



Gobierno de
México



High-Level Dialogue on Reinvigorating Feminist Multilateralism
81st session of the United Nations General Assembly
25 September 2026, United Nations Secretariat, New York
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Concept Note

Executive Summary

The Government of Mexico, UN Women and Karama, in collaboration with Member States and regional and civil society partners, including FEMNET, Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative, ARROW, and Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), will convene a high-level public dialogue during High-Level Week of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 81). The dialogue will focus on the criticality of centering women's leadership globally, to advance a feminist approach to multilateralism that is responsive to today's political, social, economic and environmental challenges.

This event will serve as the beginning of a sustained effort to build a feminist multilateral system, connecting member states, the UN, regional organizations and civil society around concrete actions to strengthen a more representative, accountable and effective multilateral system for all women and girls.

Context

As world leaders plan to meet at UN Headquarters for UNGA 81 in September, confidence in the ability of the international system to prevent and resolve conflicts has hit a multi-decade low. The Security Council faces increasing challenges in reaching agreement, humanitarian aid and development funds are being cut at unprecedented rates, even as military spending increases. Progress by governments and regional and international bodies on realizing transformative agendas through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and numerous Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security has been too slow, all with the backdrop of a climate emergency.

The gap between what multilateral institutions promise and what they deliver is measured in real terms: in the lives of women affected by conflict in every region who are absorbing the consequences of failed peace and security decision-making, while being systematically excluded from dialogues and peace processes.

Women remain significantly underrepresented in the institutions where political and international decisions are made. As of January 2026, women hold 27.5 per cent of seats in national parliaments and 22.4 per cent of Cabinet positions globally. The gap extends directly into international relations, in 2025, women held only 22.5 per cent of ambassador and permanent representative positions globally. In 2024, women made up only 7 per cent of negotiators and 14 per cent of mediators globally, while 9 out of 10 negotiation tracks included no women negotiators at all and around two thirds had no women mediators. Conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar, Gaza, Ukraine, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have exposed the limitations of the existing international architecture.

Multilateralism remains one of the international community's greatest achievements - and our best tool to prevent conflict, protect the planet, advance human rights and sustainable development, and ensure that all countries have a voice in shaping global priorities. Yet multilateralism is under deep strain, with escalating conflicts, rising authoritarianism, deepening inequality and attacks on women's rights, threatening its legitimacy and effectiveness.

What this moment demands, more than ever, is an inclusive multilateralism that enables the breathing space for peace, security and gender equality to survive and thrive, grounded in the recognition that the multilateral system cannot be strengthened without women's full and equal leadership and rights at its very core. A feminist, participatory multilateralism prioritizes peace, security, universal human rights, climate justice and human dignity, and is accountable and representative for all.

As world leaders address pressing challenges of peace, security and resilience at UNGA 81, the dialogue will demonstrate the vital need for a multilateral system that is more representative and responsive to people and communities across the world. Through an inclusive approach, it will underline that women's leadership is essential for effective multilateral action, building on and expanding existing efforts, including Feminist Foreign Policy and networks of women leaders, while creating a distinct opportunity for political leaders and women peacebuilders to engage directly on priorities for action.

Dialogue

The dialogue is an urgent call for centering feminist leadership in multilateralism. It will bring together women leaders, including in civil society, with Member States and multilateral partners committed to advancing women's leadership and rights in the multilateral system. What does feminist multilateralism look like in practice? How do we rebuild trust in the multilateral system? How do we make the system more representative, accountable and responsive?

The dialogue will be public – broadcast on UN Web TV – with representation at the leadership level to underscore the urgency and commitment to the renewal of multilateralism. It will bring together political, diplomatic, activist, youth and academic voices. It will invite leaders to announce concrete, time-bound commitments and actions, using their individual and collective influence to advance change.

The dialogue will serve as a sustained effort of collaboration among Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society, and to translate the discussion into coordinated follow-up beyond UNGA 81.

Objectives

- Promote, defend and support the multilateral system within the UN and across international and regional organizations through women's leadership.
- Secure a call for action from Member States, UN, regional organizations and civil society on the reinvigoration of a multilateral system that centers women's leadership and rights in global peace and security decision making.
- Build political momentum that connects women's leadership globally to the broader efforts of reinvigorating the multilateral system.
- Build a sustained constituency for feminist multilateralism beyond UNGA 81, creating a pathway for continued engagement and concrete follow up by Member States, the UN, and civil society.

Guidance for Interventions

As an immediate first step, Member States and regional organizations are requested to commit to defend a robust multilateral system and the universal rights it was created to uphold, champion feminist leadership, and resist efforts to weaken international cooperation, gender equality, and women's rights.

Agenda

Time	Segment
3:30–3:33 p.m.	Welcome and framing
3:33–3:45 p.m.	Opening remarks
3:45–4:03 p.m.	Moderated panel discussion
4:03–4:48 p.m.	Interactive dialogue
4:48–4:58 p.m.	Lightning round: Commitments from the panel and audience
4:58–5:00 p.m.	Closing remarks



**The African Women's
Development and
Communication Network**

