

“Our Common Agenda: UN After 75”

Proposals to reinvigorate an inclusive, networked and effective
multilateralism

Club de Madrid-2021



Final Report

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Foreword from Danilo Türk, President of Club de Madrid

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations has represented hope for millions of people affected by poverty, hunger and conflict. The organisation is the best example of what States are able to build together despite their differences.

Looking back, it might be easy to discern moments when the United Nations and the multilateral system failed to rise to the occasion. We cannot, however, fail to acknowledge the fact that multilateralism has contributed to shaping the most peaceful and prosperous period of time in our existence as human beings.

Our multilateral system is not perfect. Original signatories of the United Nations Charter in 1945 already knew that when they agreed to compromise on a set of controversial issues only because all nations were determined to set up, if not the perfect international organization, at least the best that could be made.

After 75 years, we now share the same responsibility, which is, how to reform multilateralism to make it fit for purpose in the new era despite our differences?

Multilateralism has no alternative. The challenges the world is facing require more global cooperation than ever. COVID-19 has been a painful warning of what we can face in the future, it should help us to be better prepared as a global community facing global and shared threats related to peace, health, financial stability, environmental sustainability and digital transformation, among many others.

The moment has come to set the world on a new path more equitable, secure and sustainable, fit for purpose in the 21st century and able to leave no one behind. The *Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations* is a good reminder of what needs to be done, but it requires political will, significant reforms, and measurable implementation.

Club de Madrid was created to put at the service of current leaders, from the local to the global level, the experience of former Heads of State and Government, to promote and strengthen global governance and democracy. The report that I introduce here, on behalf of my fellow Members of Club de Madrid, is our contribution to *Our Common Agenda*. It aims at supporting the United Nations Secretary General's efforts to put in place an inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism able to address the world's biggest global challenges.

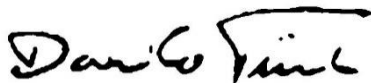
The proposals contained in this report are the result of a series of conversations among Club de Madrid Members and Advisors on how to advance the Common Agenda and strengthen multilateralism as the guarantor of inclusive, consensus-based, and sustainable responses to transnational challenges. We organised our recommendations and specific proposals, some of which relate to future actions and structural improvements of the United Nations, along the lines of the 12 commitments of the Declaration *on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary* of the organization.

The 2030 Agenda should guide all our efforts, it should remain our roadmap and the core comprehensive framework within which all policy initiatives and reforms should be embedded. Human Rights and human dignity should remain central to all conversations regarding peace, security and development, and social development should play a significant role. Holding a Second World Summit for Social Development would allow Member States to reaffirm social and economic commitments in light of the COVID 19 Pandemic and help the United Nations to define what the organization understands by social development.

Youth represents the future of humanity. We cannot build a renovated multilateralism without them. The time has come to enable young people's active participation in real decision-making processes at the multilateral level. Club de Madrid fully supports the creation of a new body on youth and with youth under article 22 of the United Nations Charter.

Member States should reflect on what security means in the 21st century. Ensuring the existence of a peaceful and harmonious world for future generations will require addressing threats that were not initially contemplated when the Security Council was established back in 1945. The international community would benefit from a New Global Security Agenda able to expand the definition of security and encompass threats related to health, energy, the cybersphere, food, and climate, just to mention some.

The challenges are mounting and no efforts should be spared. On behalf of my fellow Members of Club de Madrid, I express the willingness of the organization to remain an ally of the United Nations, its Member States and its Secretary General and contribute to a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world where no one is left behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Danilo Türk".

Danilo Türk
President of Club de Madrid
President of Slovenia (2007-2012)

Club de Madrid

Club de Madrid is the world's largest forum of democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers, who leverage their unique leadership experience and global reach to strengthen inclusive democratic practice and improve the well-being of people around the world.

As a non-partisan and international non-profit organisation, it benefits from the hands-on governance expertise of more than 100 Members from over 70 countries, along with a global network of advisers and partners across all sectors of society.

This alliance fosters dialogue, builds bridges and engages in advocacy to strengthen public policy and effective leadership through engagement and policy recommendations addressing challenges such as shared inclusive societies, the advancement of democracy, and multilateralism for global peace and cooperation.

About the Report

On 21 September 2020, United Nations General Assembly held a high-level event to mark the 75th anniversary of the organisation, and adopted by consensus a political declaration on “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”.

