

2026

Policy Profiles

On UN Secretary-General Candidates

An independent civil society analysis of UN Secretary-General candidates, scrutinizing their policy platforms across core priorities shaping the future of the United Nations.



Introduction

This year, the **United Nations will appoint its next Secretary-General** at a moment of profound global strain—marked by rising conflict, deepening inequality, and mounting challenges to international law, human rights, and multilateral cooperation. The choice of leadership will not only shape the direction and effectiveness of the UN, but will also serve as a test of the system’s legitimacy, credibility, and capacity to respond to today’s interconnected crises.

The [1 for 8 Billion Campaign](#)—a **global civil society initiative** advocating for a more transparent, inclusive, and merit-based selection process—has brought together a diverse coalition of organizations and experts to strengthen public scrutiny and engagement. Guided by a Steering Committee that includes [CIVICUS](#), [GQUAL Campaign](#), [Plataforma CIPÓ](#), [Southern Voice](#), [UNA-UK](#), and [WomanSG](#), with the support of Ben Donaldson and Aditi Gorur, the campaign works to ensure that the selection of the Secretary-General reflects the values and standards the United Nations is meant to uphold.

As part of this effort, and in collaboration with [Pass Blue](#) as media partner, the campaign launched a **collaborative initiative** to scrutinize the policy platforms of all candidates currently running for Secretary-General, assessing how they position themselves across the core priority areas shaping the UN’s future. These **policy profiles** are based on a careful analysis of candidates’ public engagement in the process, including their vision statements, campaign materials, and their participation in the Interactive Dialogues held by the General Assembly on 21–22 April 2026, as well as other publicly available information.

Together, these sources provide a comprehensive picture of how candidates understand the role and responsibilities of the Secretary-General—and how they propose to navigate today’s global challenges.

Each profile has been developed by civil society organizations with recognized expertise in thematic areas critical to the UN’s work.

The assessments cover:

– [Conflict Prevention](#)

Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) & Saferworld

– [Peacekeeping and peacebuilding](#)

Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) & International Peace Institute (IPI)

– [Humanitarian action](#)

ODI Global

– Development and inequality

Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) & Southern Voice

– Human rights and gender equality

Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) & GQUAL Campaign

– Gender, youth and civil society inclusion

CIVICUS & Transparency, Accountability, and Participation (TAP) Network

– Climate

Plataforma CIPÓ & SHE Changes Climate

– UN reform

Article 109

By bringing together these analyses, this initiative aims to support a more informed, substantive, and transparent global conversation around the selection of the next Secretary-General—one that moves beyond individuals to focus on vision, priorities, and the kind of leadership the United Nations requires at this critical juncture.

All profiles are also available [online](#) through Pass Blue.

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Policy profile

MICHELLE BACHELET



– Prevention

By: Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) and Saferworld

– Summary

Bachelet frames prevention as the primary obligation of the Secretary-General. She pledges a presence in the field along with strengthened mediation capacity as a core part of UN preventive action.

– Profile

Bachelet has consistently identified prevention as her first priority for peace and security. She has called for the Secretary-General to be an active preventive diplomat who is present in the field and always willing to intervene before conflicts escalate.

On reform, she has proposed reorienting the existing UN architecture – such as regional desks, field offices and the Mediation Support Unit – to prioritize prevention without creating new structures or budget lines. She has also identified developing the early-warning capacity of the Resident Coordinator system as a priority. Her approach to prevention draws on her background as a physician: she emphasizes diagnosing root causes rather than managing symptoms. In her General Assembly dialogue, she identified specific early-warning indicators she would monitor, such as patterns of human rights violations and changes in security force behavior. She recalled country visits where she witnessed these dynamics as High Commissioner for Human Rights, and predicted a coup that others dismissed.

Prevention is not limited to the peace and security pillar in Bachelet's view. She has framed sustainable development as a conflict prevention tool, stating that failure to invest in development ultimately has a far greater cost. She has also committed to integrating women systematically into prevention and peacebuilding strategies, drawing on her experience as the first head of UN Women. She has stated that silence is not an option in cases of genocide or mass atrocity, and identified Article 99 of the Charter as a last-resort tool she would be prepared to use.

Areas where Bachelet has offered fewer details in her campaign so far include the financing of prevention functions within the UN system, specific reform proposals to enhance prevention, frameworks for emerging threats such as cybersecurity and autonomous weapons and the structural role of civil society as prevention actors beyond consultation.

– Peacekeeping and peacebuilding

By: Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) and International Peace Institute (IPI)

– Summary

Bachelet proposes context-specific, politically driven peace operations instead of military-heavy models. She advocates for regular technical mandate reviews, reduced logistical footprints, remote monitoring technologies and stronger human rights components. She emphasizes gender and regional partnerships.

– Profile

Bachelet frames prevention as central to international peace and security, positioning peacekeeping and peacebuilding as tools for prevention alongside mediation, early warning and preventive diplomacy.

She has emphasized that military responses alone are insufficient, arguing that “the political component and the civilian component is as important as the police and armed forces component of a peacekeeping operation.” She has also cautioned against applying “a general peacekeeping model to every country in the world,” favoring mandates tailored to each situation’s priorities rather than the “multidimensional, big mandates.”

Among the current candidates, Bachelet has offered the most specific peacekeeping reform proposal thus far. Her reform ideas include improving operational efficiency in peace operations through “regular technical mandate reviews aimed at simplifying tasks, reducing logistical footprints, and making greater use of remote monitoring and data collection technologies.”

These positions build on a long record of engagement. As President of Chile, she maintained troop contributions to the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti and expanded deployments to the Central African Republic and Colombia. At UN Women, she focused on the intersection between gender and peacekeeping, calling for peacekeeping mandates to include explicit provisions on protecting women peacebuilders and highlighting the value of gender advisors in mission settings. As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, she championed human rights’ components within peace operations as “the soundest and most cost-effective investments,” promoted the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and emphasized transitional justice as essential to lasting peace.

So far in her campaign, Bachelet has said little on peacebuilding more broadly. Her candidacy has emphasized a prevention-oriented approach to building and sustaining peace and addressing root causes.

– Humanitarian action

By: ODI Global

– Summary

Bachelet emphasizes principles of neutrality and impartiality. She supports greater anticipatory and preventive action and use of international and human rights law. She champions the UN's field presence and supports safeguarding humanitarian presence and action amid budget cuts.

– Profile

Bachelet's approach to humanitarian action is firmly grounded in human rights and international humanitarian law. A refugee and survivor of torture herself, she has adopted a rights-based approach to migration and has demonstrable knowledge of contemporary displacement situations and the geopolitical context surrounding them. In her previous role as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, she engaged on several humanitarian crises ranging from Ukraine to the Rohingya crisis.

Her statements regularly invoke humanitarian law and principles. As High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bachelet repeatedly called on international human rights law and international humanitarian law to be respected in situations of conflict. In her General Assembly dialogue, she explicitly recognized the protection of civilians and the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Bachelet has repeatedly stressed the importance of the UN having a strong field presence. During the General Assembly dialogue, she underlined the importance of protecting humanitarian presence and access from budget-driven erosion. Her vision statement proposes integrated UN responses that combine humanitarian assistance, peace operations and support for political dialogue as appropriate when prevention efforts have failed.

