

European Perspectives on Taking Forward the UN75 Declaration: From Reflection to Innovation & Action

*Discussion Paper for the Virtual Forum and Experts Roundtable
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Introduction

On 21 September 2020, the United Nations' 193 Member States adopted a Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, which outlines a vision and twelve distinct commitments addressing the world's most pressing challenges, threats, and opportunities. The milestone UN75 Declaration further calls for "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."¹ Based on "a process of profound reflection" on the future of multilateralism and global governance, the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda* (forthcoming this September), are expected to reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives, from civil society and business groups to Member States, youth representatives, and thought leaders.

As an independent, multi-stakeholder contribution to the consultations and substantive preparations for *Our Common Agenda*, the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH, Stimson Center, Academic Council on the UN System (ACUNS), Plataforma CIPÓ, and Leiden University will convene select experts from Europe and beyond, on 4 March 2021, for a virtual forum and experts roundtable. The back-to-back events will seek to offer diverse perspectives from Europe and other regions in response to the overarching question: "***In marking 75 years of the United Nations, how can the results of last year's intense reflection now be turned into action and contribute to innovation and strengthening of the world body?***" The analysis provided here is meant to help spur and inform debate, as well as raise timely questions (*including through the accompanying expert roundtable framing questions*) about the challenges and opportunities ahead for improved global governance, giving particular attention to Europe's unique perspectives and decades-long responsibility in support of effective multilateral cooperation and a rules-based international order.

¹ United Nations. General Assembly. *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations*. A/RES/75/1. 21 September 2020, para. 20.

I. Overview of United Nations anniversary innovations, with a special focus on UN75

United Nations anniversaries, especially on the decadal and twenty-five-year mark, offer moments (1) to reflect on past achievements, (2) to take stock of progress vis-à-vis current challenges, and (3) to renew multilateral cooperation principles. Less frequently, they have presented opportunities (4) to rethink, innovate, and strengthen the global governance architecture. For instance, the first three objectives were well reflected in the General Assembly’s unanimously adopted UN50 Declaration, in 1995, but the fourth only minimally. Giving merely rhetorical support to the need to “strengthen,” “resource,” and “reform,” UN Member States thereby missed an opportunity as power shifted at the end of the Cold War, to address the growing need for United Nations leadership in hotspots from the Balkans to Africa and the Middle East.² All the more so given the creative intellectual environment at the time, as manifested in several substantial reports on the need for UN restructuring by the likes of the Commission on Global Governance, the Yale-Ford Foundation Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations, UNDP’s Human Development Report Office, and other notable institutions.³

Learning from past mistakes to deliver on meaningful and durable reform, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan established the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change in the run-up to UN60. Its seminal report, *A more secure world: our shared responsibility* (alongside a five-year Millennium Development Goals progress review), was translated into an even more politically palatable Secretary-General’s report, *In larger freedom: toward security, development, and human rights for all*.⁴ Together, they framed multilateral negotiations and informed the adoption of a relatively more forward-leaning UNGA resolution, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, compared to the UN50 Declaration. Among the most noteworthy outcomes, arguably, from this gathering of Heads of State and Government were: the endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect principle, introduced in 2001 by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty; the upgrade of the frail and divisive Human Rights Commission into a Council empowered with new tools, such as the Universal Periodic Review; and the creation of a new UN Peacebuilding Architecture, consisting of a new Commission, Support Office, and Fund.⁵

Seeking to mark the United Nations’ first seven and one-half decades, while both learning from the world body’s failures and building upon its accomplishments, UN Member States initiated, in June 2019, preparations for a political declaration to be adopted by the annual high-level segment of the UN General Assembly, in September 2020, in New York. Under difficult negotiating conditions, which were complicated further by the COVID-19 pandemic, a critical mass of diplomats—with support from civil society groups—set out to remake the case for the world body in an era marked by growing nationalism, authoritarianism, and other crosscurrents pointing to an anti-multilateralist turn in international affairs.⁶

² UN. General Assembly. *Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations*. A/RES/50/6. 24 October 1995, paras. 14–17.

³ Commission on Global Governance. *Our Global Neighborhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations. *The United Nations in Its Second Half-Century*. Ford Foundation and Yale University: New York and New Haven, Conn. 1995; and the UNDP Human Development Report Office (for past *HDRs*, visit: <http://hdr.undp.org/>). Another notable publication at the time was Erskine Childers with Brian Urquhart, “Renewing the United Nations System,” in *Development Dialogue* 1994:1 (Uppsala, Sweden: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation).

⁴ High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. *A more secure world: our shared responsibility*. United Nations: New York, 2004; United Nations. *In Larger Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. United Nations: New York, 2005.

⁵ United Nations. General Assembly. *2005 World Summit Outcome*. A/RES/60/1. 24 October 2005. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf Accessed on 10 February 2021.

