

President of Azerbaijan

The President opened the ceremony with remarks on Azerbaijan's energy contributions and environmental positioning:

- **Historical energy role:** Highlighted Azerbaijan as the first to drill offshore oil in the Caspian Sea, underscoring the nation's long-standing energy expertise.
- **Energy statistics:** Shared that Azerbaijan produces 0.7% of global oil and 0.4% of global gas, yet accounts for only 0.1% of global carbon emissions.
- **Western perception critique:** Expressed frustration over being labeled a "petro state" and argued that Azerbaijan should be evaluated on additional criteria such as GDP and employment, not solely on its natural resources.
- **Energy export importance:** Mentioned Azerbaijan's critical role in European energy security, supplying gas to eight European countries, with the European Commission requesting a doubling of its gas exports.
- **Accusations against Western media:** Called out "Western Fake News Media" for allegedly spreading misleading narratives about Azerbaijan's energy practices.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

In a video address, Guterres urged immediate and unprecedented climate action:

- **Final countdown:** Warned that this year will be the hottest on record, with catastrophic weather events fueled by human-induced climate change.
- **Global demand for action:** Noted that 80% of the global population demands climate action, emphasizing that COP29 must address these expectations.
- **Renewable energy push:** Encouraged a transition to solar and wind, now the cheapest energy sources, as a way to curb temperature rise.
- **G20 leadership:** Called on G20 nations to reduce fossil fuel production and implement ambitious climate measures.
- **Climate finance:** Urged COP29 to establish a new, transparent climate finance goal, labeling it an essential investment rather than charity.
- **Cultural impact:** Stressed that climate victims are more than numbers, as their lives and cultures face direct threats from climate change.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Seri Paduka Maimunah Mohd Sharif

Sharif represented the voice of common citizens, emphasizing climate adaptation and sustainable urban development:

- **Climate adaptation in cities:** Noted the importance of integrating green spaces and nature-based solutions for cities like Kuala Lumpur to withstand climate impacts.
- **Call for multilateral action:** Stressed that only a unified approach across all societal sectors can ensure a sustainable future.

- **Message to leaders:** Urged global leaders to prioritize peace, stating that conflicts undermine sustainable development goals.
- **Demand for implementation:** Emphasized the need to move from declarations to tangible climate action.

Astronauts Sunny Williams and Nick Hague

From the International Space Station, Williams and Hague shared a unique perspective:

- **Bird's-eye view of climate impact:** Described the visible effects of climate change from space, emphasizing the global scale of the crisis.
- **Gratitude to Azerbaijan:** Thanked Azerbaijan for hosting COP29, acknowledging the country's hospitality and role in facilitating the event.

Cultural Program

The event celebrated Azerbaijani culture, showcasing the nation's natural beauty, landscapes, and biodiversity:

- **Azerbaijani cultural presentation:** Included a video on the country's rich landscapes and traditions, along with a live performance by an opera singer and orchestra, blending culture with the conference's environmental mission.

Overall Summary

The three main speakers each presented distinct perspectives on how to make COP29 a success:

- **Unified message:** Emphasized unity and cooperation among nations and stakeholders to achieve effective climate action.
- **Azerbaijan's role:** Azerbaijan was spotlighted for both its energy contributions and cultural heritage, positioning itself as a key player in the climate dialogue.