Her statements during the campaign have emphasized prevention (anticipating risks, responding early, mediation and avoiding the escalation of conflict), along with the importance of understanding the root causes of conflict and other crises, and sustained engagement with regional stakeholders.

While Bachelet has historically adopted an approach of cooperation and consensus-building more than outspoken advocacy, she has said during her campaign that engagement and dialogue should not come at the expense of speaking truth to power: silence is not an option in relation to genocide and atrocities.

– Development and inequality

By: Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Southern Voice

– Summary

Bachelet centers Global South decision-making, including LCDs and SIDS. She emphasizes vulnerability-based development metrics, fairer global finance, climate justice and inclusive digital governance. She champions international financial architecture reform to address debt sustainability.

– Profile

Bachelet's approach to development seeks to pivot global development priorities toward reducing inequality and supporting the Global South, ensuring that international policy translates into tangible improvements in human lives.

Central to her vision is the need to identify country-specific vulnerabilities that accurately reflect structural disadvantages. She has argued that GDP should not be the dominant indicator for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as relying solely on this metric can lead to premature graduation and the loss of access to critical concessional funding. Instead, she advocates for a multidimensional approach that incorporates geography, climate risks, and other external exposures.

To address systemic inequities, she has emphasized flexible debt solutions, including restructuring and crisis-driven relief while improving financial governance, curbing illicit financial flows, and strengthening domestic resource mobilization.

While most global leaders remain tethered to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) deadline, Bachelet has proposed a 2045 centennial "working horizon." This approach acknowledges the reality of lagging implementation, but risks removing the pressure of the 2030 targets and arguably sidesteps the root causes of current implementation failures.

Climate justice is central to Bachelet's development approach. She has endorsed the integration of climate risk into development financing frameworks and reiterated the importance of loss and damage funding, adaptation support and robust international cooperation on environmental protection.

Bachelet has engaged on development and inequality in prior roles. At the International Labor Organization (ILO), she led the creation of a framework that is now a foundational reference for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. As the first Executive Director of UN Women, she linked gender equality directly to economic empowerment and global governance. She also co-led the High-Level Advisory Council on Jobs at the World Bank, where she designed policies to address labor crises within the Global South and for youth populations.

– Human rights and gender equality

By: Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and GQUAL Campaign

– Summary

Bachelet emphasizes the equal importance of human rights alongside the other two UN pillars and calls for preserving its resources. She positions human rights as a tool for prevention. She commits to gender parity at the UN Secretariat.

– Profile

Bachelet's experience aligns closely with this agenda, and she is generally recognized as a leading voice.

As a candidate, she has committed to “consistent and full adherence to the Charter” and highlighted the Secretary-General's role in promoting compliance with international law through dialogue and speaking out on non-compliance.

Bachelet has emphasized the equal importance and interdependence of the three UN pillars, noting that a return to “the basics” requires strengthening all three and that UN reform should not “hollow out” human rights and development mandates. She has defended the universality and indivisibility of rights and called for adequate financial and political support across pillars, noting limited resources for human rights and arguing to preserve its share.

She has emphasized human rights as the core of a dignified life and “preventive tools for lasting peace and global stability.” She has indicated that she would strengthen the human rights system's coherence and agility, including through more integrated reporting across UN entities. She has emphasized strengthening monitoring through field presence and coordination with Resident Coordinators to monitor human rights violations as a basis for early-warning and timely action. She has not, however, proposed specific measures to strengthen human rights accountability mechanisms.

She has referred to human rights violations in conflict, climate change and economic policy and emphasized gender equality, including eliminating violence against women and ensuring women's equal role in peace, development and leadership. She has called for stronger support to local defenders through digital training and legal and institutional protection. She has not developed proposals on other human rights issues or specific vulnerable groups.

On applying human rights principles in staffing, Bachelet has highlighted gender parity, geographic balance, and inclusion of underrepresented states, alongside Charter requirements and competence, as key criteria for senior appointments, framing representation as essential to institutional credibility.

– Gender, youth, and civil society inclusion

By: CIVICUS and Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network

– Summary

Bachelet commits to working with civil society and addressing barriers to participation in UN processes. She commits to engaging civil society in her Secretary-General campaign. She calls for inclusion of women and youth in implementing WPS and YPS.

– Profile

Bachelet has a substantial track record on gender, youth and civil society inclusion. As a President of Chile, she introduced legislation on gender equality, LGBT rights and reproductive rights. She served as the first Executive Director of UN Women, and as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights she launched the first global [Report on Protecting Youth in Civic Space](#).

Her tenure as High Commissioner has generated both praise and criticism on protection of civic space. She engaged directly with civic space threats, including expressing [concerns](#) about “rapidly shrinking civic and democratic space in Hong Kong.” However, she was criticized by human rights groups such as [Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch](#) for failing to condemn human rights violations and mass repression by the Chinese government, including against the Uyghur ethnic community. In a [report](#) released on her last day in office, she named Beijing’s treatment of Uyghurs as possible crimes against humanity and called for prompt action.

During her campaign, Bachelet has framed women and youth actors as agents of peace and development, and committed to meaningful youth inclusion and the implementation of existing frameworks such as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas and their participatory and inclusive dimensions.

Bachelet has also committed to regular, structured engagement with civil society and working to reduce accreditation and visa barriers for civil society access to the UN. She has committed to upholding the 1 for 8 Billion [Principles for Integrity in UN Secretary-General Campaigns](#), which include engagement with civil society during the campaign, and further pledged to carry the spirit of these commitments into her term as Secretary-General if appointed.

So far in her campaign, Bachelet has not directly addressed LGBTQ+ peoples, shrinking civic space or anti-gender pushback as a challenge for feminist civil society.

– Climate

By: Plataforma CIPÓ and SHE Changes Climate

– Summary

Bachelet frames climate change as an existential threat and a human rights challenge. She calls for urgent action to uphold the 1.5°C goal. She champions climate justice and adequate climate finance, including for loss and damage.

– Profile

Bachelet's campaign treats climate as an urgent priority. She has framed climate change as "the biggest threat to humanity" and positioned climate action as central to restoring trust in multilateralism. She has also identified it as a key sustainable development priority and framed the disproportionate burden of climate impacts on developing countries as a human rights challenge and a question of survival.

Bachelet has committed to using the "full moral authority" of the Secretary-General's office to sustain urgency around the 1.5 °C goal and support "the most ambitious interpretation of the Paris Agreement."

On reform, Bachelet emphasizes concrete solutions linked to international financial architecture reform. She has called for simpler access to climate funds, innovative financial instruments and responses that ensure climate justice, linking debt relief to investments in sustainable infrastructure, and a just energy transition, while identifying emerging technologies as opportunities to improve climate resilience.

On financing, she has called for a transparent system for tracking climate finance commitments delivery; grant-based rather than loan-based climate finance; and adequate resourcing for the Loss and Damage Fund as a matter of climate justice.