Titled “*Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations*” the document lays out 12 succinct commitments to revitalise global cooperation:

1. leave no one behind	2. protect the planet,
3. promote peace	4. abide by international law,
5. place women and girls at the centre	6. build trust,
7. improve digital cooperation	8. upgrade the United Nations,
9. ensure sustainable financing	10. boost partnerships,
11. work with youth	12. be prepared

Member States asked the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) to report back before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly (2021) with **recommendations to advance this common agenda and respond to current and future global challenges**.

On November 27th, 2020 Club de Madrid President, Danilo Türk, received a letter from UNSG inviting “the distinguished members of the Club de Madrid, drawing on their extensive *experience as world leaders, to share ideas with me in the coming months on how we can put in place the inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism that is necessary to address the world’s biggest global challenges both today and in the future.*”

To respond to the UNSG's request, the CdM Secretariat, under the leadership of President Türk, launched an **internal consultation process** which included a series of online, regional conversations with CdM Members and a written procedure to ensure that all CdM Members were able to contribute to this joint reflection.

Between February 8th and 18th, CdM organised regional conversations in which CdM Members and advisors from Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia/Pacific shared their views on the future of multilateralism and the new social contract after COVID-19. The United Nations Foundation participated as an observer in each of these conversations.

The four regional conversations complemented a series of discussions on *Multilateralism and Global Cooperation* that CdM organized in 2020 in the context of its 2020-2022 strategic priorities, one of which is the promotion of an enabling global environment for democracy, including support for the multilateral system as the guarantor of inclusive, consensus-based, and sustainable responses to transnational challenges.

- *Imperial Springs Forum Experts Meeting on Multilateralism 2.0, Globalization and Global Cooperation*, in cooperation with the Australia China Friendship and Exchange Association and the Kingold Group, July 2020.
- *Inclusive Governance to Leave No One Behind During and After COVID-19*, in cooperation with UNITE, July 2020.
- *Policy Lab on Transatlantic Approaches to Digital Governance: A New Social Contract in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, in cooperation with the Boston Global Forum, September 2020
- *Policy Lab on the Future of Europe*, in cooperation with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 2020
- *Policy Lab on Multilateralism, Peace and Security: Strengthening the Rules-Based Multilateral Framework to Sustain Peace*, in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), October 2020
- *Policy Dialogue on Multilateralism that Delivers*, in cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation and the German Federal Foreign Office, October 2020
- *Imperial Springs Forum Experts Meeting on Multilateralism 2.0, Globalization and Global Cooperation*, in cooperation with the Australia China Friendship and Exchange Association, February 2021.
- *Transforming Multilateralism for Social Justice and Inclusion*, in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, February 2021.

The present report aims to bring together the reflections and proposals raised in these interrelated and complementary activities.

Main Reflections and Proposals

1. As Members of Club de Madrid, we reaffirm our faith in the United Nations and our commitment to the **purpose and principles of the Charter**, which enshrines our common values as human beings, and unites us in diversity beyond our ethnic, cultural, identity-related, and religious differences.

We fully endorse the *Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations* and reiterate that “there is *no other global organization with the legitimacy, convening power and normative impact as the United Nations*”.

2. We express our heartfelt support to **United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres** in his responsibility to foster an inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism as the best resort to address global challenges both today and in the future.

In this endeavour, we commend his efforts in listening to the voices of not only United Nations Member States but of a broad network of thought leaders, youth, civil society, private sector actors, and other stakeholders from all regions.

3. Our world is facing grave, **complex and interdependent and overwhelming challenges** that are jeopardising the resilience of governments and threatening citizens all over the globe. Inequality, recession, poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism, human rights violations, insecurity, climate change, and global health crises have set the scene for a new era.

But this is not a time for despondency, let alone for despair. This is a time for resolute leadership and collective action. We must seize this moment to set the world on a new path that will lead us to an equitable, secure and sustainable system of global cooperation enabled by renewed multilateral institutions, fit for purpose in the 21st century and resilient against future existential threats.

