



Media Note

New York

20 September 2023

UN General Assembly Insights: Thursday 21 September

World leaders are in New York for the UN General Assembly high-level week, during which they will participate in a host of summits and side events on global issues. Over the course of the week, Crisis Group will highlight forthcoming meetings with a focus on peace, security and current conflicts. We will release a note each evening commenting on the next day's events. *These notes are for attribution, and quotations from Crisis Group staff are available for use by the media.*

1. Crisis Group at UNGA78

Comfort Ero, Crisis Group's President and CEO, will be participating in two side events on Thursday. In the morning, she will speak on two panels at the "Reimagining Tomorrow: Breakthroughs in Data and AI for a More Resilient World" [conversation](#), organised by the Complex Risk Analytics Fund and the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative. In the afternoon, she will moderate a ministerial roundtable on climate action in fragile and vulnerable contexts, co-organised by the UAE COP28 Presidency, Belgium and the European Union.

Comfort Ero says:

Half of the most climate-fragile countries also face violence and, as the world warms, climatic distress will play an increasingly central role in conflict. For fragile countries, building resilience to climatic shocks and the conflicts they intensify is often an uphill battle.

2. The Big Event: Preparing for the Summit of the Future

Ministers will meet on Thursday putting the finishing touches on preparations for the September 2024 Summit of the Future. The outcome document under discussion proposes four priorities for the world leaders who will meet at next September's landmark event: 1) Sustainable Development and Financing; 2) Peace and Security; 3) Digital Cooperation; and 4) Transforming Global Governance. Should ministers agree on these priorities, delegations in New York will spend the next year negotiating a broader outcome document, in talks facilitated by Germany and Namibia, that will prepare the UN to better deal with future challenges.

Secretary-General António Guterres has used his second term in office to spark conversations about big-picture challenges facing the organisation. His 2021 report, *Our Common Agenda*, laid the foundation for a far-reaching vision of international cooperation. The UN published eleven [policy briefs](#) over the summer that cover topics ranging from education to digital

technologies, information integrity and outer space, as well as a “[New Agenda for Peace](#)” that emphasises the need for greater global regulation of potentially dangerous technologies like artificial intelligence (AI).

While next year’s Summit is an opportunity for states to agree on new structures and processes to address these challenges, it is unclear how much appetite world leaders have for a new round of forward-looking conversations about the UN. Cuba and Pakistan, representing a vocal bloc of like-minded countries and members of the G77 + China group, held up negotiations on this conference earlier in the summer, arguing that Western countries were too focused on this event at the expense of commitments on the Sustainable Development Goals, objectives the UN set in 2005 and aims to reach by 2030.

Richard Gowan, Crisis Group’s UN Director, says:

Guterres has done important work outlining how the UN needs to evolve in an era of rapid technological change. It is unlikely that big powers like China and the U.S. will adopt binding international treaties on AI and other advanced technologies, but the UN is a space where they can discuss guidelines for reducing the risks these innovations create.

3. In Focus: International Assistance to Haiti

Canada and countries of the Caribbean Community are organising a high-level meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council’s ad hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. Created in 1999, the Advisory Group [meets](#) regularly to discuss Haiti’s socio-economic recovery, reconstruction and stability, as well as to promote coherence and sustainability in this international support. This gathering follows up on the Advisory Group’s high-level meeting at last year’s UN General Assembly.

The high-level meeting will unfold at a moment when Security Council diplomats are debating whether to authorise a multinational security support mission for Haiti. Negotiations are well under way, with some Council diplomats pressing for a vote by the end of September. The Council is right to respond to Haiti’s request for support. But as we noted in Crisis Group’s annual briefing, [Ten Challenges for the UN](#), for the mission to have the best odds of success there needs to be progress toward an inclusive political settlement.

Renata Segura, Crisis Group’s Deputy Program Director, Latin America and Caribbean, says:

Haiti needs the world’s help to stop the violence crippling the country, and a multinational mission to help in the fight against gangs is a crucial step. But a broad political agreement between the interim government and the opposition is indispensable for the mission to succeed. Without it, gains will be temporary. We need to break the cycle once and for all.

4. Crisis Group Will Also Watch...

Finland and Türkiye will convene the 13th Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends on Mediation. Sweden and Jordan will co-host a ministerial working meeting for donors to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)). Romania and the U.S., co-chairs of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Focal Points Network, will convene a side event on the sustainability and adaptability of the WPS Agenda. The Security Council will hold an informal interactive dialogue with representatives of the League of Arab States.