Bachelet has proposed that access to concessional finance should be determined not by GDP alone but should incorporate vulnerability aspects, including through a "multi-dimensional vulnerability index." She has also linked debt restructuring and relief to countries facing climate disasters, describing climate as a global public good that requires financing.

Referring to the risks that climate change poses to oceans and marine species, she highlighted the importance of protected marine areas, and stressed the need to implement multilateral agreements on oceans.

Bachelet has experience leading climate initiatives in prior roles. As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, she led the defense of human rights during climate crises, and in 2025, she co-led a regional Dialogue on Climate for COP30.

– UN reform

By: Article 109

– Summary

Bachelet commits to a principled stance and being a moral voice on Charter violations, prioritizing prevention, gender and human rights. She proposes clear and targeted UN system reform. She calls for greater representation in the Security Council.

– Profile

Of the current candidates, Bachelet lays out the most concrete, targeted proposals for reform. Her reform agenda centers on efficiency and staying true to the UN's founding principles while adapting it to current challenges, including climate change. However, without more ambitious structural changes, her reform agenda is unlikely to meet the scale of the challenges facing the UN.

Bachelet's approach appears incremental and consultation-driven, with concrete proposals, including strengthening UN agencies and reviewing peace operations. She has proposed mainstreaming gender but cautions against merging agencies with distinct gender mandates. Preventive diplomacy features highly on Bachelet's agenda, including enhancing UN field presence and prioritizing human rights and early reporting mechanisms.

For Bachelet, any efficiencies must retain the UN's ability to deliver on the ground and preserve the balance of its three pillars. She has supported more equitable Security Council representation, collaboration with regional organizations and international financial architecture reform.

She has articulated an active role for the Secretary-General, helping to shape the agenda and to pave the "political viability" of necessary changes, while acknowledging that member states hold the final decision on initiatives like Security Council reform. While Bachelet has underlined the importance of closed-door diplomacy, she sees the Secretary-General as the "moral voice" on Charter violations and has committed to publicly calling these out should traditional diplomacy fail, making clear "silence is not an option" in relation to crimes against humanity and genocide.

Bachelet is an experienced leader who understands the UN system, having worked in a highly political environment as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – though civil society organizations have noted her mixed record in confronting major powers for their violations. As President of Chile, she led electoral and constitutional reform. According to observers, her diplomatic skill was central to expanding UN Women's global presence.

Policy profile

RAFAEL GROSSI



– Prevention

By: Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) and Saferworld

– Summary

Grossi aspires to lead from the front as a trusted mediator who can reassert the UN's role in resolving conflicts. He engages less on UN institutional tools and capacities for prevention.

– Profile

Grossi places the prevention of war and conflict resolution at the center of his vision for the role of Secretary-General. He has criticized the UN's absence in recent conflicts, and has argued that the Secretary-General must reconnect with the principle of impartiality and become a trusted interlocutor for the UN to regain a central role in crisis response. He has highlighted his experience as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, including as a high-level mediator in the Iran and Ukraine conflicts, working with colleagues in the midst of war to prevent further catastrophic consequences.

He has noted that preventive diplomacy is essential, but his statements focus more squarely on his aspirations to being a key, visible figure in resolving and mediating crises that have already erupted. He has emphasized action over rhetoric and has committed to being proactive in his attempts to build bridges, but has not offered any policy or reform proposals on prevention.

While his statements as a candidate highlight his experience in technical and issue-specific mediation, they have not covered the UN's wider institutional mandate, which includes a diverse range of conflicts, actors, tools and thematic areas. In response to questions, he has acknowledged concerns such as hybrid threats and transnational organized crime, but has not proposed specific initiatives to address them.

He has emphasized the importance of dialogue between the Secretary-General and Security Council and has acknowledged the relationship between development and the cost of war and the need to respond to emerging threats, but has not proposed any specific reforms nor initiatives. He also has not identified links between the Secretary General's prevention role and the UN's peace operations or peacebuilding efforts. His vision statement and opening statement at the General Assembly dialogues focus more on "war" than on "peace."

– Peacekeeping and peacebuilding

By: Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) and International Peace Institute (IPI)

– Summary

Grossi has rarely addressed peacekeeping, but in response to questions, he acknowledged Resolution 2719 and called for renewed dialogue on financing. He has not addressed peacebuilding.

– Profile

Grossi's career has produced few opportunities for him to formally address peacekeeping or peacebuilding. His vision statement frames international peace and security as the "first pillar" of the UN's shared architecture but does not mention peace operations or peacebuilding.

In response to member state questions at the General Assembly dialogues, Grossi provided his most detailed remarks on peace operations. On partnerships, he recognized Security Council Resolution 2719 as "concrete guidance in terms of allocating resources for peacekeeping operations" while acknowledging implementation gaps and identifying the third-year review as a chance to revisit partnerships with donors and countries in conflict. He also called for greater interaction between continents and communities on peacekeeping, particularly between Africa and other regions.

When asked how he would ensure peacekeeper safety and security in the context of recent UNIFIL casualties in southern Lebanon, Grossi said he would "give enormous priority to this" but seemed to limit his diagnosis of the problem to inadequate funding. As a solution, he called for "a renewed dialogue at the level of member states" to gauge willingness and capacity to fund peacekeeping, drawing on his experience negotiating with member states over nuclear safeguards budgets.

On the changing nature of conflict, Grossi has noted the challenges posed by new technologies and non-state actors, characterizing the means to address these on the ground as "an area where we should enhance our work... by using the talent that we have in the system."

His experience at the International Atomic Energy Agency—including leading the Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhia, which has involved localized ceasefires, a demilitarized protection zone and continuous monitoring—demonstrates experience with field-level activities, though these fall outside the domain of peace operations.

Grossi has not engaged substantively with peacebuilding as a distinct policy area and has not discussed the UN peacebuilding architecture.

– Humanitarian action

By: ODI Global

– Summary

Grossi believes the UN and the Secretary-General must engage in active diplomacy and deploy impartial expertise to respond to humanitarian crises. He has not offered specific proposals to enhance UN humanitarian action.

– Profile

Grossi supports the tenets of the UN Charter as they relate to humanitarian action. He frames humanitarian response as a necessary UN function while criticizing the organization for not doing more to resolve conflicts. He believes the UN has been absent in many conflicts and has called for a more proactive response to humanitarian crises, moving from platitudes to active diplomacy and the deployment of impartial expertise.

He has emphasized the importance of negotiation and impartiality, and has an active ‘boots on the ground’ approach to leadership, valuing UN presence and action at the front lines of conflict over verbal declarations. He believes it is important for the Secretary-General to build credibility and political capital by visiting crisis-affected countries, including conflict zones, as he has done in his current role as the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency. He has also stated that human rights law and humanitarian law are essential and deserve the full attention of the future Secretary-General.

Grossi has not, however, offered specific proposals for improving humanitarian action or addressing impediments to humanitarian response. When asked during the General Assembly dialogues about escalating threats to peacekeepers and humanitarian workers in conflict zones, he said he intends to prioritize this issue; however, in terms of solutions, his response focused on the need to address inadequate member state funding for peacekeeping.