4. **Multilateral cooperation is not an option**, it is **a necessity, an obligation and pre-condition** for the preservation of our societies and the management of transnational challenges related to peace and security; economic and financial stability and growth; environmental sustainability, digital transformation; trade; pandemics and others.
5. Humankind is capable of transcending existing challenges by building bridges, re-establishing trust and working actively and responsibly to manage systemic global risks and transnational challenges to **protect our Global Public Goods**. A forward-looking, viable and people-centred strategy of pragmatic dialogue, recognition of interdependency, solidarity and trust is crucial for a reinvigorated, inclusive and effective multilateralism.

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the fragility and fissures of our societies. It has shown us that **people must be at the centre of development** and that multilateral institutions must be redefined around goals of **equity, inclusion and wellbeing**.
7. All measures to recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic and revitalize multilateralism should remain guided by **the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Quito Framework on the New Urban Agenda, the Beijing Declaration and Platform to Action, and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development of 1995**.
8. Considering the 12 commitments of the *Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations*, it is our honour to contribute to this global process with the following reflections and proposals:

8.1 “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 centre 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 humanitarian principles. We are guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties and instruments and will ensure everyone’s human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- The severe economic crisis the world is facing is seriously affecting progress made in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Some of these goals already seemed unattainable before COVID-19 and the pandemic has only exacerbated delays in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Despite obstacles, the 2030 Agenda continues to be our collective roadmap. It constitutes a major milestone for multilateralism and should be valued and protected against any attempt to undermine it.

We encourage all efforts to realistically evaluate the effects of the Pandemic on the implementation and achievement of the SDGs and **support the idea of recalibrating the 2030 Agenda without changing its original aspirations** and mobilising the financial means to advance as close to the goals and targets as possible.

Considering that the SDGs might not be fully achieved by 2030, we support the proposal of convening a series of **High-Level meetings to prepare for the successor vision of the Agenda for Sustainable Development** beyond 2030.

- **Human Rights** should remain central to the global conversation regarding peace, security and development. All civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are not only universal but also indivisible and interrelated in their application, individually and globally.
- COVID-19 has become a test for human rights, including **for the social and economic rights of the most vulnerable and all those affected by the pandemic** and for the civil and political rights of those in societies that have used the cover of COVID-19 measures to repress citizens. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the social aspects of development especially those related to education, employment, social protection and health care.

There is a **need to strengthen the United Nations framework on social development**. The organisation and its Member States should come up with a clear definition of what “social development” means and how it should be pursued. The United Nations needs a **“Social Development Charter”** which defines what the organization understands by social development.

We propose holding a **Second World Summit for Social Development (II WSSD)** to reaffirm social and economic commitments in light of the COVID 19 Pandemic. A *II WSSD* could lead to a **renewed and inclusive Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development** able to respond to the current context and people’s needs, with the concept of **“human dignity”** at its core, and with the **2030 Agenda** as its framework. The II WSSD should be convened by 2025, thirty years after the 1995 Summit in Copenhagen. This timing would allow the participants to assess the world’s social situation comprehensively and design socio-economic policies that would promote reduction of the income inequalities that have characterised the past decades and give concrete meaning to the concept of “leaving no one behind.”

A *II WSSD* might be a good opportunity to review long-pursued social inclusion and social justice objectives such as the “universal social protection floor”; universal health coverage; education for all; and the concept of decent work. All these are central to the consideration of a new social contract and are at the heart of what CdM defines as “A Shared Society”.

- The adoption and entry into force of the **Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** was a major step forward in the international protection of human rights. To ensure its success as one of the main Human Rights instruments of the United Nations on a global level, governments must continue to ratify the document, enabling the most vulnerable to access their fundamental rights.

- On 15 March 2021, the **United Nations Human Rights Council** will celebrate the 15th anniversary of its creation as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. 2021 also sees the opening of the five-year window during which the General Assembly is due to review the status of this Council in accordance with its resolution 65/281. It might be time for the United Nations to assess the human rights system to make sure that can be relevant, meaningful, and effective in the post-pandemic era.

8.2 “We will protect the 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 the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. This cannot wait. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with mounting climate and other ecosystem crises, shows we have reached an inflexion point in both world affairs and our planetary boundaries. We cannot go back to the pre-existing trajectory and standard model of economic growth. We need to garner forces radically to reduce, if not end, poverty and inequality, expand health care and stop biodiversity loss and further damage to our climate system.
- The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, as the leading global environmental organisation setting the global environmental agenda, was created before advancing sustainable development became an agreed priority for the international community. Considering the current dimension of the environmental and climate change agenda, and their relationship to health, social, economic and environmental crises, we must **assess whether UNEP has the appropriate mandate, structure and resources to play its part in advancing sustainable development.**

The 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (**Stockholm Conference**) will provide a good occasion to seriously consider the needed institutional improvements.

