

UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases

Meetings Coverage
General Assembly / Plenary

EIGHTIETH SESSION, 82ND & 83RD MEETINGS (AM & PM) GA/12760 20 May 2026

General Assembly Strengthens Fight against Climate Change, Adopting Contentious, Yet Broadly Supported Draft among Several Texts on Myriad topics

The fight against climate change received a fresh boost today, as the General Assembly adopted a set of draft resolutions and decisions, including a contentious but broadly supported climate text designed to turn the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion into a tangible political, legal and practical momentum for stronger global action and accountability.

By a vote of 141 in favour to 8 against (Belarus, Iran, Israel, Liberia, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, United States, Yemen), with 28 abstentions, the 193-member Assembly adopted the draft resolution titled "Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change" (document [A/80/L.65](#)).

Before the vote, amendments to L.65 (documents [A/80/L.66](#), [A/80/L.67](#), [A/80/L.68](#) and [A/80/L.69/Rev.1](#)) were proposed to address four provisions of the text, but the Assembly rejected them.

By "L.65", the Assembly - "determined to translate [the Court's findings](#) into enhanced multilateral cooperation and accelerated climate action at all levels, consistent with international law" - welcomed the unanimous 23 July 2025 advisory opinion and affirmed its importance as "an authoritative contribution to the clarification of existing international law".

Further, the Assembly called upon all States to "comply with their respective obligations under international law to ensure the protection of the climate system and other parts of the environment from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, as identified by the Court".

It also requested the UN Secretary-General, within existing resources, in consultation with Member States, to submit to the Assembly during its eighty-second session a report containing ways to advance compliance with all obligations in relation to the Court's findings.

Today's action comes on the heels of the Assembly's 28 July 2022 resolution (document [A/RES/76/300](#)) recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, as well as its 29 March 2023 resolution (document [A/RES/77/276](#)) requesting the Court to render an advisory opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change.

On 23 July 2025, the Court clarified that protecting the amendments, is not optional diplomacy – it is a legal duty grounded in treaties, customary law and human rights, and States that fall short risk legal responsibility and claims for repair.

"The draft resolution before you does what an Assembly should do when its own Court has spoken," said the representative of Vanuatu, who spoke also on behalf of the Core Group – a cross-regional group of States.

He said that the resolution does neither adjudicate disputes, assign responsibility to any State nor reopen, replace or compete with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. On the contrary, he added, it reaffirms them as the primary legal instruments and intergovernmental forums for the global response to climate change.

"The role of this Assembly is complementary: to receive the Court's clarification with integrity and to support cooperation and implementation across the United Nations system," he explained, declaring: This day will be remembered as "the moment the United Nations received the considered judgment of its highest Court on the defining challenge of our time – and decided what to do with it".

Saudi Arabia was among the countries tabling the amendments. Its representative insisted that climate obligations must remain strictly confined to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change–Kyoto–Paris treaty framework, stressing that these are "the competent and agreed-upon reference points to determine the responsibilities and obligations" and warning that the resolution "gives the impression that there are new obligations or extended obligations that goes beyond what was collectively agreed". The Court's advisory opinions are non-binding and cannot be used to expand or operationalize new legal duties through the Assembly, he emphasized.

The representative of the United States said her country's position rests on a firm rejection of giving legal or operational weight to the Court's advisory opinion, emphasizing that "the resolution improperly treats the Court's opinion as irrefutably authoritative and as setting out binding obligations on States". On this basis, it objects to any attempt to derive duties from the opinion, arguing that "this resolution is highly problematic in calling on States to comply with so-called obligations that are based on non-binding conclusions of the Court on which UN Member States' views diverge". The text also frames the Court's legal approach as an overreach into State sovereignty, she added, cautioning that "such an expansive legal rule would impermissibly interfere with each State's sovereign rights to regulate and manage its own energy policy".

Text Endorsing Migration Review Forum's Progress Declaration

Also adopted today was the draft resolution titled "Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum" (document [A/80/L.64](#)), by which the Assembly endorsed that Declaration.

That text was adopted by a recorded vote of 147 in favour to 6 against (Czech Republic, Italy, Israel, Poland, Slovakia and United States), with 23 abstentions.