Grossi has spoken broadly about UN reform by identifying the UN80 reform initiative as a “first step,” but has not commented on the Humanitarian Reset, humanitarian-specific aspects of UN80 or other humanitarian reform initiatives.

– Development and inequality

By: Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Southern Voice

– Summary

Grossi prioritizes implementation and delivery of existing commitments over redesigning global frameworks or addressing structural drivers of inequality. He calls for safeguarding development resources and stronger coordination with international financial institutions.

– Profile

Grossi's approach to development emphasizes implementation, system effectiveness and coordination. He frames the core UN challenge not as a lack of global commitments but as a failure to deliver on existing ones. His priority is not to redesign instruments, such as the 2030 Agenda or the Pact for the Future, but to implement them more effectively. This suggests limited focus on shaping future global development frameworks if he is appointed Secretary-General.

On financing for development, Grossi underscores the gap between political commitments and practical results. He emphasizes that development priorities should not become a casualty of declining international assistance or broader financial constraints. He calls for a more constructive and coordinated relationship between the UN and international financial institutions, but he does not propose specific reforms to the international financial architecture or detail how systemic inequalities in financing should be addressed.

He has emphasized delivery at the country level, including alignment with national realities, stronger UN country teams and reduced fragmentation. He has argued that development strategies must reflect different national contexts but has not engaged with how UN funding models and donor preferences shape development priorities. More broadly, he does not address how decision-making power over development priorities and financing norms should be distributed within the international system.

Grossi also links development to stability, treating peace and security as enabling conditions. He has made few references to technology and has not articulated a position on artificial intelligence or its implications for inequality.

His approach reflects his experience leading a technical international organization, with a focus on operational delivery and practical problem-solving. It prioritizes improving how the system functions, rather than addressing the structural drivers of inequality within it.

– Human rights and gender equality

By: Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and GQUAL Campaign

– Summary

Grossi commits to upholding the UN Charter and international law. He frames human rights as integrated into other pillars, focusing on conflict contexts. He emphasizes accountability and equality, without supporting additional resources or committing to parity.

– Profile

Grossi has committed to upholding the UN Charter. He has framed international law—including international humanitarian and human rights law—as a “guide for responsible engagement” and human dignity as a foundation of peace.

He has recognized the three UN pillars and called for an integrated approach. He has suggested integrating human rights into other pillars, describing it as an “ingredient,” and supported a UN80 reform proposal for a systemwide Human Rights Group which would promote integration. Grossi has not proposed measures to strengthen human rights mechanisms, but referred to accountability across institutions and highlighted the Human Rights Council and Special Procedures. He has not indicated support for increasing resources to human rights, expressing confidence in the ability to operate effectively despite “apparent imbalance.”

His references to human rights have focused mostly on violations arising from conflict, with less attention to their preventive dimension. When asked how he would protect UN personnel in conflicts, he did not provide specific measures, referring instead to his close relationship with IAEA’s staff and expecting high standards of conduct.

Grossi has called for strengthening responses to discrimination and violence, women’s rights, youth participation and defense of civic space, but without specific proposals. When asked about gender equality, he has emphasized protecting women and girls and addressing sexual abuse in field operations, but has not elaborated on broader strategies or addressed the Women, Peace and Security agenda, even when asked. He has not addressed other human rights issues or affected populations.

He has highlighted achieving gender parity and geographical balance in the IAEA and argued that equal opportunity is not a matter of “image or political correctness” but leads to better outcomes. He has stated that parity and geographical balance are “very important” for his leadership team, but has not explicitly committed to them as criteria.

– Gender, youth, and civil society inclusion

By: CIVICUS and Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network

– Summary

Grossi focuses on gender parity in staffing and improved communications with youth, without engaging substantively on gender frameworks or WPS and YPS agendas. He has not offered proposals to address anti-gender backlash or restrictions on civic space.

– Profile

Grossi has called for the UN to go beyond declarations and strengthen its presence on the ground to enhance women's rights and youth participation and to defend civic space. However, he has not outlined specific mechanisms to protect civic space or address growing restrictions on civil society engagement.

His framing of gender-related issues focuses mainly on organizational inclusion and representation, without addressing broader political dimensions of anti-gender pushback, such as reproductive justice, intersectional gender rights or coordinated resistance to gender equality norms at local, national and multilateral levels.

Notably, the word "gender" does not appear in his vision statement. When asked during the General Assembly interactive dialogues about transformative gender equality and the political backlash against the term, Grossi acknowledged that the issue is substantive and not merely terminological, but largely pointed to existing achievements of the Human Rights Council, UN field operations and efforts on conflict-related sexual violence rather than proposing new frameworks or accountability measures.

On youth, he recognizes that the UN is not currently among young people's priorities, but he does not present structural reforms to improve its relevance other than by improving how the UN communicates. He does not mention the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) or the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas in either his vision statement or his statements at the General Assembly dialogues.

As Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Grossi increased women's representation at the agency from 28 percent to 53 percent within five years and achieved parity at senior levels. He has framed women's representation not as symbolic but as a matter of institutional effectiveness, arguing that equal opportunity for men and women produces better outcomes and should be a defining feature of a modern United Nations.

– Climate

By: Plataforma CIPÓ and SHE Changes Climate

– Summary

Grossi avoids proactive mentions of climate. He frames the issue mainly around energy, particularly nuclear energy. He recognizes SIDS' vulnerabilities and acknowledges that current climate finance, including for loss and damage, remains far below needs.

– Profile

Grossi's campaign engagement on climate has been limited. His vision statement and his opening remarks at the General Assembly dialogues do not explicitly mention climate change. Instead, he refers more generally to development cooperation delivering benefits, including access to food, energy security and environment. His vision statement recognizes that the UN must strengthen its engagement with international financial institutions in support of development, but without explicitly linking this to climate action. The vision statement makes no reference to climate finance or broader structural reforms for climate action.

In response to direct questions on climate change during the General Assembly dialogues, Grossi has primarily framed the issue around energy. He stated that climate ambition is already at the heart of his current mission and called for "a reinvigorated dialogue on energy matters from the UN," adding that there is "a bit of a deficit" in this area. He stressed the need to engage industry and the energy producers in addressing climate impacts, while recognizing the vulnerabilities of small island developing states.

In response to questions from the African Group about climate finance, he has referred to the Loss and Damage Fund as an achievement of a recent COP, but said that pledged resources remain "quite meager" compared with estimated needs and that agreements on paper do not automatically translate into concrete solutions. He has not detailed concrete actions to address this mismatch. When asked how he would prioritize existential threats such as climate change, Grossi has said that the UN should not rank one crisis above another.

Grossi's career includes relevant climate-related projects. Under his leadership, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has launched "NUTEC Plastics" and "Atoms for Net Zero," while his CV states that he has promoted financing for nuclear energy and its peaceful uses through partnerships with international financial institutions.

– UN reform

By: Article 109

– Summary

Grossi emphasizes leadership style and technical changes over ambitious political reform. He commits to “right-sizing” the UN. He appears hesitant to publicly call out serious violations of the UN Charter.

– Profile

For Grossi, the UN is “nowhere near the place it should be” – but he sees restoring trust in multilateralism as a matter of making the UN more efficient and delivering on peace and security, rather than proactively driving foundational reforms.