- As the impact of global ecological damage becomes increasingly visible, we must accelerate commitments to mitigate climate change and meet the targets of the **2015 Paris Agreement**, combining steadily rising carbon prices with a serious push for green energy investment. An early **convening of a global consultation building on broad-based**

coalitions between cities, Member States and civil society organizations to step up and deepen preparations for COP 26 in November 2021 in Glasgow, UK, would be useful.

8.3 “We will promote peace and prevent violence”

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 3 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 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. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- Members of the UN Security Council interpret threats to security differently. Now, the United Nations and its Member States should reflect on **what security means in the 21st century**. The threat of nuclear weapons and war remains, but other risks are to be found in much broader, everyday areas of people's lives, where the quest to ensure the existence of a peaceful and harmonious world for future generations involves other components than the ones initially contemplated by the Council.

Climate Change is calling into question the survival of human beings on this planet and, as things stand, has already become a global security issue. Climate disruption is a clear conflict amplifier and multiplier.

Pandemics are a conflation of traditional and non-traditional threats. They are not only public health threats but also new drivers for great power competition and possible confrontation, with geopolitical implications impacting the global cooperation needed to effectively support global recovery and future preparedness.

Drug trafficking and organized crime pose a significant and growing threat to international security, with clear implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability across the globe.

An additional factor fuelling insecurity is the **ineffective response to forced displacement**. The multiple dramas of extreme displacement highlight the urgency of establishing universal strategies to address a mounting, deeply disruptive threat. The forced movement of larger numbers of people around the world increases the potential for conflict and insecurity.

The international community would benefit from a **summit-level meeting of the United Nations Security Council to define a New Global Security Agenda**. Expanding definitions of security to encompass threats related to health, energy, the cybersphere, food, and climate can foster involvement from less traditional actors and help produce better crisis management responses.

The role of the UN General Assembly in building a common, global understanding of the priorities in the field of security should also be strengthened

- There ought to be a stronger emergency response system and a more reliable **early warning system for traditional and non-traditional threats**. These systems should respond beyond traditional mandates to include holistic and updated approaches to future crises. COVID-19 has showcased the possibility of a non-traditional threat severely impacting the world, which highlights the need to prepare for other potential global threats such as other pandemics (or an ever-variant COVID 19) and climate change.
- We should build **dialogue between formal, informal and semi-formal efforts**. This means taking an increasingly iterative approach to peacemaking. Mandates, structures, responsibilities and roles must be updated, and informal spaces should be provided beyond established peacemaking or even dialogue structures. We must find more effective ways to connect informal work to the official system and the international community at large. A transparent link should exist between stakeholders and supporters.
- **The United Nations should prioritize peace negotiations before other dispute settlement mechanisms for political disputes**. Peace negotiations remain the mechanism that is least regulated by law. This provides flexible opportunities for multilateral organizations to advocate more strongly for mediation in situations of armed conflict. There should be stronger normative demands from multilateral institutions for peace negotiations to be required before resorting to other types of dispute settlements such as international court rulings. In addition, the resolution of disputes that are essentially technical (e.g. trade, transboundary water management) should be carried out through specialized mechanisms to avoid their politicization.
- **SDG 16** embodies the global community's commitment to peaceful and inclusive societies. In pursuit of this goal, the global community must pay more attention to the symbiotic relationship between social inclusion and peace. Just as peace provides a favourable environment for inclusive societies to flourish, so social inclusion helps mitigate the drivers of conflict and sustain peace. United Nations' efforts towards peace and security would benefit from greater investment in development programmes that address the grievances of different groups through political and social inclusion.

8.4 “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. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- Threats to democracy existed long before COVID-19. But the pandemic has exacerbated existing fault lines in democratic systems and evidenced the inadequacy of some democratic institutions and practices in ensuring that democratic values are protected throughout emergency preparedness and response.

In particular, COVID-19 has limited the capacity of many parliaments, and of civil society and the media to provide effective oversight over executive action throughout the pandemic. In many jurisdictions, the emergency measures and enforcement mechanisms put in place in the absence of parliamentary oversight, have blurred, or clearly exceeded, the limits of the rule of law. COVID-19 has also affected the functioning of judicial institutions around the world, significantly impairing access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups and marginalized communities.