Brazil's delegate, speaking on behalf of a group of like-minded countries, regretted that "such an important document has been put to a vote". Noting the "dehumanizing rhetoric" that continues to scapegoat migrants, he highlighted the many benefits that migrants bring, especially in countries with ageing populations. Enhancing regular migration pathways is crucial, including for reducing irregular migration, combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

He also expressed concern about child detention, as well as the "growing practice of externalization whereby responsibilities for migration management are shifted to other States". While States have the sovereign right to implement domestic policies, he pointed out, "it is through the exercise of that same sovereignty that States have committed to international human rights law".

The United States was among those who voted against the text. Its representative stressed: "The era of mass migration is over, and we will no longer be complicit in allowing it to continue." Her country does not recognize the Global Compact for Migration and its claim of safe migration. "For citizens of Western nations, mass migration was never safe," she said, adding: "it introduced new security threats, imposed financial strains and undermined the cohesion of our societies." The Declaration repeatedly calls for providing basic services to all migrants regardless of their status – however, the United States has a "sharp legal distinction between those who follow our laws and those who violate them", she said.

Nicaragua's delegate, speaking for a group of countries, expressed regret that the text does not refer to the destabilizing impact of unilateral coercive measures, and their direct relationship with the increase in number of migrants in various regions.

Italy's delegate, speaking also for Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia, explained their negative vote, saying that the Progress Declaration does not meet their expectations. Noting the "missed opportunity to adopt a more pragmatic and effective tone that addresses the issue of migration in its full complexity", he said the text does not reflect the growing awareness of the differences between regular and irregular immigration.

The Declaration does not create new legal obligations or seek to interpret existing international law, said Norway's representative, also speaking for several countries. He added that the Global Compact and the Declaration are important frameworks for international cooperation on the global reality of migration.

Decade for Africa's Industrialization

The Assembly also adopted – by a vote of 176 in favour to 2 against (Fiji, United States), with no abstentions – the draft resolution titled "Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2026–2035)" (document [A/80/L.61](#)), by which the 193-member organ proclaimed the 10-year period to accelerate inclusive, sustainable and resilient industrial transformation across the African continent.

Introducing the draft, the representative of Uruguay, speaking for the Group of 77 developing countries and China, said that "this resolution comes at a critical moment for the international community at a time marked by persistent inequalities, economic fragmentation, climate-related challenges and widening technological divides". Industrialization of the region remains both "an African priority" and "a global necessity", he said.

Text Highlights Interreligious Dialogue as Soft Power Peace Tool

The Assembly adopted by consensus the draft resolution titled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" (document [A/80/L.43](#)) aimed at advancing interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a practical tool for peace, inclusion and sustainable development, supported by education, policy, partnerships and global cooperation.

Introducing the biennial text, the representative of Pakistan, also speaking on behalf of the Philippines and all co-sponsors, stressed that it is essential to promote a culture of peace – one that embraces diversity and inclusivity, safeguards fundamental rights and freedoms and rejects social structures and stereotypes that create divisions among individuals, societies, communities and nation States.

Despite progress achieved over the years, he noted, much more remains to be done to fully realize these shared ideals. In this regard, he recalled the Constitution of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which affirms that "science was begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". He explained that "a technical solution" would retain the key messages reaffirmed through the consensus adoption of the resolution during the seventy-eighth session.

Despite the unanimous adoption, several delegations raised some concerns. Among them was the representative of the United States, who said that the Assembly "spends countless hours negotiating symbolic, repetitive text with little to show in tangible results for the common citizen". Washington, D.C., she added, "is finished with performative exercises and bloated ideological multilateralism that fails to advance the core mission of the United Nations".

Other Texts Address Central Asia Cooperation, Water Conference Dates, Others

The Assembly also adopted, without a vote, the draft resolution titled "Strengthening regional cooperation and economic integration to ensure sustainable development in the Central Asian region" (document [A/80/L.52](#)). Introducing that text, Uzbekistan's delegate, also speaking for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, noted that Central Asian States have been able to resolve several issues that caused tensions and are implementing joint projects. "The political trust built over the recent years opens the path to deeper economic integration", he said, noting that this forms the substance of the present resolution.