⁶ Joris Larik, William Durch, and Richard Ponzio. “Reinvigorating Global Governance through ‘Just Security.’” *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Vol. 44:1 Winter 2020, 15-31.

Among the most contentious diplomatic battles surrounding the text of the declaration were those fought over how to reflect shifts in global political power (Security Council reform), climate action (preserving the Paris Climate Agreement), and whether the United Nations would continue to champion human rights and inclusive governance (including women's rights, civil society engagement, and the promotion of democratic governance and the rule of law). Divisiveness over these issues was further compounded by intensifying U.S.-China competition, by strains in major power cooperation owing to the pandemic, and by the Security Council's inability to pass (*until July 2020*) a resolution endorsing Secretary-General Guterres's 23 March 2020 call for a global cease-fire.⁷

The then President of the General Assembly, Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, and his two UN75 Declaration co-facilitators, Swedish Ambassador Anna-Karin Eneström and Qatari Ambassador Alya Al-Thani, had planned to conclude negotiations by UN Charter Day (26 June 2020). However, true to form since 2017, the Trump Administration twice nearly upended at the eleventh hour the carefully stitched-together, 193 country-consensus.⁸

Despite these headwinds, the co-facilitators, supported by member countries of the German-French led Alliance for Multilateralism and by the efforts of transnational civil society networks, managed to secure consensus on the need to renew and strengthen the UN system, stressing the importance of rebuilding better and greener after the pandemic. In doing so, this loose coalition of like-minded states and non-governmental organizations, and the determined co-facilitators backed by the President of the General Assembly, had, in effect, begun to remake the case for the United Nations.

Equally important to mobilizing for progressive global change, alongside the UN75 Declaration negotiations, was the Secretary-General's Global Conversation for the world body's seventy-fifth anniversary commemoration. Consisting of an unprecedented global survey involving 1.5 million people from all 193 United Nations Member States, over 3,500 global dialogues and different sub-surveys, and giving particular attention to empowering youth voices, the Global Conversation succeed in providing an opportunity for people worldwide to share their priorities and fears for the future, as well as ideas to address global challenges and make the UN fit for future.

Box 1: The Secretary-General's Global Conversation: Major findings of the UN75 Survey and Dialogues

In early January 2020, the UN75 Office (The Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Preparations for the Commemoration of the UN's 75th Anniversary) launched an initiative to gather public perspectives and ideas worldwide on global challenges and the United Nations' role in addressing them. Marking a year-long global consultation, the UN75 Office released, on 8 January 2021, the final report which includes findings of the UN's most ambitious effort to date to collect input from the global public through surveys and dialogues. Key findings include:

- 97 percent of respondents believe that international cooperation is important for addressing global challenges.
- The respondents' number one priority in the short-term is better access to basic services, such as healthcare, education, and water and sanitation.
- Those interviewed from both high- and low-income countries believe that, following the pandemic, addressing poverty and poor living standards is the second largest short-term issue.
- 73 percent of the Latin America and Caribbean respondents saw climate and environmental issues as a main threat over the long term.
- Risks related to health scored second on the list of long-term global challenges.

⁷ Dali ten Hove. "‘Pathetic:’ The UN Pulls the Plug on a UN Global Cease-Fire Resolution." *PassBlue*, 10 May 2020. Accessed 6 February 2021. <https://www.passblue.com/2020/05/10/pathetic-the-us-pulls-the-plug-on-a-un-global-cease-fire-resolution/>.

⁸ See, for instance, UNA-UK, "UNA-UK statement on the finalisation of the UN75 Declaration." 8 July 2020. Accessed 15 February 2021. <https://una.org.uk/news/una-uk-statement-finalisation-un75-declaration>.

- “More respect for human rights” ranked number three globally as a long-term priority among respondents.
- Participants acknowledged the United Nations’ role in leading international cooperation, but they also called for its revitalization, including: a reformed UN Security Council, a revised Charter that addresses global challenges such as climate change, an inclusive and participatory UN system, and management and leadership reforms.

Source: UN75 Office. *Shaping Our Future Together*. January 2021. Accessed 9 February 2021. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un75_final_report_shapingourfuturetogether.pdf, and UN75 Office. *Shaping Our Future Together. Key Findings Of UN75 Survey and Dialogues*.