- The United Nations could benefit from the outcomes of **Club de Madrid’s Global Commission on Democracy and Emergencies**. Throughout 2021 the Commission will lead a global discussion to formulate policy recommendations to increase the resilience of democratic societies in situations of emergency, that is, their capacity to function, to deliver, be trusted, and to command the enduring commitment of citizens in the midst of emergencies and recovery processes.
- **International law** is the common language of the international community and a living system that has to evolve in accordance with the needs of international cooperation. Progressive development of international law has to intensify, in particular in the areas characterised by the rapid development of technology, such as artificial intelligence and internet governance. Moreover, the experience of the current Pandemic calls for a better international legal regulation of international cooperation for the prevention of infectious diseases and in matters of public health generally.

8.5 “We will place women and girls at the centre”

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.

(Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** remain our blueprints for gender equality and the empowerment of all women. The 30th anniversary of Beijing will open new opportunities to take stock of what has been achieved and mobilize new commitments towards the end of inequality and human rights abuses against women.
- Multilateral structures, especially the United Nations, must live up to their commitments to **gender equality and women’s participation**. Multilateral organizations must increase the representation of women as peace mediators and holds Member States to account for their commitments to 50/50 representation and to develop action plans for and to implement UNSC Resolution 1325.

This means clearer and more measurable indicators of progress to enhance accountability on the national plans and UNSC resolutions. We support the following strategies to enhance women’s participation and influence in peace and security:

- Informing women from all segments of society on international frameworks intended to support and consult women to ensure that these frameworks are based on needs;
 - Supporting gender quotas where relevant;
 - Promoting disaggregated data by gender, as a way of improving the knowledge and analysis of women's realities;
 - Recognizing violence against women as an element in conflict dynamics;
 - Mobilizing women across parties;
 - Increasing women’s influence at the executive level;
 - Providing access to information on substantive policy issues and budgets;
 - Encouraging cross-cutting networks and issue-based coalitions, networks and associations; and
 - Promoting women in political dialogues.
- Multilateral institutions should **support organizations dealing with women's rights**, and guarantee proper funding for the full implementation of their mandates.

8.6 “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. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- **Disinformation** and the spread of fake news are increasing concerns throughout the global democratic community. Similarly, other threats arising from the distribution of information online – how content algorithms reinforce ideological fixations, or how anonymity fosters the spread of hate speech – are some of the drivers of the political shifts in different continents.

Anonymity, zero-cost publishing, and content algorithms have created echo chambers that push online citizens into exclusive ideological camps and favour the propagation of distorted or malign political messages, including fake news, hate speech, and extremism and polarizing ideas. These distortions are inherent in the business model of online platforms.

Do we need to learn to live in a low-trust world? Or can we find a solution to protect information integrity online and address the structural drivers - like economic inequality - behind declining trust in institutions? As the evidence of these threats to democratic societies grows, the **United National and other multilateral organisations could contribute to policy-making and normative discussions** and increase their efforts to find partnerships and formal mechanisms to counter disinformation.

- We are aware of the need to **improve the accountability and transparency of public authorities**, the need to fight corruption and tax evasion. While these tasks primarily belong to sovereign states themselves, there is scope for more effective international cooperation and regulation. The UN should serve as a forum to strengthen the ongoing international processes in these domains and should take advantage of the expertise that already exists.

8.7 “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 the 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. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- We have entered an era of artificial intelligence, big data, and the internet of things. The issues arising from the use of these need to be debated at the global level. The international community should strengthen an inclusive, accountable, transparent and ethical system centred around human beings, where Human Rights and rules-based order are respected.
- There is a need for a new **Social Contract for the Age of Artificial Intelligence** to set out a human-centric approach for the governance of AI. The new social contract should support fundamental rights and the rule of law to ensure that AI supports sustainable development, inclusion, fairness, protection of privacy and accountability. This social contract should have the support of different stakeholders and find an appropriate way to regulate the use of technology with the aim of generating greater social trust; and strengthen an inclusive, accountable, transparent, and ethical system centred around human beings ensuring protection of their privacy and, at the same time strengthening their agency.