It also adopted, without a vote, the draft decision titled "Dates and venue of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" (document [A/80/L.62](#)), by which it revised the dates of the Conference, which shall now be held from 8 to 10 December 2026 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Peaceful Settlement of Border Disputes

Also adopted without a recorded vote was the draft resolution titled "Peaceful settlement of border disputes" (document [A/80/L.63](#)). Introducing that text, Kyrgyzstan's delegate said it offers a simple and universal principle: "when States face border disputes the path forward should be peaceful, lawful and based on dialogue". Her region can serve as a constructive example for this, she said.

Again without a vote, the Assembly adopted the draft resolution titled "The role and importance of a policy of neutrality in maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and sustainable development" (document [A/80/L.55](#)). That text recommended to all Member States, organizations of the UN system and others the use of the full potential of neutral States and mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution. Introducing that text, Turkmenistan's delegate said neutral platforms and impartial mechanisms are crucial for maintaining dialogue when channels of communication are cut off.

Also adopted today without a vote was the draft decision titled "The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity" (document [A/80/L.51](#)), by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its eighty-second session and transmit the report to the Human Rights Council.

! For information media. Not an official record.

Today 12:06 AM

General Assembly - in brief

What happened: The General Assembly gave political force to last year's landmark climate ruling from the International Court of Justice, voting 141-8 to adopt a resolution urging countries to comply with legal obligations to curb greenhouse gas emissions and protect the climate. The measure, backed by Vanuatu and a cross-regional coalition, frames climate action as a matter of international law and human rights – not just diplomacy – and asks the UN Secretary-General to propose ways to improve compliance. The United States, Saudi Arabia and others argued the resolution overreaches by treating the ICJ's non-binding advisory opinion as effectively authoritative and potentially infringing on national sovereignty and energy policy.

Why it matters: The vote signals growing momentum to use international law and courts to pressure Governments on climate accountability, potentially shaping future litigation, diplomacy and compensation claims.

Also today: The Assembly approved the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum over sharp divisions, established the Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2026–2035) and adopted several consensus resolutions on peacebuilding and regional cooperation.

(Summary generated with assistance from AI based on our meetings coverage.)

A full summary of today's meeting will soon be available on our [website](#).

May 20, 2026 11:20 PM

States' obligations to protect climate not just legal problem: Guyana

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"Rather, they concern an existential problem of planetary proportions that imperils all forms of life and the very health of our planet which requires political and social follow up to the legal findings," said Guyana's representative, speaking for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

"As small island developing States and low-lying coastal States, our countries are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change," she said, welcoming the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion and the adoption of [A/80/L.65](#).

She stressed the significance of the Court's opinion that a State's breach of any of the Court-identified obligations related to climate change constitutes an internationally wrongful act entailing the responsibility of that State from which specified legal consequences would follow, she said.

"In CARICOM's view, it is crucial that we not only welcome the opinion in this moment but also ensure meaningful follow up," she stressed.

May 20, 2026 10:54 PM

Continuity of statehood crucial in face of sea-level rise: Fiji

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"For the PSIDS [Pacific small island developing States], the operative provisions on maritime zones and the continuity of statehood stand among the most consequential in this text," said Fiji's representative, speaking for those countries.

Welcoming the adoption of [A/80/L.65](#), he said the affirmations in operative paragraphs 6 and 7 reflect what Pacific Islands Forum Leaders declared in the 2021 Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise and in the 2023 Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise.

"That is – our maritime zones, established and notified in accordance with UNCLOS and the rights and entitlements that flow from them, shall continue to apply without reduction, and that our statehood and sovereignty will be maintained, notwithstanding any physical changes connected to climate change-related sea-level rise," he stressed.

As a group that stands on the front line of the climate crisis and has consistently taken a leading role on this issue, "we reaffirm our commitment to working closely with all Member States on the most important next step forward – our collective resolve toward its full and effective implementation" he said.

May 20, 2026 10:33 PM

Assembly adopts text welcoming ICJ Advisory opinion on States' obligations on climate change

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By a recorded vote of 141 in favour to 8 against (Belarus, Iran, Israel, Liberia, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, United States, Yemen), with 28 abstentions, the Assembly adopted [A/80/L.65](#) as a whole.

