

United Nations secretary general addresses 76th Session of UN General Assembly

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The annual General Debate opened on Tuesday with a speech by UN general secretary?

United Nations, September 21 (RHC)-- Several days of speeches from heads of state and government are beginning on Tuesday as the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly gets underway.

Climate change, COVID-19 and security are set to dominate discussion during the annual gathering, which has a hybrid format after being forced almost entirely online last year.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres spoke first on Tuesday morning. Guterres called for more comprehensive multilateral organizations. "Today's multilateral system is too limited in its instruments and capacities, in relation to what is needed for effective governance of managing global public goods," he said.

He said the world must address six "great divides": Peace, wealth, gender, digital, and generational. "COVID-19 and the climate crisis have exposed profound fragilities as societies and as a planet. Yet instead of humility in the face of these epic challenges, we see hubris. Instead of the path of solidarity, we are on a dead end to destruction. At the same time, another disease is spreading in our world today: a malady of mistrust," he said.

Guterres addressed the UNGA with a stark warning: "I am here to sound the alarm: The world must wake up. We are on the edge of an abyss -and moving in the wrong direction."

In sweeping speech beginning the General Debate, Guterres decried inequality, distrust, misinformation, an "assault" on science, and upheaval in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Yemen.

He decried geo-political divides that hinder international cooperation, specifically referencing the confrontational stance of the world's two biggest economies – the US and China – without naming them.

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