With greater use of artificial intelligence -- and greater innovations and applications -- we must put mechanisms in place to make sure that their scientific bases are robust, and that all “hidden” AI features can be understood. We support efforts to transform the UN Secretary General’s Roadmap on Digital Cooperation into a **United Nations Convention on Artificial Intelligence** to build global consensus and define boundaries on its human-centred, managed use.

We particularly hope for clearer standards for the prevention of discrimination resulting from algorithmic bias. The growing use of artificial intelligence & automated decision-making tools, including in the provision of public services, risks reproducing and amplifying biases ingrained in the data and algorithms that feed these systems, often to the detriment of certain social groups. We support efforts to define **universal standards of accountability** for any discrimination that may result from the use of AI and automated decision-making systems.

- With social norms potentially compromised by the velocity of digitalization, artificial intelligence and social media, and gaps in the rules-based multilateral trading system generating trade and technology tensions between states, a foundational, norm-setting initiative is imperative to ensure that we manage digitalization before it manages us. **We propose** to explore the development of a globally agreed set of norms and measures to enable improved global connectivity and data flows, inclusive digital platforms and better internet management - a **"Bretton Woods for Digitalization"**.

8.8 "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 4 revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council. The review of the peacebuilding architecture has our full support. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- United Nations reforms will never be complete without **UN Security Council reform** which reflects the realities of the 21st century and transform it into a more representative, effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent body. For example, a greater voice should be given to the countries of Africa, a region that was not yet represented at the time of the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations.

While it is unlikely that the composition and veto power of P5 members will change in the near future, the need to address the veto power and membership composition should not be abandoned nor be presumed to be unrealistic. The P5 should adopt a collective undertaking to use their veto sparingly, engage in constructive consultations before using it, and apply vetoes only as a last resort.

There are additional areas, where progress to adapt the **Security Council** to the new global realities is possible. Some of these areas include:

- Strengthening alliances for multilateralism. Building multilateral coordination between P5 members or, bilaterally, between global players (e.g. France and Germany's "Alliance for Multilateralism") can help build trust and strengthen cooperation across the board, which may, in turn, support achieving consensus in the Council.

- Increasing consultation with regional organizations. Involving regional organizations in UNSC business and strengthening their cooperation and coordination with the Council can improve the Security Council's modus operandi through better-informed decision making.
 - Expansion of scope and complementarity through multi-stakeholderism. There is a need to include a larger diversity of actors in the UNSC work, both via membership or considering a range of diverse actors when elaborating substance and content processes. A multi-stakeholder approach effectively complements UN efforts.
- The **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** as the principal UN body coordinating the economic and social work of the organization could be reinforced in terms of decision-making on economic issues, and work together with Bretton Woods institutions as the leaders in the field of global economic policy. This will improve the levels of ownership, democratic governance, transparency, and accountability of the global economic development framework and facilitate better alignments to the social and environmental pillars of development.

We encourage the United Nations General Assembly to **debate constructive and creative mechanisms to create a more effective and high-profile ECOSOC able to include the vision of developing countries in economic decision-making processes and influence public debate**. Reviving old ideas such as that of a "Social and Economic Security Council" might fuel the debate. Bringing the G 20 and its processes into a closer relationship with ECOSOC would strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateral policymaking.

8.9 "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. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- The implementation of the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development** would support achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The global economic recession as a consequence of COVID-19 is affecting the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. There is an urgent need for a **coordinated global growth plan** that will boost all economies - advanced and developing - around the world. The United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and

the G20 should be able to come together to make sure that no country is left behind; that sufficient funds are made available to developing countries; and that a new Special Drawing Rights allocation backed up by debt restructuring is agreed in a manner that benefits those who currently have the least resources to fight the pandemic and plan the recovery.

- **International financial institutions** should be repurposed for mission-level objectives of equity, inclusion and well-being. In this context, they should support prudent fiscal stimulus to sustain economic activity, tax reform for greater tax fairness, accommodative monetary policies, and debt relief, restructuring and concessional financing to liberate resources to address funding shortfalls and allow for greater social development investments.
- As noted in the **2021 Report of the UN High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency, and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda (FACTI)**, a **Global Pact for Financial Integrity for Sustainable Development** based on countries' priorities, could have a substantial impact on the well-being of people and the planet in both developing and developed countries, and constitute a major contribution to improving multilateral and national governance.

