



## **Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event**

### ***The Role of the General Assembly in Strengthening Peace and Security***

Saturday 21 September 2024, 10:00am-11:30am,  
Baha'i International Community 866 United Nations Plaza #120  
(Corner of 1st Avenue and 48th Street)

Organized by: Permanent Missions of Portugal, Ecuador, Liechtenstein, Costa Rica, the Baha'i International Community, and the UN University Centre for Policy Research

#### **Background on the event**

The Permanent Missions of Portugal, Ecuador, Liechtenstein, Costa Rica and the Baha'i International Community and UNU Centre for Policy Research organized a timely discussion titled, "The Role of the General Assembly in Strengthening Peace and Security" on the sidelines of the Summit of the Future Action Days. Initiatives such as recent emergency special sessions convened in connection with the Uniting for Peace resolution and procedural innovations such as the Veto Initiative introduced in 2022 – have reignited discussion about how to revitalize the role of the General Assembly and increase synergies between the GA and the Security Council. It is in this context, and on the occasion of the Summit of the Future, that the organizers promoted a discussion on the role of the General Assembly in peace and security. As a basis for the discussion, there was a presentation on the recently published [Digital Handbook for the General Assembly](#), as called for in resolution 77/335 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

## Key Issues discussed

- Tools, including legal precedent, to Member States to use as a catalyst for action that fosters peace described in the Handbook
- Past General Assembly accomplishments on peace and security including:
  - Condemning acts of aggression, recommending provision of military support (or refraining from it), and creating bodies to act on disarmament and related issues
  - Directly mandating special envoys and bringing together groups of Member States to foster mediation and preventive diplomacy
  - Mandating peacekeeping operations such as the UN Emergency Force
  - Deploying mediators to resolve crises, facilitating treaties, and calling for peace
  - Denouncing instances of systemic discrimination, such as apartheid in South Africa, including by organizing global boycotts, creating watchdog bodies to monitor the implementation of sanctions and boycotts, and acting as the voice of world public opinion
- Recent General Assembly accomplishments on peace and security
  - Resumed 10th Emergency Special Session, under “Uniting for Peace” resolution
  - Instituted the Veto Initiative, under which the GA has a standing mandate to convene, within 10 working days of a SC veto being cast, a debate on that veto
- Principles to guide action
  - Cooperation
  - Accountability and responsibility
  - Individual agency and collective will
  - Courageous leadership

## Key recommendations for action

- Ongoing calls to revitalize the work of the GA and to reform the SC should be acted upon, especially as highlighted in the Pact for the Future
- GA shouldn’t only be prompted by vetoes - it should be proactive, creative, courageous, and legally solid. The *Assembly for Peace* handbook offers precedents for action
- Member States holding a seat in the SC often have peace and security experts as advisors. Can well-informed experts similarly advise on the functioning of the GA?
- GA should condemn any instance of a SC member violating Article 27(3) which requires SC members who are party to a dispute to abstain from voting
- GA should pressure P5 members to refrain from using the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or humanitarian disasters
- GA should more widely use the tool of creating panels of experts, as an accountability and enforcement mechanism
- GA should use its good offices strategically, so that Member States viewed as neutral to a conflict, or that had particular influence with the conflict parties, would be brought together into crisis management and response

## Webpage to find more information:

<https://sites.google.com/bic.org/pgascactiondaysideevent?usp=sharing>