

## **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 gives hope to so many people for a better world and can deliver the future we want. The urgency for all countries to come together, to fulfill the promise of the nations united, has rarely been greater.

Born out of the horrors of World War II, the United Nations, as a common endeavor for humanity, was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Even in times of great global challenges and tension, 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 with the education that every child deserves. It has worked to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the equal rights of women and men. The Charter of the United Nations, which is the cornerstone of international law, has declared the principle of sovereign equality of all States, respect of their territorial integrity, political independence and the right to self-determination of peoples. It has affirmed the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the resolution of international disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. It has determined that all states shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

The achievements are many, and we owe the United Nations and its personnel much gratitude and respect, not least to those who have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. Over the years, more than one million women and men have served under the UN flag in more than 70 peacekeeping operations. Every day, countries, citizens, private sector and civil society representatives use the platform provided by the United Nations to make life better for all of humanity.

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, poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism, insecurity, 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 calls for greater action, not less. When Member States lend their will and 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 listened to the concerns and aspirations of the people. 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 illness, but also global economic recession, increased poverty, anxiety, and fear. It has put enormous pressure on our societies, economies, and health systems. While none of us have been left untouched, people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries have been the hardest hit. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us in the most powerful way that we are closely interconnected and only as strong as our weakest link. Only by working together and in solidarity can we end the pandemic and effectively tackle its consequences. Only together can we build resilience against future pandemics and other global challenges. Multilateralism is not an option but a necessity as we build back better for a more equal, more resilient, and more sustainable world. The United Nations must be at the center of our efforts.

Strengthening international cooperation is in the interest of both nations and peoples. The three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, 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 have the tools and now we need to use them. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our roadmap and its implementation a necessity for our survival. 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 have 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 from the COVID-19 pandemic. We need a strong UN development system and effective collaboration between the United Nations and the international financial institutions. We support the Secretary-General's efforts and measures in this regard. We are determined to implement the 2030 Agenda in full and on time. There is no alternative. The peoples have to be at the center of all our efforts. Particular attention must be given to people in vulnerable situations. Humanitarian access to those in need of assistance must be granted without obstacle or delay and in line with the humanitarian principles. We are guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human right treaties and instruments and will ensure everyone's human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**We will protect our planet.** Without more determined action we will continue to impoverish our planet with less biodiversity and fewer natural resources. We will see more environmental threats and climate related challenges, including natural disasters, drought, desertification, food shortages, water scarcity, wildfires, sea-level rise, and depletion of the oceans. The time to act is now. Many countries, not least small island developing states, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, are already among the most affected. We need to adapt to the circumstances and take transformative measures. We have a historic opportunity to build back better and greener. We need to immediately curb greenhouse gas emissions and achieve sustainable consumption and production patterns in line with applicable State commitments to the Paris Agreement and in line with the 2030 agenda. This cannot wait.

**We will promote peace and prevent conflicts.** The ongoing armed conflicts and threats against international peace and security must be urgently resolved through peaceful means. We reiterate the importance of abiding by the Charter, principles of international law, and relevant resolutions of the Security Council. International arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and their architectures need to be upheld. The United Nations must better address all

forms and domains of threats. Terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism are serious threats to international peace and security. The diplomatic toolbox of the Charter needs to be used to its full potential, including preventive diplomacy and mediation. We call on the Secretary-General to enhance this toolbox to prevent the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of hostilities on land, at sea, in space and in cyberspace. We fully support and promote the Secretary-General's initiative for a global ceasefire. International humanitarian law must be fully respected. To build, keep and sustain peace is now one of the main responsibilities of the United Nations.

**We will abide by international law and ensure justice.** 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 the international agreements we have entered into and the commitments we have made. We will continue to promote respect for democracy and human rights, to enhance democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions.

**We will place women and girls at the center.** Conflicts will not be resolved, and sustainable development not occur, without the equal and active participation of women at all levels. Human rights can never be fully upheld unless they are also enjoyed by all women and girls. Persistent gender inequalities and abuse, including sexual- and gender-based violence, have deprived us of a more just and better world. We will accelerate action to achieve gender equality, women's participation, and the empowerment of women and girls in all domains.

**We will build trust.** Growing inequality within and among countries is jeopardizing our efforts to ensure the future we want. Inequality leads to mistrust between countries, and to people's mistrust in institutions of governance. It also contributes to acts of xenophobia, racism, intolerance, hate speech and disinformation. We condemn all such acts. We will address the root causes of inequalities, including violence, human rights abuses, corruption, marginalization, discrimination in all its forms, poverty and exclusion, as well as lack of education and employment. It is our responsibility.

**We will improve digital cooperation.** Digital technologies have profoundly transformed society. They offer unprecedented opportunities and new challenges. When improperly 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 a digital future that show the full potential for beneficial technology usage, and addressing digital trust and security, must continue to be a priority as our world is now more than ever relying on digital tools for connectivity and social-economic prosperity. Digital technologies have a potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda. We must ensure safe and affordable digital access for all. The United Nations can provide a platform for all stakeholders to participate in such deliberations.

**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, effective, and accountable organization that can deliver better in the field and adapt to global challenges. We reiterate our call for reforms of three of the principal organs of the United Nations. 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. The review of the peacebuilding architecture has our full support.

**We will ensure sustainable financing.** Realizing our aspirations will require sustainable and predictable funding of the Organization. We will pay our assessed contribution in full and on time. Measures to better ensure this should be explored. We will further enhance transparency, accountability and efficient use of resources. The full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development is key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Joint public-private financing 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 make the United Nations more inclusive and engage with all relevant stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, 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 benefitted 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 through meaningful engagement with youth.

**We will be prepared.** The COVID-19 pandemic caught us off-guard. It has served as a wake-up call for improving our preparedness for not only health related crises but also other challenges and crises. We need to strengthen international cooperation, coordination, and solidarity. It is important to learn, share experiences and information to reduce risks and make our systems more resilient. While improving our global crisis prevention and response systems, there is an urgent need to accelerate development, production as well as equitable and affordable global access to new vaccines, medicines, and medical equipment. We applaud all healthcare and other frontline workers who put their own safety at risk when saving others, and pledge to put the people at the center of our response.

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What we agree today, will affect the sustainability of our planet as well as the welfare of generations for decades to come. Through reinvigorated global action and by 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 future of present and coming generations.

We request the Secretary-General 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.

We commit to take this declaration to our citizens, in the true spirit of We the Peoples.