His reform vision focuses on a change in leadership style and being a “boots on the ground” Secretary-General, rather than through institutional reform. His reform agenda is largely framed as an extension of UN80. He has emphasized technical “right-sizing” reforms, building on his modernization agenda at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Experts foresee that he would not be afraid to be disruptive in delivering his reform agenda, though more likely to challenge the UN system rather than the major powers.

Grossi shows limited appetite to use the agenda-setting powers of the Secretary-General; for example, he has downplayed the role of Article 99 (empowering the Secretary-General to bring to the Security Council’s attention any matter they believe threatens international peace and security) in favor of constant dialogue with the Security Council. He appears to perceive the role of Secretary-General as an administrator and implementer in service of member states. When asked whether he would seek to drive change by, for example, strengthening the General Assembly or the international courts, Grossi refused to be drawn in, similarly expressing little appetite to push for Security Council reform.

Mediating conflicts is a priority for Grossi. He promises to be present on the front lines of conflict, favouring private diplomacy over issuing declarations or condemnations. When pressed, he has been unwilling to call out serious violations of international law. However, he has asserted that he would “live by the oath to defend the UN Charter.”

Grossi has not stepped down from existing UN duties while campaigning to be Secretary-General, as recommended by the General Assembly.

Policy profile

REBECA GRYNSPAN



– Prevention

By: Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) and Saferworld

– Summary

Grynspan prioritizes peacemaking and calls for strengthening prevention through greater human rights monitoring. She commits to restructuring the EOSG for active mediation. She believes the Secretary-General should impartially engage all conflict parties and strengthen dialogue with the Security Council.

– Profile

Grynspan has placed prevention and mediation at the center of her candidacy, framing peacemaking as her top priority as Secretary-General. She has called for the Secretary-General to be present wherever violent conflict is developing, to speak to every conflict party regardless of political sensitivity and to persist even when progress appears out of reach. She has described Article 99 as a last resort, preferring constant Security Council engagement, including in informal sessions.

Her prevention vision involves creating small, agile, expert teams operating flexibly rather than through institutional hierarchy. She has drawn directly on her experience brokering the 2022 Black Sea Grain Initiative while Secretary-General of UNCTAD. Grynspan has emphasized that engaging all conflict parties, including politically difficult ones, is essential for access.

She has committed to specific structural reforms: restructuring the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on day one to create dedicated mediation capacity and merging DPPA and DPO planning functions. She has also proposed that she would attend informal UN Security Council consultations to speak candidly about emerging threats before formal processes begin and to meet with all SRSGs and special envoys immediately upon taking office to hear their field assessments to inform her thinking on reform.

On the human rights prevention nexus, she argued in the General Assembly dialogue that systematic human rights violations are the most reliable early-warning indicator of developing conflict, positioning human rights monitoring as the primary trigger for the Secretary-General's preventive engagement. She has not, however, committed to strengthening this nexus with any new structural reforms or actions. She has highlighted transnational organized crime explicitly as a peace and security issue rather than merely a law enforcement matter, recalling its impact in Latin America. She has also linked youth unemployment to conflict instability as a long-cycle prevention investment, particularly for Africa.

– Peacekeeping and peacebuilding

By: Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) and International Peace Institute (IPI)

– Summary

Grynspan commits to crafting a new vision for UN peace operations. She calls for streamlining mandates, adapting modalities case by case, operationalizing Resolution 2719 and integrating DPPA and DPO planning capacities. She has not directly addressed peacebuilding.

– Profile

Grynspan has made durable peace and security her first priority as a candidate, committing to “crafting a new vision for UN peace operations... that works hand in hand with partners to prevent the escalation of violence, protect civilians, and create the conditions for peace and recovery.” She has warned against “Christmas tree” mandates that “spread resources and capacities too thin,” calling for greater communication with field presences to identify urgent priorities.

She has addressed new peacekeeping modalities in the context of Haiti’s Gang Suppression Force, emphasizing the importance of adapting missions on a “case-by-case basis” and pointing to the UN presence in Haiti as an innovative model. She has committed to operationalizing Resolution 2719 as a priority, stressing that “the UN doesn’t have the monopoly of peace, and it doesn’t have the monopoly of peacekeeping.” She has also proposed merging DPPA and DPO planning capacities to enable more flexible modalities.

On reform, she has said that she is aware of the ongoing peace operations review, but also wants to have her own perspective. To that end, she has proposed meeting with all SRSGs and special envoys immediately upon taking office as Secretary-General to inform her position.

Grynspan’s prior role at UNDP provided some exposure to peacekeeping contexts. For example, in a 2006 Security Council briefing, she advocated for strategic alignment between MINUSTAH and the UN country team on police reform, DDR and justice sector reform. Grynspan has also suggested that she would leverage her experience as a finance minister for Costa Rica and UNDP associate administrator to re-engage major donor countries and mobilize resources, including for peace operations.

As a candidate, Grynspan has not discussed peacebuilding as a substantive agenda, though her vision statement mentions data-driven early warning systems, AI-assisted risk analysis and the role of the private sector in reconstruction.

– Humanitarian action

By: ODI Global

– Summary

Grynspan pushes back against politicization and weaponization of humanitarian space and aid. She supports greater aid financing as well as greater localization and centering local actors. She emphasizes dialogue with parties to conflict and other stakeholders as a protection approach.

– Profile

Grynspan's approach is grounded in the UN Charter and compliance with international law. She has emphasized the importance of early engagement, mediation, preventive diplomacy and protection of civilians. She supports dialogue and engagement with all stakeholders, including parties to conflict. She has often framed her responses to peace and security questions around people affected by crises. As a child of refugees, Grynspan has acknowledged the complexities of migration and displacement, and the need to protect the rights of migrants in accordance with the Global Compact.

Grynspan has also acknowledged the multifaceted nature of humanitarian crises and the need for a more unified UN response. She has called for a faster, more streamlined and more agile UN that avoids duplication and unhealthy competition between agencies. In line with the localization movement, she has highlighted that a key element of humanitarian reform is greater partnerships with local organizations and centering local actors in humanitarian response.

Grynspan has asserted the need to push back on the politicization of humanitarian space and weaponization of humanitarian aid. She has acknowledged the need for greater financing for humanitarian action including through more diverse sources, and for resources to go to aid rather than administration. She has called attention to the scale of attacks against humanitarians and called for the protection of humanitarian aid workers and civilians. On access, when asked about the Gaza conflict, she has called for the full implementation of Resolution 2830 and said the UN must do what it can to support the ceasefire and ensure UN humanitarian agencies have unrestricted access to Gaza.

While Grynspan's background is largely trade and development focused, as Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of UNDP, she coordinated "crisis countries" that include Somalia, Afghanistan and Sudan with program oversight, financial management, institutional governance and coordination with member states and UN entities.

– Development and inequality

By: Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Southern Voice

– Summary

Grynspan advocates for demand-driven, country-led implementation and financial reforms to alleviate debt burdens and climate vulnerability. She emphasizes operational efficiency and increased representation for the Global South within UN governance structures.

