

Humanity at a Crossroads: Abbreviated Declaration and Program of Action

1. We write at a time in which change is progressing at a pace and scale perhaps unparalleled in all of human history. Far quicker than most of us could have imagined, a world-encompassing health crisis, for example, has shaken the global order to its core. No nation is immune, no border is respected. And no longer can we behave as if our current institutions are sufficient to secure our future. For many—perhaps all—a period of disruption and difficulty seems all but assured. But like the United Nations arising from the ashes of World War II, our response to this challenge can lay the foundation for another, better path for humanity.
2. The United Nations has achieved much in its 75 year history, and we are most grateful to it and to the thousands who have dedicated their lives to its success. But today, like never before, the need for new arrangements in every field is clear to those willing to see it. From the economic sphere, where narrowly-focused profit priorities dictate the distribution of resources, to the social sphere where deepening inequalities, corruption, and misinformation weaken the social fabric, to politics where solutions are sacrificed at the altars of power and pride, to culture where outdated traditions can put entire communities at risk: all must find avenues to transform the systems we have to enable the future we want--particularly those in positions of power and authority.
3. The pandemic we face is a reckoning for risks and shortcomings long understood but long ignored. Other health vulnerabilities, a deteriorating political atmosphere, and the climate crisis should have been enough to demonstrate the need for new leadership characterized not by short-term victories but by long term vision and action. Unmoved as yet by the inevitable consequences of rising temperatures and societal fracturing, we once again turn to the United Nations and the Member States which form it, to see circumstances impartially, to respond decisively, and to chart a course for humanity addressing vulnerabilities which we can no longer afford to ignore.
4. We have drafted a solutions-focused declaration, knowing that this moment represents humanity's best chance to imagine and create a stronger multilateralism. We call upon leaders of character and wisdom to act now in solidarity with present and future generations. *The time has come for a process of rigorous, transparent, inclusive, and (vitaly) nonpartisan assessment of global governance needs paired with a strategy to implement the results of this process.* Anything less will be insufficient to address the circumstances which allow lives and livelihoods to be lost in the blink of an eye.
5. We trust this is the beginning of a new chapter of partnership, and look forward to engaging meaningfully as new strategies are deliberated upon in the coming months and years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jeffery Huffines, UN2020 Senior Advisor
(646) 747-1060, Jeffery@un2020.org

Giovanna Kuele, Together First UN Representative,
(917) 280-6488, giovannakuele@igarape.org.br

6. Humanity must unite and harness its ideas, networks and resources to better support all nations and peoples in tackling twenty-first-century struggles, transcending national and regional boundaries and seizing new opportunities. Crucially, we need steadfast and sustained leadership to overcome obstacles head-on and rebuild the bonds of trust between international institutions and citizens around the world. Charting this new course for the UN over the next 25 years will depend on leaders who are ready, willing, and able to stand together. In consultation with stakeholders from around the world, we offer the following **three priority calls for action** to be undertaken by the United Nations and its Member States. These calls are intended to serve as a springboard for more ambitious action toward the UN's 2045 centenary and beyond.
7. **Initiate a formal process to reform global multilateralism:** In an increasingly interconnected world, we must support a reformed, reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system to deliver public goods and services that meet the needs of all people. New and transformative measures that invest in the capabilities, accountability, and overall effectiveness of international institutions and processes are needed. The UN75 political declaration should endorse and encourage efforts by governments to strengthen international cooperation, multilateral institutions, and the rule of law. Moreover, Member States must establish a process, such as **an independent Commission on Global Governance** to assess and reform the United Nations. The Commission will examine the post-2020 and long-term positioning of the UN and conduct a comprehensive review of the global governance architecture. It must also incorporate a plan for the implementation of the results of the process.
8. **Invest in multilateralism with “we the peoples” at its heart:** Meeting new and compounding global challenges and opportunities demands the active participation of civil society and diverse groups in decision-making in policies and programs at all levels. Structural barriers that inhibit their meaningful and sustained participation should be removed. This requires a greater emphasis on principles of justice and equity, showing generosity and solidarity, and the need to leave no one behind (as enshrined in the UN 2030 Agenda). Specific measures could include a system-wide strategy on expanding civic space and a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly.
9. **Reliably and fully fund the UN:** United Nations funding is dependent primarily on combinations of assessed and voluntary contributions from Member States. The arcane and opaque set of rules guiding these contributions have failed to generate adequate funding for the UN's work. To meet growing demands, a revitalized UN system would need a reliable source of funding. Fortunately, alongside a new and clear funding mechanism for Member States, a number of other measures could be utilized such as ending international tax havens, promoting resource extraction taxes, financial transaction taxes, or a minimum international corporate tax. A high level panel of experts should be impanelled to assess these options and review the appropriateness of the UN's central role in promoting “blended finance” models for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other key aspects of the UN.

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