

Submitted by UN2020

## ZERO DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

We, the Heads of State and Government representing the peoples of the world, have gathered on September 21, 2020, to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. We do so with a sense of awe and deep respect for the founders who created this Organization. There is no other global organization with the legitimacy, convening power and normative impact as the United Nations. No other global organization that brings hope to so many people for a better world and can deliver the future we want. The urgency for the countries around the world to come together, to fulfill the promise of the nations united, has rarely been greater.

Born out of the horrors of a world war, the United Nations was established to save future generations from the scourge of war. Even in times of great global challenges and tension, as during the Cold War, our Organization has catalyzed decolonization, promoted freedom, shaped norms for international development and worked to eradicate disease. The United Nations has helped mitigate dozens of conflicts, saved hundreds of thousands of lives through humanitarian action and provided millions of children the education that every child deserves. It has worked to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the equal rights of women and men. Through its Charter, which is the cornerstone of international law, it has determined that all nations -- whether large or small -- should be treated with sovereign equality and with respect for their territorial integrity, political independence and the right to self-determination of peoples. The achievements are many, and we owe the United Nations and its personnel gratitude and respect, especially to those who have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. Every day, countries, citizens, **civil society groups and the private sector** ~~and civic actors~~ use the platform provided by the United Nations to make life better for all humanity and the planet.

However, the United Nations has had its moments of disappointment. Our world is not yet the world our founders envisaged 75 years ago. It is plagued by growing inequality, complex conflicts, terrorism, insecurity, **weapons of mass destruction, dangerous technology trends,** climate change and pandemics. People in different corners of the world are forced to make dangerous journeys in search of refuge and safety. The least developed countries are falling behind, and we still have not achieved complete decolonization. All this is a call for greater action, not less. When Member States lend their will and their resources to the collective efforts of the Organization, powerful results have been seen. Through the Global Conversation launched by the Secretary-General this year, we have heard the concerns and aspirations of the peoples **[PLEASE RETAIN]**. We are here to respond.

Our challenges are interconnected and can only be addressed through reinvigorated multilateralism. As we meet, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reverberate around our

world. In a matter of weeks, the pandemic manifested itself as the largest global challenge in the history of the United Nations. It has not only caused death and serious illnesses, but **has triggered a** ~~also~~ global economic recession, increasing poverty, societal anxiety and fear. It has put enormous pressure on all of our societies, our economies and our health systems. While none of us have been left untouched, the most vulnerable persons and nations have been the hardest hit. COVID-19 has reminded us in the most powerful way that **our global systems must be responsive to the diverse needs of all to effectively manage global crises** ~~we are only as strong as our weakest link~~. Only by working together and in solidarity can we eradicate the virus and effectively tackle its consequences. Only together can we build resilience against future pandemics and other global crises. Multilateralism is not an option but a necessity and in the national interest of each and every State. We must build back better for a more equal, more resilient and more sustainable world. The United Nations must be at the center of our efforts. **[PLEASE RETAIN THIS PARA]**

Strengthening international cooperation is in the interest of both nations and peoples. The three pillars of the United Nations - peace and security, sustainable development and human rights - are equally important, interrelated and interdependent. We have come far in 75 years but much more remains to be done. **We must use the tools at hand, and create the systems we need to address the underlying fragility exposed by COVID-19.** ~~We have all the tools we need and now we need to use them.~~ Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an obligation and a necessity for our survival **[PLEASE RETAIN]**. Urgent efforts are required. Therefore, we are not here to celebrate. We are here to take action. Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter, we are here to ensure the future we want, and the United Nations we need.

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**We will leave no one behind.** The next ten years, which has been designated as the Decade of Action, will be the most critical of our generation. It is even more important as we build back better **and greener** from COVID-19. We need a strong UN development system and effective collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions. We support the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard. We are determined to implement the 2030 Agenda on time. There is no alternative. The peoples have to be at the center of all our efforts **and included in our deliberations, policy making, implementation and evaluation at all levels.** Particular attention must be given to the vulnerable groups. We are guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and will ensure everyone's human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**We will protect our planet.** Without **urgent and more** ~~determined~~ action we will continue to impoverish our planet with less biodiversity, less natural resources, more environmental threats and more climate related crises, including drought, widespread wildfires and depletion of the oceans. The time to act is now. Many countries, not least small island developing states and least developed countries, are already among the most affected. We need to adapt to the

circumstances and take transformative measures. We have a historic opportunity to **ensure climate justice and mobilize for adaptation and mitigation**—~~build back better from COVID-19~~. We need to immediately curb greenhouse gas emissions, **end fossil fuel subsidies**, and achieve sustainable production and consumption patterns in line with the Paris agreement and the 2030 Agenda. This cannot wait.