May 20, 2026 10:25 PM

2 amendments to text welcoming ICJ advisory opinion on States' obligations on climate change rejected

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By a recorded vote of 53 in favour to 91 against, with 20 abstentions, the Assembly rejected two draft amendments to [A/80/L.65](#).

Draft amendment [A/80/L.66](#) would have replaced operative paragraph 3 with new language, and draft amendment [A/80/L.69/Rev.1](#) would have replaced operative paragraph 4 with new language.

May 20, 2026 09:34 PM

Vanuatu introduces text welcoming ICJ advisory opinion on States' obligations on climate change

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"The Opinion does not invent new law; it clarifies the law that already binds us. It confirms that the protection of the climate system is a matter of legal obligation, not political discretion," said Vanuatu's representative, speaking also for the Core Group – a cross-regional group of States.

The Court's 23 July 2025 Advisory Opinion matters "because the harm is real, and it is already here – for low-lying islands and coastlines, for communities facing drought and failed harvests, for people whose homes, livelihoods and cultures are being reshaped by forces they did nothing to set in motion".

The States and peoples bearing the heaviest burden are, very often, those who contributed least to the problem.

"The Court did not look away from that reality. Nor should this Assembly," he said, expressing disappointment that several amendments to draft [A/80/L.64](#) titled "Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change" have been proposed.

May 20, 2026 07:15 PM

Assembly adopts draft introduced by Turkmenistan on role of neutrality for peace and security

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Again without a vote, the Assembly adopted draft resolution [A/80/L.55](#) on "The role and importance of a policy of neutrality in maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and sustainable development".

That text recommended to all Member States, organizations of the UN system and others the use of the full potential of neutral States and mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution.

Introducing the draft, Turkmenistan's delegate said neutral platforms and impartial mechanisms are crucial for maintaining dialogue when channels of communication are cut off.

May 20, 2026 06:59 PM

Highlights

70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
New York, 9-19 Mar 2026

Second World Summit for Social Development 2025
Doha, 4-6 Nov. 2025

High-Level Meeting of the Eightieth General Assembly
New York, 22-30 Sep 2025

Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries
Awaza, Turkmenistan, Aug. 2025

Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
Sevilla, 30 June-3 July 2025

Highlights of the Security Council

Daily Noon Briefing

20 May 2026

World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, speaking to the press, said there are almost 600 suspected Ebola cases and 139 suspected fatalities reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. He has released an additional \$3.4 million from the Contingency Fund for Emergencies, bringing the total to \$3.9 million.

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Assembly adopts draft introduced by Kyrgyzstan on peaceful settlement of border disputes

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The Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution [A/80/L.63](#) "peaceful settlement of border disputes", which stressed the importance of dialogue and international cooperation among Member States in achieving lasting and mutually acceptable solutions consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

The Assembly also urged all parties to refrain from any action that may aggravate or extend such disputes.

Introducing the text, the representative of Kyrgyzstan said it offers a simple and universal principle: "when States face border disputes the path forward should be peaceful, lawful and based on dialogue."

Her region can serve as a constructive example for this, she said.



May 20, 2026 06:16 PM

Assembly adopts draft introduced by Pakistan on culture of peace

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Pakistan's delegate, also speaking for the Philippines and other co-sponsors, introduced draft resolution [A/80/L.43](#) "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" aimed at advancing interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a practical tool for peace, inclusion, and sustainable development, supported by education, policy, partnerships, and global cooperation.

Such dialogue is essential for creating a culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity, safeguards fundamental rights and freedoms, and rejects social structures and stereotypes that create divisions among individuals, societies, communities and nation States, he said.

"Despite advances made over the years, much more needs to be done to fully realize these cherished ideas," he said, citing the prevalence of xenophobia, racism and intolerance.

While several delegations raised some concerns, the Assembly adopted the draft without a vote.



May 20, 2026 05:29 PM

Assembly adopts Progress Declaration of International Migration Review Forum

The Assembly adopted draft resolution [A/80/L.64](#) endorsing the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum – the outcome document of the Forum, which was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 5 to 8 May 2026.

The text received 147 votes in favour to 6 against (Czech Republic, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and United States), with 23 abstentions.

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