co-operation, and institutional reforms, the UN.2.0 process is a modernisation initiative aimed at transforming the UN to be more agile, data-driven, and digitally innovative, aligning with 21st-century challenges.