**We will work to ensure peace and security.** The increase in complex conflicts must be urgently resolved through peaceful means. International arms control and disarmament agreements and structures need to be upheld. The United Nations must better address new forms and domains of threats including cyberattacks. The diplomatic toolbox of the Charter needs to be used to its full potential. We call on the Secretary-General to enhance this toolbox to avoid the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of hostilities on land, at sea, ~~or~~ in space **and online**. We fully support and promote the Secretary-General's initiative for a global ceasefire **and the Sustaining Peace Agenda**. Humanitarian access to those in need must be granted without obstacle or delay in accordance with international humanitarian law. To **promote reconciliation and to** build, keep and sustain peace in societies emerging from conflict is now one of the main responsibilities of the United Nations.

**We will abide by international rules and norms.** The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law remain timeless, universal and an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. We will abide by **and implement** the international agreements we have entered into. We will continue to promote respect for democracy, to enhance democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent, **participatory**, and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions **[PLEASE RETAIN]**.

**We will make this the century of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls** ~~place women and girls at the center~~. ~~Without the leadership and active participation of women, lasting peace and sustainable development are unattainable. Conflicts will not be resolved without the active participation of women. Sustainable development will not occur without the engagement of women.~~ Human rights can never be fully upheld unless they also apply to **girls and women of all ages**—~~all women~~. Persistent gender inequalities, gender abuse and violence have deprived us of a more just, **sustainable** and better world. We will accelerate action to achieve women's participation and gender equality in all domains.

**We will build trust.** **Good governance that is transparent, open, and inclusive, promotes trust within societies.** Growing inequality within and among countries is jeopardizing our efforts to ensure the future we want. Inequality leads to mistrust between countries and to peoples' mistrust in institutions of governance. It also contributes to acts of xenophobia, racism, intolerance, hate speech, disinformation, terrorism and violent extremism. We condemn all such acts. We will address the root causes of inequalities, including **greed**, violence, corruption, marginalization, discrimination, poverty, exclusion as well as lack of education and employment. It is our responsibility.

**We will promote the use of new technologies for the benefit of all.** Digital technologies have strong potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda. However, when improperly managed or maliciously used, they can fuel divisions within and between countries, increase insecurity, undermine human rights and exacerbate inequality. Shaping a shared vision on digital cooperation and addressing digital trust and security must be a priority as our world is now more than ever relying on digital tools for connectivity and socio-economic prosperity. We must ensure safe and affordable digital access for all. The United Nations can be **an exemplary user of digital technology, as well as** a platform for such deliberations in partnership with relevant actors.

**We will upgrade the United Nations.** The world of today is very different from what it was when the United Nations was created 75 years ago. There are more countries, more people, more challenges, but also more solutions. Our working methods need to keep pace and adapt. We support the ongoing reforms by the Secretary-General. They are creating a more agile and effective organization that can deliver in the field and adapt to crises like COVID-19. We commit to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council and continue the work to revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council **with a view toward making them more responsive, accountable, and democratic.**

**We will ensure financing.** None of our aspirations will be realized unless there is sustainable funding of the organization. We will pay our assessed contribution in full and on time **[PLEASE RETAIN]**. Measures to better ensure this should be explored. Implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development is key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Joint public-private financing, **when it is transparent and grounded in human rights**, plays a central role in our efforts to make the United Nations deliver better on its purposes.

**We will boost partnerships.** Today's challenges require cooperation not only across borders but also across the whole of society. We have to **ensure that ~~make~~ the United Nations fosters enabling environments for more inclusive and meaningful ~~and~~ engagement** with all relevant stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, youth, civil society, **indigenous peoples, local authorities**, the private sector, academia and parliamentarians, to ensure an effective response to our common challenges.

**We will listen to and work with youth.** Youth is the missing piece for peace and development. As we benefited from the foresight of the founders of the United Nations, young people today will have to live with the consequences of our action and inaction. For too long, the voices of youth have been sidelined in discussions about their future. This has to change now **[PLEASE RETAIN]**. **Institutional arrangements need to be created to ensure young people's meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making.**

**We will be prepared.** ~~The COVID-19 pandemic caught us off guard.~~ We need to learn, share experiences and information ~~in order~~ to make our systems more resilient and coordinate better in future crises. While improving our global crisis prevention and response systems, there is an urgent need to accelerate the development, production and equitable global access to new vaccines and medicine **and strengthen public health care systems and scientific research.** We applaud all healthcare and other frontline workers who put their own safety at risk when saving others. We will invest wisely in the safety of us all.

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What we agree today, will affect the sustainability of our planet as well the welfare of generations for decades to come. Through reinvigorated global action and building on the progress achieved in the last 75 years, we are determined to ensure the future we want. To achieve this, we will mobilize resources, strengthen our efforts and show unprecedented political will and leadership. We will work together with partners to strengthen coordination and global governance for the common good of present and future generations.

We request the Secretary-General, **following consultations with Member States and other stakeholders,** to report back before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges **[PLEASE RETAIN]**. We commit to take this declaration to our citizens, in the true spirit of We the Peoples.