– Profile

Grynspan's vision for development is centered on a transition from traditional, supply-driven methods toward a demand-driven model that prioritizes specific requirements defined by individual nations. Overall, her approach champions greater inclusivity and representation, and she has called for African states and other developing nations to serve as active participants in shaping global priorities rather than mere beneficiaries.

Expressing concern that only 18 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are currently on track, Grynspan has proposed that the primary effort for accelerating the 2030 Agenda must occur at the country level, supported by a system that coordinates international efforts around national priorities. This implementation-focused approach suggests that the primary obstacle to progress on the SDGs lies in operational inefficiencies rather than the need for new frameworks. Moreover, Grynspan has not articulated a vision for the post-2030 agenda including how global priorities might evolve.

A critical pillar of Grynspan's strategy involves reforming the international financial architecture to address structural inequalities. She has highlighted the severe fiscal distress faced by 3.4 billion people living in countries where debt servicing costs exceed spending on essential services. To remedy this, she has advocated for strengthening international support by drawing on multilateral development banks, reducing borrowing costs, and mitigating risks to attract private investment.

Grynspan has also framed climate change as a multiplier of existing vulnerabilities, particularly for Small Island Developing States. She supports integrating multidimensional vulnerability metrics into development financing decisions to ensure that global resources are better aligned with the realities faced by climate-stressed nations.

On institutional reform, she has prioritized operational effectiveness and delivery over simple budgetary reductions, emphasizing reduced duplication and better system-wide coordination. Although she acknowledges the growing significance of digital transformation and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, she has not addressed how they may shape development outcomes.

– Human rights and gender equality

By: Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and GQUAL Campaign

– Summary

Grynspan commits to the Charter and international law. She frames human rights within peace and security, prioritizing prevention. She has not proposed measures to strengthen human rights accountability mechanisms or funding. She supports women's rights, but has not made an explicit commitment to parity.

– Profile

Grynspan's candidacy has emphasized peace and security, with less emphasis on human rights. She has framed the UN Charter as the foundation of her approach, underscoring shared UN and member state responsibility to uphold international law and avoid double standards. She has highlighted the human rights framework, arguing that "a world where laws are violated is not the same as a world without laws," since violations can be named and justice pursued. She has referenced the International Court of Justice and compliance with its decisions.

Grynspan has recognized the three pillars and the universality and indivisibility of human rights. Her references to human rights are primarily within peace and security: as early-warning indicators and as a basis for preventive diplomacy and protecting civilians. She has also underscored their inherent preventive value: "where rights are respected, conflicts decline." At the General Assembly dialogues, she did not prioritize human rights in her responses; on Haiti, for example, she emphasized humanitarian and development needs without referring to human rights violations. She has not offered proposals to strengthen accountability mechanisms or commitments to protect or expand human rights funding.

She has highlighted women's rights and committed to partnerships with civil society. She has pledged zero tolerance for sexual abuse. She did not answer questions on environmental rights and justice at the General Assembly dialogues, but addressed migrant rights, noting gaps in international legal frameworks for protection of migrants and displaced persons. She has not presented proposals on other human rights issues or affected populations.

On representation, Grynspan has emphasized transparent, merit-based and geographically balanced appointments, including linguistic diversity and selecting the "best" candidates, but omitted references to women or gender parity as criteria. She has referenced her experience achieving parity at the senior management level at UNCTAD.

– Gender, youth, and civil society inclusion

By: CIVICUS and Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network

– Summary

Grynspan supports civil society partnership as a pragmatic necessity for the UN. She affirms women's rights as inseparable from peace. She offers little on wider human rights commitments, funding cuts and human rights alignment with SDG implementation.

– Profile

On gender equality, Grynspan has presented a consistent and principled approach. Her vision statement frames the rights of women and girls as inseparable from peace and security, arguing that where rights are respected, conflicts decline, and where they are denied, grievances deepen and instability grows. In her General Assembly dialogue, she described women as central actors in transformation. She has committed to partnering with women's organizations and has cited her internal record at UNCTAD, including achieving gender parity for the first time, as evidence of institutional leadership in this regard. However, she has not directly addressed the current wave of anti-gender backlash or rollback of reproductive rights, nor outlined specific mechanisms to counter regression.

On youth, her vision statement acknowledges a generation facing economic insecurity, climate disruption and declining prospects, and frames UN renewal as essential to restoring credibility. She has highlighted the UN Youth Office as an important entity, but has not provided more substantive responses on meaningful youth participation in decision-making.

Grynspan has framed partnership with civil society in pragmatic terms, arguing that civil society now has far greater capacity than in 1945 and the UN must learn to work with it rather than act alone. Her most concrete commitments focus on humanitarian action, including stronger partnerships with local actors and reforms to ensure funding reaches affected communities. However, she has not addressed shrinking civic space or civil society participation in intergovernmental processes, nor funding cuts of the human rights pillar, and she made no reference to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) or Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas in her vision statement or at the General Assembly dialogues.

– Climate

By: Plataforma CIPÓ and SHE Changes Climate

– Summary

Grynspan has not prominently addressed climate. She acknowledges disproportionate impacts on vulnerable countries, the need for adaptation finance, and the need to assess vulnerability through measures that go beyond GDP.

– Profile

Grynspan has touched on climate only lightly as a candidate for Secretary-General. In her vision statement, she references climate mostly indirectly. For example, as part of a broader discussion of global risks, she warns that “we are sleepwalking into dangerous climate change scenarios.” On the subject of emerging technologies and future development pathways, she states that “clean energy is growing faster than anyone predicted” and that “critical minerals are becoming as valuable as oil.”

Her opening remarks at the General Assembly dialogues similarly make no direct reference to climate change, but refer to those who worry about “this planet,” the “promise of clean technologies” and the fact that “the ocean that rises on one shore rises on every shore.”

Grynspan has offered more detail on climate impacts regarding disproportionate impacts on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Her vision statement refers to “small island states hit by cyclones that grow fiercer each year.” In response to direct questions from Pacific and small island states, she has said she was “very aware of the threats that climate change poses” to SIDS, cited indicators showing increased disaster impacts and argued that climate finance must support both mitigation and adaptation. She has also said countries must be supported to adapt to the impacts already being felt, and linked climate vulnerability to wider structural pressures, including poor financing, high trade and freight costs and weak connectivity. She has expressed support for further work on a vulnerability indicator for SIDS, stressing that their challenges should not be measured only through GDP per capita, and noting that some SIDS had already lost territory because of climate change.

Grynspan’s prior roles have not focused directly on climate but have encompassed related fields, including macroeconomic policy, development finance, trade and institutional reform.

– UN reform

By: Article 109

– Summary

Grynspan insists the Secretary-General role is more than “stewardship” and commits to ambitious structural reform including a more representative Security Council and new UN financing arrangements. She emphasizes an active peacekeeping and mediation role for the UN.

– Profile

Of the current candidates, Grynspan goes furthest in acknowledging the scale of the UN’s challenges. She insists the role is more than “stewardship,” expressing determination to explore creative solutions and implement foundational reform.

