

Outline Agenda for the United Nations

(Olara Otunnu's Vision Statement)

I. Introduction: United Nations at a Historic Moment

The United Nations is the only body that represents all of humanity. It was founded, in the aftermath of a savage global war and against the backdrop of the Holocaust, expressly to prevent the scourge of war, maintain international peace and security, promote international cooperation, and promote the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.

The founding of the United Nations was a solemn covenant: a covenant made by nations drawn together and united by a common humanity and by the pursuit of self-determination, the dignity and self-worth of the human person, and the protection of fundamental freedoms and fundamental human rights. These were and still are the guardrails and the guiding values of the United Nations.

For more than eight decades the United Nations has been at the heart of the global architecture for peace and security and shared prosperity.

With rapid advances in the field of artificial intelligence and other great scientific and technological leaps and transformations, we stand on the precipice of a potential golden age in human history -- a time to prevent and cure hitherto incurable diseases; a time to lift billions of people out of poverty through financial and digital inclusion; a time to explore the heavens with renewed hope and confidence and insights.

It is also, however, a moment of great upheaval and dislocation: a moment fraught with grave threats to international peace and security, economic disenfranchisement and dislocation, and a time when drones and artificial intelligence might evolve to dominate the human race.

It is against this backdrop of hope and great promise and the gathering threats that the United Nations is once again called upon to fulfill its historic mission. It is an opportunity to reinvent and to renew and to give the United Nations a new lease on life.

II. Issues on the Agenda

As Secretary General, I would quickly develop an Agenda for Action around the following key issues.

1. Moral authority of the UN. The UN Secretary General does not wield conventional power, derived from military strength, resource base and support of the population. However, the UN Secretary General has moral authority that flows from the principles of the UN Charter and the support of the Member States. This is a crucial asset. When this asset is carefully and strategically deployed by the Secretary General, it benefits the international community as a whole.

2. Reforming the United Nations. Key to the United Nations' success is its legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency. To achieve these objectives, of the United Nations, I would promote the following reforms at the UN:

The ongoing reform of the United Nations in the context of the UN80 Initiative is timely. The organization, facing a historical liquidity crisis amid unprecedented demand from the people it serves and conflicts around the world, must indeed reform.

The Secretary-General's proposals aimed at strengthening effectiveness, coherence, and accountability; reducing duplication and redundancy; aligning resources with priorities; and supporting the Secretariat in delivering better results, need to be fully supported by the next Secretary General and Member States.

The reform of the organization should be driven by member states. Member States that create and approve mandates must recognize the urgent need for a coherent approach to mandate implementation. The ongoing discussion regarding the creation, implementation, and review of mandates for an efficient and effective United Nations should be undertaken with sincerity and urgency.

The next Secretary-General should shepherd the organization and its Member States in undertaking genuine and lasting reforms.

3. Peace and Security and Geopolitical Hotspots. International peace and security and international cooperation constitute the core mandate of the United Nations. To fulfill that mandate, the United Nations needs a leader who is accomplished in building bridges, forging international consensus, and successfully executing bold and creative initiatives that garnered broad global support and consensus

In the area of international peace and security, I would give immediate priority to ending the following major conflicts:

- Ukraine Conflict - - urgently work with the key stakeholders to convene or support a global peace conference to immediately end the conflict and to mobilize the international community to focus on post-war reconstruction and the rehabilitation of those affected by the conflict, especially women and children.

- Gaza Crisis - - rapidly mobilize humanitarian intervention and work closely with key stakeholders to explore how principles of the Oslo Accords can potentially be combined with the framework of the Abraham Accords to promote permanent peace across the region.
- Democratic Republic of the Congo - - support the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help bring about permanent peace and security and to promote economic rehabilitation and partnerships across the Great Lakes Region of Africa.
- Sudan Conflict - - work closely with the African Union and other global partners to support the Quad and Quint frameworks and other initiatives to bring about a permanent ceasefire and a timely end to the conflict.
- Iran Conflict - - work closely with the key state actors and support all ongoing diplomatic efforts to bring about a comprehensive agreement for permanent peace and reconciliation.

4. Protection of children and women exposed to war. Children and women suffer disproportionately in situations of war. The United Nations must do more to ensure the implementation of rules and standards which have been adopted for their protection.

5. A new world economy. A new world economy, based on and driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI), is fast emerging. As Secretary General, I would work to ensure the creation of a special body to oversee the UN's work on artificial intelligence, potentially including i) creating frameworks for the development, adoption, safety, governance, and societal and employment impact of AI, and ii) using AI and digital technology to help lift billions of people out of poverty through financial and digital inclusion.

6. Environment and Prosperity. Climate change should be addressed without sacrificing economic prosperity, technological innovations, and energy security, can be promoted, where it is economically viable and where it can help reduce poverty and modernize the economy.

Climate Change remains one of the greatest challenges of our time. The Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change represented a historical convergence on ambition to address climate change. However, we are falling short on its implementation. All countries, in particular developing countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. As Secretary General, I would draw on the United Nations' capacities to provide Member States with rapid assessments on the progress and what practical steps could accelerate action to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the goals of the Paris Agreement. Critically, these actions must not deepen burdens on developing countries. I would prioritize partnerships on finance, technology and capacity building support to countries in their national efforts to address climate change.

7. Mobilizing financial resources for development. Developing countries need long-term capital to finance key development sectors. Financing for development remains critical in the pursuit of sustainable development. The Sevilla Commitment provides the renewed global framework for financing for development to realize sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Governments need access to affordable sources of finance, both public and private, to support the implementation of national development plans and policies. However, many developing countries are facing limited fiscal space that is exacerbated by high debt burdens.

As Secretary General, I would advocate for coordinated and coherent international response to support countries to address the financing challenges. The United Nations should not replace the international financial institutions, rather it should use its convening powers and universal legitimacy to support Member States in advancing concrete policies and actions to urgently close the financing gap. Specifically, I would seek to mobilize political and financial support towards the implementation of the intergovernmental agreements that aim at closing the financing gap and address the development needs of all developing countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States as well as middle income countries, and countries in conflict and post- conflict situations.

8. Immigration. Immigration is a global challenge and a potential threat to international peace and security. The United Nations should play a key role in helping the international community develop a new framework and consensus on immigration so as to promote seamless and humane immigration policy consistent with issues of national security and sovereignty. The United Nations should make this a top priority.

9. Connecting 'the Global' to 'the Community'. The United Nations is primarily an association of member States. However, the world body is organized for the benefit of the people of the world. There is need to actively reach out engage the people, especially the youth, communities of faith and women. This is a critical public advocacy and engagement role of the Secretary General. We need to connect the Global to the Community.

10. Deepening cooperation between the UN and Regional Organizations. Although the United Nations and Regional Organizations are located at different levels within the multilateral architecture, we should work to deepen cooperation and complementarity.

III. Conclusion: The Age of Hope and Faith

In order to carry out the Agenda outlined above, the United Nations is in need of a particular kind of Secretary General. A Secretary General who is proactive, is a bridge-builder and is able to propose creative solutions in difficult situations.

We are blessed to live in an era of great technological revolutions and rapid transformations. This should be the golden age - - the age of hope and faith. An age that allows the full flourishing of the human race as one global family of hope and faith.

I take my inspiration from St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy...