



As the 65th session of the General Assembly is coming to an end, symbolized in part by the recent appointment of the Qatari diplomat [Nazir Abdul Azziz Al-Nassar](#) , 57, as President of the 66th session (succeeding [Joseph Deiss](#)), the focus will very soon be on the upcoming session and the challenges waiting to be discussed.

But what exactly is on the General Assembly's Agenda when political leaders from all 193 Member States of the United Nations gather in New York on 13 September?

More than 160 issues up for discussion

Although the range of topics on the official agenda for the upcoming General Assembly is immense and so far counts more than 160 issues to be discussed, everything is expected to run smoothly, as up to seven months of intense and careful planning serves as the solid groundwork for the following month's discussions in the General Assembly, on the part of the General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division ([GAEAD](#)) of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management ([DGACM](#)). These divisions of the UN make sure that meetings, conferences etc. are organized and effective. A necessity as the General Assembly is intense and hectic as many matters are up for debate.

When the General Assembly commences, one of the first things on the agenda is acceptance of the official Agenda. A [provisional agenda](#) , in accordance to the [Rules of Procedure](#) , must be sent to the General Secretary and all members of the United Nations no later than 60 days prior to the opening of the session. The final Agenda will be adopted in a plenary meeting after the

session begins.

With an agenda that consists of more than 160 issues, some issues are given more prominence and are expected to attract more attention than others.

This year three high-level meetings will be held which provide political leaders with a unique opportunity to have in-depth discussions on selected issues of global concern.

3 high-level meetings

The first High-level meeting will focus on obesity or "[the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases](#)". The four most dangerous and common non-communicable diseases (NCDs): Cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung diseases and diabetes will be the focal points of discussion.

These are all serious health issues that most people in the world can relate to, as statistics show that these four potentially deadly non-communicable diseases [kill three in five people worldwide](#), and cause great socioeconomic harm within all countries - particularly in developing nations.

"The summit in September in New York is our chance to broker an international commitment that puts non-communicable diseases high on the development agenda, where they belong," Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, [says](#).

The second high-level meeting is on the theme "[Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication](#)" and is the subject of debate on 20 September, when leaders gather to discuss progress and solutions - particularly in Africa. This meeting is a lead-up to the forthcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

Finally the 66th General Assembly will convene a one-day high-level meeting to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of [the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](#). This meeting will take place on the 22 September. In short, the Durban Declaration and Programme

of Action is a document, which is the international community's blueprint for action to fight all forms of racism and racial discrimination. Furthermore the 10th anniversary of the declaration is a chance to strengthen political commitment.

The official theme for this high-level meeting is: "Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development."

High-level meetings include heads of state and governments, and do often consist of a plenary session and a series of round table discussions.

During the first couple of weeks, the Secretary-General will also convene a range of important high-level events, which focus on important global issues such as nuclear safety, nutrition, counter-terrorism and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

These events will be in addition to the general debate, which brings together a large number of high-level representatives.

Since the first weeks of the session include heads of states, it is expected that leaders will use the General Assembly as an opportunity for numerous informal bilateral and smaller multilateral discussions as well.

Most discussions and meetings during a General Assembly session have in recent years been scheduled to take place from the opening in September to the end of December, although there will be meetings, discussions and voting up until the end of the 66th session.

For additional information about the General Assembly:

- General Introduction to the General Assembly: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/65/meetings/elections/presskit66/backgroundunder.pdf>

- Provisional agenda of the sixty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/150

- Schedule of the high-level week: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/info/meetings/66schedule.shtml>

- High-level Meetings and the general debate of 66th session: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/INF/66/4

3 High-level meetings:

- Non-communicable diseases: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/ncdiseases.shtml>

- Desertification: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/desertification.shtml>

- Non-communicable diseases: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/ncdmeeting2011/>