“To defend the UN today is to have the courage to change it” is central to Grynspan’s candidacy. While she supports building on existing initiatives, including UN80, she has stressed that cuts alone are insufficient.

She has argued that the Secretary-General must actively lead reform or else the system “maintains the status quo.” She supports Security Council reform to make it more representative. She has called for structural solutions to solve the UN’s financial crisis, arguing these are essential to avoid further fragmentation and build trust.

Peace is also central to her agenda. She has emphasised more active and flexible peacekeeping, including hybrid arrangements and partnerships with regional organizations, recognizing that “the UN doesn’t have the monopoly of peacekeeping.” She has proposed restructuring the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to strengthen mediation capacity.

Grynspan envisages building a UN that has “courage to listen when truth is uncomfortable, present new ideas when the room resists, to persist when others leave.” Her experience of debt restructuring as a Vice President of Costa Rica, facilitating the Black Sea Grain Initiative as Secretary-General of UNCTAD and calling for similar efforts for the Strait of Hormuz may indicate the mediation role she anticipates as Secretary-General. Though Grynspan’s vision statement asserts that “violations can be named,” she was less clear during her General Assembly dialogue about her willingness to confront member states. She also expressed some hesitancy on invoking Article 99, preferring participation in informal and formal Security Council meetings.

Grynspan has implemented the General Assembly recommendation to step away from her existing UN position while campaigning for Secretary-General.

Policy profile

MACKY SALL



– Prevention

By: Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) and Saferworld

– Summary

Sall emphasizes the Secretary-General's role in mediation but does not offer specific policy ideas on prevention. He calls for the Security Council to respond to terrorism.

– Profile

Sall aspires to be a Secretary-General who engages in quiet diplomacy with the permanent members of the Security Council, rather than publicly in the “press or the streets.” His platform stresses building bridges and trust with member states, but he has offered few specific policy ideas related to prevention or mediation. He cites his long experience as a public servant dealing with conflict parties, from local disputes while he was a mayor to military coups while he was President of Senegal.

If selected as Secretary-General, Sall has promised to talk to all conflict parties, to place particular emphasis on fragile contexts and to work on preventative action to avoid a future of “the rule of the strongest.” He has stressed the importance of regional organizations, reasserted the importance of sovereignty of all member states and committed to using a “solidarity-based approach, founded on trust in crisis management, associated with sustained efforts for prevention and the strengthening of early warning initiatives and mechanisms.” Yet both his vision statement and his statements at the General Assembly dialogues offer few specific policy ideas, reform initiatives or engagement with the UN’s prevention tools and capacities.

He has given significant attention to the issue of terrorism, especially in the Sahel, as a critical issue that the UN must do more to tackle. He has called for collective action through the Security Council but has not suggested long-term prevention approaches. He has also referenced the importance of youth, women and civil society – but has not committed to any specific action to strengthen the UN’s prevention role in relation to these constituencies.

– Peacekeeping and peacebuilding

By: Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) and International Peace Institute (IPI)

– Summary

Sall emphasizes peacekeeping, drawing on Senegal's experience as a major troop contributor. He calls for more robust and effective mandates, operationalizing Resolution 2719, and fully integrating the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

– Profile

Sall has addressed peacekeeping more extensively than any other candidate, drawing on his experience as president of a major troop-contributing country in the Sahel and as chair of the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. He has been consistently critical of current peacekeeping approaches, particularly their failures in Africa, warning that "mandates and equipment hardly respond to the nature of the situations."

During his General Assembly dialogue, Sall emphasized the need to integrate political and economic dimensions into peace operations, called for greater coordination with the African Union—committing to operationalize Resolution 2719—and highlighted the need to engage regional organizations, troop-contributing countries, and major financial contributors to address peacekeeping financing challenges. He has committed to "think deeply about the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations" and acknowledged the potential impact of drawing down current missions.

Throughout his presidency, Sall consistently advocated for more robust peacekeeping mandates, particularly in the Sahel, calling on the Security Council to take "greater responsibility" and authorize stronger action against terrorism. At a 2017 Security Council meeting on the HIPPO report, he argued that "the very nature of peacekeeping mandates must evolve to avoid spending endless amounts of money" and advocated for partnership with regional organizations and cooperation between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries, and the Secretariat. His vision statement was more restrained, highlighting the need for "better synergy between peace operations and the actions of development agencies and humanitarian organizations."

On peacebuilding, Sall has prioritized fully integrating the humanitarian-development-peace nexus across the UN system and has emphasized partnerships between the UN and regional organizations for conflict prevention. He has underscored the role of youth and women in preventing and resolving conflict, recalling the WPS and YPS agendas. However, he has not expressed particular views on the peacebuilding architecture itself.

– Humanitarian action

By: ODI Global

– Summary

Sall supports multilateralism and finding synergy between peace, development and humanitarian responses. He supports protection of women and children. He has not addressed UN humanitarian action in depth.

– Profile

As a candidate for Secretary-General, Sall has not addressed humanitarian action in depth. His vision statement calls for the UN to achieve better synergy between peace, development and humanitarian workstreams. Relatedly, he has stated that peace and security cannot be sustained when the foundations of development are undermined by poverty, inequality, exclusion, and climate vulnerability. He has identified the goal of streamlining field operations to avoid duplication and increase impact, particularly in fragile countries.

Sall has acknowledged the high number of conflicts in the world and the urgent need for humanitarian action. He has highlighted the conflict in Sudan, “where humanitarian action is the greatest urgency for the world,” noting the need for serious diplomatic work on all conflicts. He has paid tribute to humanitarian aid workers and said their work needs to be supported.

He has recognized the heavy cost that conflict poses and has called for the UN to collaborate more closely with regional organizations on conflict prevention and resolution. He has emphasized the need to protect women and children, and has also referenced protecting civilians in conflict more generally.

Sall values dialogue and consensus-building and believes in speaking to all stakeholders, including parties to conflict.

– Development and inequality

By: Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Southern Voice

– Summary

Sall frames development as a financing challenge centered on access to capital, cost of credit and risk perception. He calls for reform of the international financial architecture without detailing concrete pathways. He supports relaunching the SDGs.

– Profile

Sall frames development primarily as a question of financing capacity. To Sall, the core issue lies in the conditions under which countries access capital, manage debt and invest in long-term priorities such as infrastructure.

His position on development centers on reforming the international financial architecture. He has linked development constraints to high borrowing costs, short maturities, restricted access to credit, and risk assessments that disadvantage developing countries. His proposals remain broad and do not outline specific institutional changes or reform pathways.

Sall has placed strong emphasis on private capital, investment, trade, and partnerships. He presents these as necessary complements to public finance, while acknowledging that current debt structures can limit development when borrowing conditions are unfavorable.

His approach reflects his experience as a former head of state; as President of Senegal, he oversaw large-scale development projects supported through external financing, while navigating debt constraints, borrowing conditions and access to capital. As a candidate, he has connected development with peace and security, stressing that conflict redirects resources and disrupts long-term progress. He has also recognized inequality, exclusion, and climate vulnerability, though these issues do not drive his overall vision.

Sall has proposed revitalizing the General Assembly and addressing its coordination with the Economic and Social Council on development issues. He has also emphasized representation and power within the UN system, including Security Council reform. These positions reflect concerns about representation and institutional balance in global governance.