8.10 "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.

(Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- Alliances between citizens, governments, the private sector, and regional organizations are critical for responding effectively in a people-centred and driven multilateralism to solve problems for diverse peoples and communities.
- The United Nations and its Member States should devote greater collective efforts to promoting multilateralism and fostering **coordination and integration at the regional level**. Broader aspects of cooperation: economic, trade, culture, science, and the environment, should be better integrated into development, human rights, and peace and security mechanisms.

Comprehensive partnership agreements and complementarity are essential, as each regional entity offers different added value. Clear division of labour, sequencing, and complementarity are needed to ensure proper and timely policy-making and programme

implementation. While vague language may enable constructive ambiguity in the short term, the need to clarify mandates is pressing.

The European Union shows that it is possible for a group of very different countries to share sovereignty and work together for the common good.

- Existing mechanisms to unite **businesses** to reach Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. UN Global Compact) should be strengthened. Businesses can promote SDGs through innovative, visionary and realistic solutions. The UN should foster dialogue between the states and businesses, for private entities can serve as actors for development and peace. The UN should continue working with investors to bring public and private resources together and encourage companies to self-regulate and develop better standards.

Foresight and futures thinking are needed. Innovative tools provided by the private sector contribute to a better assessment of issues concerning climate change, food security, humanitarian situations, etc. Tools and robust assessment systems such as predictive modelling to identify conflict drivers can enable the UN to tailor policy responses and mitigate their consequences more effectively. Innovation can also help build non-discriminatory technologies and trust in a virtual world.

8.11 “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 side-lined in discussions about their future. This has to change now through meaningful engagement with youth. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- There is a disconnect between young people and traditional institutions. The United Nations must become better at listening and responding to those unrepresented and alienated. Empowering and engaging youth at the grassroots level and supporting their participation should be further promoted by multilateral organizations.

The United Nations and other international organizations represent States, but they also need to represent the people. The forms of communication and participation have changed. Now they are more horizontal. Political parties are no longer the sole channel of expression of political will. Many young citizens do not feel represented by their leadership. The statements of their countries before international organizations do not express their daily concerns. There is a gap between the role of international organizations and young citizens’ expectations. The United Nations must adapt to these new forms of representation to get closer to the people, especially younger generations.

The time has come to enable young people's active participation in **real decision-making processes** at the multilateral level. The UN General Assembly should create a **new body on youth and with youth under article 22 of the UN Charter**. The UN Member States should ensure that young people are adequately represented in that body.

In addition, the Economic and Social Council should consider setting up a standing permanent forum on youth – a broad forum that would allow a variety of youth organisations, in particular those without a consultative status at the ECOSOC, to voice their opinions.

- On the public information side, the United Nations and Member States should invest more resources in trying to reach out and engage young people, especially those in vulnerable situations. UN Clubs, Model UN, and public engagement activities remain crucial tools but they only reach a small group of privileged young citizens. The United Nations needs to show young people that it can make a difference in their lives.

8.12 “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 centre of our response. (Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations)

- The top priority for the world at present should be to work together to control the pandemic. **Vaccines** are in short supply, their equitable distribution, especially to developing countries, is essential. The pandemic won't be controlled until it is controlled everywhere, we should focus on stopping transmission at the global level to better avoid new variants.

International efforts should focus on supporting initiatives to secure vaccines everywhere. Mechanisms such as the Peoples' Vaccine Alliance, COVAX, and TAP should be properly funded to incentivize production at scale and worldwide distribution at affordable costs.

- The world will recover from COVID-19 but there will be more pandemic threats and lessons from the handling of the current pandemic need to be learned and applied. We need a more effective global architecture to drive preparedness and response.

The **World Health Organization** should be empowered with strengthened authority, enforcement capabilities, resources and programs. It needs to refocus and make clear what it can do and acknowledge what it cannot do in order to find alternative multilateral solutions. Clearer and binding norms and procedures, designed to minimise the danger of future pandemics and for the strengthening of global health security, are needed and should be developed through appropriate multilateral legal instruments. Geopolitical grievances around the organization should be avoided. We must concentrate on making the WHO fit for purpose.

- After COVID-19, the world could benefit from a **Convention on Pandemics** which elaborates the obligations of Member States to build resilience to pandemic threats and supports the early notification of threats and an effective international alert system.

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