

Ghada Waly

Director-General/Executive Director

G77 Handover Ceremony

4 February 2025

Ambassador Laura Gil,

Ambassador Maurice Makoloo,

Excellencies, dear Ambassadors,

Dear friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you today for the annual G77 handover ceremony.

I would like to begin by congratulating Ambassador Gil for her leadership as Chair of the G77 Vienna Chapter over the past year.

You advocated for greater geographic representation, supported important initiatives such as the MoU signing ceremony between UNIDO and UNODC, and contributed to the discussions on international drug policy, and indeed promoted alternative development programmes.

I'm also very pleased to see the torch now pass on to Ambassador Makoloo of Kenya.

Ambassador, your leadership as Chair of the African Group has already proven your ability to elevate Africa's voice in the multilateral system, and I'm confident you will bring the same vision, determination, and diplomatic flare as Chair of the G77, and we are already feeling the passion and commitment in your inspiring speech.

As an African and a proud member of the G77 myself, I feel a close attachment to this group.

It is more than just a forum – it is a force for change. It brings us together to find solutions, define common priorities, and push for a fairer multilateral system.

At UNODC, our work is anchored in the G77 regions, with 8 out of 10 of our regional offices located in G77 countries.

We are committed to stand by you in the year ahead, as a partner and ally.

Excellencies,

We enter this year at a crossroads, with just five years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – and the stakes could not be higher.

Across the world, especially in the developing world, the cracks are widening.

More than 1.1 billion people are struggling in acute poverty, according to UNDP, with 80 percent living in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia alone.

The gap between the Global North and South is growing wider, fuelled by corruption, crime and illicit financial flows that drain vital resources needed for development.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis devastates those who contribute the least to the problem.

And over 110 million people have been displaced globally due to conflict, instability, and the absence of the rule of law, leaving the vulnerable trapped in cycles of hardship.

In this challenging context, the G77 is indispensable.

This group represents the aspirations of 80% of the world's population.

When the G77 speaks, it speaks for the majority who are too often unheard, especially at a time of growing global uncertainty.

Today, as some countries turn inward, withdrawing from the multilateral system, and as donor priorities shift from development assistance to military and defense spending, we need the G77 to be louder, clearer, and more united than ever before.

And last year, the G77 made itself heard.

At the Vienna-based Commissions, the G77's voice was resolute on issues related to drugs, crime, and the rule of law.

At the negotiations for the Cybercrime Convention, the leadership of Algeria's Ambassador Faouzia Mebarki showcased the G77's capacity to lead on a critical global issue, and the Group's members were deeply engaged and made vital contributions.

The Convention itself, with its emphasis on capacity-building for developing countries, is proof of the Group's influence.

And the signing ceremony will be held later this year in Viet Nam, reinforcing the G77's influence and leadership in this area.

At the Summit of the Future, the G77 championed the need for a reformed multilateral system that delivers for everyone, particularly the developing world.

And at COP29, the G77 called for fairer climate financing, a call we must amplify at COP30 later this year in Brazil, a proud G77 member.

Excellencies,

UNODC remains committed to delivering impactful work in G77 countries.

In Africa, through our strategic vision, we are working with vulnerable groups, especially youth who represent 60 percent of the population, to prevent drug abuse, address crime, and promote anti-corruption efforts.

In Latin America, we expanded our assistance in Haiti, and I was proud to open a new programme office in Ecuador.

In Southeast Asia, we increased support to farming communities, and I saw firsthand the value of our alternative development initiatives during my visit last year to Thailand, which has been a global leader in this area.

And across all regions, we continue to engage with youth, women and civil society, to strengthen community resilience and accelerate sustainable development.

We are also eager to make greater use of G77 talents in our workforce.

Last year, we held over 40 outreach events to promote greater geographical representation, and we increased staff across all under-represented groups.

Over the past five years, the share of the most represented group has fallen by 11%, while the number of nationalities from other groups has grown from 88 in 2019 to 112 in 2024.

And we recently appointed four new Field Representatives from G77 countries, because we need the voices of the G77 to shape our work on the ground.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work closely with the G77 as we shape our new corporate strategy for 2026-2030, and we welcome your contributions.

UNODC is also holding the regional preparatory meetings for the 2026 UN Crime Congress, providing an important platform for G77 members to share their perspectives.

And at the end of the year, we will organize the 11th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC in Qatar, with anti-corruption a key G77 priority.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The G77 stands for fairness, justice and above all solidarity.

We need the G77 to keep pushing for multilateralism to show the world what is possible when we work together.

Let's continue standing together – across borders, regions, and cultures – to promote stability, prosperity and sustainable development.

Thank you.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