On the Sustainable Development Goals, Sall supports their continuation and relaunch. His position indicates that future development agendas will depend on improving financing conditions and expanding access to capital.

– Human rights and gender equality

By: Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and GQUAL Campaign

– Summary

Sall commits to the UN Charter and international law, acknowledges human rights as a pillar. He acknowledges funding imbalances and proposes reallocating savings. He has not proposed strengthening accountability mechanisms. He commits to gender parity and geographic representation.

– Profile

Sall has committed to the UN Charter and international law, including calling out noncompliance and avoiding “double standards.” His vision statement omits any reference to human rights as a core pillar, instead framing his approach around “peace, security, development, and shared prosperity.” When asked, he did not clarify the omission but noted that peace must be accompanied by development and affirmed his recognition of the three pillars. He also said he would maintain human rights “at the heart of the UN.”

He has acknowledged funding imbalances for human rights and emphasized that reforms should not weaken core pillars, while noting budget constraints make cuts inevitable. He has suggested eliminating overlapping mandates and reallocating resources to human rights. He has not outlined other strategies to strengthen the human rights pillar or its accountability mechanisms, but has proposed that, on “major human rights issues or war issues,” the use of the veto should be avoided.

His references to human rights focused mostly on violations in conflicts, highlighting women and children. On gender equality, he has committed to promoting women’s rights and emphasized women’s role in conflict prevention and resolution. When asked about actions to address global pushback, including on sexual and reproductive rights and Women, Peace and Security, he did not provide a response. He has not developed proposals on other human rights issues or affected populations.

Sall has indicated adherence to gender parity and geographic balance, suggesting member states put forward “a qualified woman candidate” alongside others, and pledging to appoint a woman from the “North” as Deputy Secretary-General in light of his background as a man from the Global South.

Sall’s prior experience has not focused on human rights or gender equality, and aspects of his record as President of Senegal have drawn allegations of human rights violations.

– Gender, youth, and civil society inclusion

By: CIVICUS and Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network

– Summary

Sall commits to geographic and gender parity in senior leadership, including a woman as DSG. He calls for greater inclusion of women and youth, though without specific proposals. He frames civil society positively despite his troubling domestic record.

– Profile

Sall has a mixed track record on gender, youth and civil society inclusion. The repression civil society faced in Senegal from 2021-2024 at the hands of Sall's administration has raised [concerns](#) from civil society actors regarding his willingness to work with civil society and oppositional actors. In an [interview](#) with PassBlue, Moussa Ngom, a Senegalese journalist, noted that he "plunged the country into one of the darkest periods in its democratic history," and questioned his fitness for "a role that demands strong credibility on human rights." During this period, Human Rights Watch [documented](#) a systematic crackdown on the political opposition, media, and civil society, including arbitrary arrests of journalists and activists and bans on civil society demonstrations.

This history is at odds with Sall's statements during the General Assembly dialogues, where he repeatedly named civil society as an important actor. As a candidate, he has primarily framed civil society as implementation partners (in humanitarian aid distribution, for example) rather than accountability and governance partners. Sall has discussed the need to gain back the trust of member states, but has not acknowledged the trust deficit between the world's population and the UN as an institution. He has also mentioned the need to include women and youth in UN agendas related to peacebuilding and job opportunities.

On representation, Sall cites a track record on women's representation in his leadership and advisory teams throughout his career. He has further committed to appointing a woman from the "North" as Deputy Secretary-General.

So far in his campaign, Sall has not directly addressed LGBTQ+ peoples, shrinking civic space, or anti-gender pushback as a challenge for feminist civil society. During the General Assembly dialogues, when asked about regression on gender equality commitments under international law, Sall did not answer but rather discussed gender parity in high-level appointments.

– Climate

By: Plataforma CIPÓ and SHE Changes Climate

– Summary

Sall gives climate little prominence in his campaign. He acknowledges vulnerability, adaptation and finance gaps, especially for SIDS and Africa. He supports the Loss and Damage Fund and Just Energy Transition Partnership, but proposes no concrete reforms toward climate objectives.

– Profile

As a candidate, Sall has had limited engagement on climate. His vision statement argues that peace and security cannot be ensured on a lasting basis when the foundations of development are undermined by poverty, inequality, exclusion and “climate vulnerability” – the only time climate is directly mentioned. The statement refers more broadly to “the environment” among the global issues to which the UN must provide collective, credible and effective responses. It also calls for the UN to act as a central platform for strategic consultation on these issues, in collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, other international financial institutions and non-state partners.

Similarly, Sall made a passing reference to climate in his opening remarks at the General Assembly dialogue, listing “climate vulnerabilities” as one of several systemic global challenges.

In response to member state questions, he has highlighted “backtracking” and a “drop in climate funding” since the Paris Agreement. He has referred to the Just Energy Transition Partnership and the Loss and Damage Fund as relevant mechanisms that should be continued to move toward a just climate transition.

On SIDS, he has recognized that rising sea levels threaten “their very existence” and stressed that these countries “contribute very little” to the pollution driving climate change, calling for international solidarity to support SIDS’ adaptation and resilience efforts. However, when pressed on how he would use his leadership to mobilize climate action, he did not offer concrete pathways. He has said that reforms under his leadership “will not be at the detriment of developmental and climate fund expense,” but did not explain how that commitment would be operationalized.

Sall has experience on climate, including as former Special Envoy for the Paris Pact for People and the Planet and as current President of the Global Center on Adaptation to Climate Change.

– UN reform

By: Article 109

– Summary

Sall emphasizes a more representative UN. He calls for political reform of the Security Council, General Assembly and ECOSOC but without concrete proposals. He commits to calling out Charter violations and treating member states equally without double standards.

– Profile

Sall is expected to be vocal in championing the Charter. He is the most forward-leaning of the candidates on advocating for political reform, including of the Security Council. However, he has not offered concrete proposals to achieve this.

Sall views much of the UN's dysfunction as stemming from a failure to become more representative and to adapt, saying that for more than three-quarters of member states, the institutional architecture of 1945 has become "a source of inequality that feeds frustration and challenges to the system."

While acknowledging the hurdles in delivering Security Council reform, he has positioned the Secretary-General as being able to "move the agenda." He has also identified revitalizing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, particularly on development, as priorities. He has not provided specific proposals, but envisions hosting a dialogue with the Security Council's permanent members to better "ensure the legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN."

Sall has expressed support for implementing UN80 and has noted the UN needs to rediscover its place in the multilateral system, working alongside international financial institutions.

As Chair of the African Union from 2022-2023, Sall was instrumental in the successful push for permanent AU membership of the G20. As a President of Senegal, he implemented economic and constitutional reform.

Sall has said that the Secretary-General must be impartial and independent, explicitly stating that he would not align with any geopolitical bloc, promising to act as a bridge "between East and West, and between North and South."

He has emphasized his commitment to international law and to applying this message to all without selectivity or double standards – and specifically called for member states not to exercise the veto "for major human rights issues or war."

Policy Profiles of UN Secretary General Candidates

