

How to rebuild hope | Demócrata

 democrata.es/en/analysis-and-opinion/how-to-rebuild-hope

Aminata Touré, Amitabh Behar

July 30, 2026



In all regions of the world, **people are going through a period of deep uncertainty**. Conflicts and wars are multiplying; climate disasters are accelerating and hitting hardest those who have the least responsibility for them; the weight of debt is suffocating public services in dozens of countries; [artificial intelligence](#) promises extraordinary advances, while also raising fears in multiple areas; and democracy itself is under increasing pressure. Citizens know that when crises erupt, it will be they who pay the price.

The world does not lack solutions; it lacks the political will of those who have the greatest capacity to act together. We are facing a genuine crisis of hope.

Part of the problem lies in the way global decisions are made. For decades, international decision-making has been driven by forums led by the West, such as the [G7](#), the International Monetary Fund, or the World Bank. However, many people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America believe that these institutions are not representative and that they make decisions for them, rather than with them.

The consequences are already visible in three interconnected crises that highlight this lack of political will and greatly hinder the rebuilding of trust in collective action.

The first is extreme inequality. In **Africa**, nearly 57% of the population —around 751 million people— live in countries that allocate more resources to debt repayment than to healthcare or

education, frequently transferring scarce funds to wealthy private creditors in the Global North. The consequences are profound: at the current rate, eradicating extreme poverty on the continent could take more than 600 years. In Latin America, the most unequal region in the world, two men possess more wealth than **334 million people**. On a global scale, the fortunes of billionaires have increased by \$9.8 trillion since 2020.

The second crisis, closely linked to the first, is climate injustice. **The world continues dangerously far from the goals of the Paris Agreement**, forcing those who have contributed the least to the crisis to bear its highest costs. People living in unequal countries are seven times more likely to die in a flood than those residing in more equal societies. Meanwhile, a person belonging to the richest 0.1% generates in a single day more carbon emissions than a person in the poorest 50% does in an entire year.

The third crisis is the erosion of respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, within a system characterized by increasing impunity. In numerous conflicts, the civilian population is paying the highest price, while the norms designed to protect them are ignored or applied selectively with increasing frequency. Since 2019, 44 people per minute have been thrust into humanitarian emergency situations. An international order based on norms cannot survive if those norms are only applied to some.

This institutional failure reflects a broader attack on civic space. Around the world, governments are restricting fundamental freedoms such as those of association, expression, and peaceful protest. Furthermore, political participation has taken a dangerous turn: while civil society faces severe restrictions in more than 118 countries, the wealthiest encounter no similar obstacles. Currently, a billionaire is 4,000 times more likely to hold a political office than an ordinary person.

However, a different story is emerging. While **cooperation among great powers** is becoming increasingly complicated, a growing number of middle powers are demonstrating political will to collectively address shared challenges. International coalitions are becoming indispensable tools to mobilize political support, resources, legitimacy, and, above all, people.

This change could be observed during the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development**, where the Sevilla Action Platforms were launched. Designed to navigate geopolitical tensions, these platforms allow governments and other stakeholders to drive concrete initiatives. A highlighted example is [the Action Platform on the Taxation of the Superrich, promoted by Spain and Brazil](#), which channels the growing global demand from citizens to combat extreme inequality.

Attention must also be paid to the push to create an International Panel on Inequality, inspired by the Intergovernmental Panel of Experts on **Climate Change**—the IPCC, for its acronym in English. Promoted by a group of experts chaired by Professor Joseph Stiglitz during the G20 Summit held in South Africa, this initiative is quickly gaining support from governments and

actors from academia and civil society. It has the backing of Brazil, South Africa, Spain, Norway, and the African Union. If it received the support of the United Nations General Assembly, it would send a strong message about the urgency of addressing the inequality emergency and would demonstrate that international cooperation to respond to shared challenges is possible.

This same spirit can be appreciated in efforts to defend democracy and international law. The **Summit in Defense of Democracy**, held in Barcelona in 2026 after a similar initiative led by Chile, brought together political leaders and representatives of civil society committed to strengthening democratic resilience. The decision to hold the next summit in Mexico indicates that this initiative is becoming a continued political process aimed at building alliances to promote progressive agendas, rather than an isolated event.

Rebuilding trust requires more than casting a ballot in a box every few years. People want to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. They want to be heard, not simply counted. Precisely for this reason, civil society is essential.

The history reminds us that the most lasting political transformations —from the struggle against colonialism and the defense of civil rights to advances in women's rights and the current protests of the [Generation Z](#)— have always been driven by hope and by the conviction that a better future is possible.

The task we have ahead of us is not simply to defend multilateralism as it exists today, but to transform and rethink it so that it listens to the aspirations of the citizenry and acts accordingly. In an increasingly fear- and division-marked world, this could be the most important political project of all.

about the signatures:

Aminata Touré is the former Prime Minister of Senegal and Member of the Club de Madrid, and **Amitabh Behar**, executive director of Oxfam International.