

'The best-selling brand today is fear': UN chief highlights urgent need to address global 'deficit of trust'

Warning against the dangers of widespread fear and mistrust in our planet, the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, [told journalists](#) on Friday he wants to reaffirm the UN as a "platform for action to repair broken trust in a broken world."

"The best-selling brand in our world today is indeed fear," stated Mr. Guterres. "It gets ratings. It wins votes. It generates clicks," he added, during the press conference, held at UN headquarters in New York.

"I believe the biggest challenge that governments and institutions face today is to show that we care – and to mobilize solutions that respond to people's fears and anxieties with answers, with concrete answers," he explained.

The Secretary-General was speaking two days after [presenting his areas of action for the UN for 2019](#) to the 193 Member States, who, he said, widely responded to his remarks by highlighting the importance of multilateralism.

"As we look to the challenges we face – from climate change to migration to terrorism to the downsides of globalisation – there is no doubt in my mind that global challenges require global solutions," he noted. "No country can do it alone. We need multilateralism more than ever."

Hate speech and hate crimes are direct threats to human rights, sustainable development and peace and security – UN chief Guterres

The UN chief noted that "dismissing or vilifying the doubters of multilateralism will lead nowhere," and insisted on the importance of understanding why "many people around the world are not convinced of the power and purpose of international cooperation."

Citing the fact that, in the process of globalisation and technological progress, many people, sectors, and entire regions were left behind, he explained the UN needs to focus on addressing the root causes of this widespread mistrust, anxiety, anger and fear, over three key areas of work: accelerating sustainable development, strengthening the added value of the United Nations through reform, and engaging societies to put an end to the rise of hate speech, xenophobia and intolerance.

"We hear troubling, hateful echoes of eras long past. Poisonous views are penetrating political debates and polluting the mainstream," warned Mr. Guterres, as he stressed the need to remember the lessons of the 1930s and the Second World War.

"Hate speech and hate crimes are direct threats to human rights, sustainable development and peace and security," he said.

Stressing that "words are not enough," the UN Secretary-General announced he has tasked his Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, to bring together a team to develop a UN-wide strategy and urgent global plan of action against hate speech and hate crimes.

Mr. Guterres stated that his "absolute priority for 2019" is to make sure the United Nations is a "platform for action to repair broken trust in a broken world and deliver for people".

Following his opening remarks, the Secretary-General answered questions from members of press on various issues handled by the UN, including the situation in Venezuela, in Syria, and in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the plight of migrants and refugees worldwide, recent uncertainty around the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as UN funding challenges.