

# Bring the United Nations closer to the people, urges Assembly President in her inaugural speech

The new session of the United Nations General Assembly opened on Wednesday with its President pledging to use her year in office to bring the world body closer to the people and strengthen their sense of ownership and support for the UN.

In her [first keynote address](#) to what is the 73rd session of the 193-member General Assembly, President María Fernanda Espinosa, said that the need for stronger global leadership in the service of multilateralism, to ensure more peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies, would underpin her work.

“Let us proceed together, building a world more equal and free, more sustainable and respectful of nature, and more inclusive and supportive,” she said.

Ms. Espinosa, who was elected the President of the General Assembly in June, succeeds Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the 72nd session. She is only the fourth woman to hold that position in the history of the world body, and the first woman ever from Latin America and the Caribbean region.

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In her address, the Assembly President outlined her seven priorities – identified in consultation with Member States – that will shape the year-long session: promoting gender equality; promoting and implementing the new global compacts on migration and refugees; advocating for decent work; protecting the environment; focusing on rights of persons with disabilities; supporting the UN reform process; and facilitating dialogue.

“I am also prepared to facilitate quick and effective responses of the General Assembly to emergency situations as they arise,” she added, noting that “unfortunately, they will arise.”

Concluding her remarks, Ms. Espinosa also pledged that she will uphold good practices in her Office, ensuring its geographical representation, gender parity, and total transparency in its administrative and financial management.

She also assured that she will observe, “with absolute responsibility”, the Code of Ethics for the President of the General Assembly, and will abide strictly by the precepts of the United Nations Charter and the Assembly’s

Rules of Procedure.

## **World needs the General Assembly to show the value of international cooperation – UN chief Guterres**

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) also [addressed](#) the new General Assembly, congratulating President Espinosa on assuming the office and noting the important issues that lie ahead.

“We need action for peacekeeping, gender parity, financing for the 2030 Agenda [for Sustainable Development], empowerment for the world’s young people, urgent steps to end poverty and conflict, and much else,” he said, calling on world leaders to come to the high-level week beginning on Monday, “ready to be bold and ready to forge solutions for our global challenges.”

The Secretary-General also underscored the importance of international cooperation and for the Assembly to show the true value of working together.

“The Secretariat and I are committed to supporting you,” he said.