As the follow-through to the 2005 Summit demonstrated, landmark anniversaries, such as UN60, can serve to promote not just immediate change, but also structural reforms (for example, its recommended upgrade of the Human Rights Commission into a stronger Council took another six months). Similarly, the UN75 Declaration, agreed to in September 2020, can serve as a “launch pad” not only for catalytic changes, but also for new, ambitious reforms that may require additional time to mature. Four reasons for optimism and for the relevance of the “UN60 model” for further positive momentum toward substantial and lasting change are:

- On 19 February 2021, the leaders of the G7 proclaimed that they “... will work together and with others to make 2021 a turning point for multilateralism and to shape a recovery that promotes the health and prosperity of our people and planet.”⁹
- On 10 November 2020, ten Heads of State or Government, convened digitally by Spain and Sweden, committed to a reinvigorated United Nations, building on the UN75 Declaration, and calling “for reforms of the three principal organs of the United Nations to create a more agile, effective, and accountable organization that can deliver better in the field and adapt to global challenges.”¹⁰
- In response to the troubling rise of exclusionary nationalism in many countries and regions and attacks on multilateralism, German Foreign Minister H.E. Heiko Maas and French Foreign Minister H.E. Jean-Yves Le Drian convened, in September 2019 at UN headquarters, over fifty countries from different world regions to forge a new Alliance for Multilateralism to demonstrate that states that “support multilateralism and support the United Nations remain the majority in the world.”¹¹ On 25 September 2020, during UNGA High-Level Week in New York, the Alliance’s members once again recommitted to international rules and enhanced cooperation through the United Nations System. When even more countries, especially the largest and most powerful, step up their support for multilateral cooperation, the international leadership gap identified by the UN Secretary-General in

⁹ Joint Statement of G7 Leaders. 19 February 2021. Accessed 23 February 2021. <https://www.g7uk.org/joint-statement-of-g7-leaders-19-february-2021/>; Later that day, German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a Munich Security Conference virtual session with U.S. President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron, said, “Prospects for multilateralism are a little better than they used to be, and that has a lot to do with Joe Biden being the president of the United States of America.” Gearan, Anne. “Biden pledges to reassert U.S. leadership in global diplomacy and welcome talks with Iran.” *Washington Post*. 19 February 2021. Accessed 23 February 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-to-reassert-us-leadership-in-global-diplomacy-and-welcome-talks-with-iran/2021/02/18/76c6bb2c-724e-11eb-93be-c10813e358a2_story.html.

¹⁰ Heads of State and Government and other High-Level Representatives of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Canada, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of South Africa, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Tunisia. “Joint Statement: Reinforcing Multilateralism together building on the United Nations 75th Anniversary Declaration.” Madrid: 10 November 2020. Accessed on 16 February 2021. <https://www.government.se/4abf46/contentassets/fceff3d2e9264bf9bf822f5ea016d3cd/joint-statement---reinforcing-multilateralism-together-building-on-the-united-nations-75th-anniversary-declaration.pdf>.

¹¹ Lederer, Edith. “France and Germany launch alliance to back multilateralism.” *Associated Press*, 2 April 2019. Accessed 15 April 2019. <https://www.apnews.com/1518af4bd79b45f7bce1af0bf1bf7ad2>.

2020 can be overcome through “multilateral institutions that can act decisively, based on global consent, for the global good.”¹²

- Building on sentiments reflected in the Secretary-General’s UN75 Global Conversation with civil society (elaborated below), two recent non-governmental-led initiatives, the Coalition for the UN We Need (formerly UN2020) and Together First, are developing a track-record for mobilizing global civil society through public and expert consultations, research, and direct advocacy and educational outreach to constructively engage governments in charting a progressive renewal and innovation agenda.¹³

These efforts by pro-multilateral cooperation UN Member States (*including the United States’ return to advocating for stronger global cooperation through the world body*) and like-minded non-governmental partners have significantly improved conditions for engendering an ambitious global institutional revitalization effort—akin to how the UN50 Declaration in 1995 and the Millennium Declarations in 2000 laid the groundwork for the ambitious 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.¹⁴ These countries and civil society actors demonstrated skill over the past year through their creative and targeted support for the seventy-fifth anniversary Declaration of the world body and the “Global Conversation” orchestrated by the Secretary-General.

Today, building on the momentum generated by the UN75 Declaration and the Secretary-General’s Global Conversation, the international community’s collective task is to rekindle the original spirit of the founding of the United Nations and to build the smart coalitions needed to overcome the growing bottlenecks (whether institutional, political, financial, or psychological) to solving humanity’s inextricably global problems. In support of these efforts, the remaining sections of this discussion paper summarize current UN75 Declaration insights, fortified by further lessons from past global governance innovation efforts. Attention is given, in particular, to Europe’s potential contributions in making today’s global governance architecture more effective, inclusive, and accountable.

II. UN75 Declaration commitments and major challenges

The twelve commitments adopted in the UN75 Declaration traverse all three major substantive pillars of the United Nations, namely peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights. In addition to highlighting each commitment’s context and emphasis, this section offers brief overviews of advances as well as obstacles to implementation.

#1 *We will leave no one behind.* With a view to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through a people-centered approach, the next ten years—designated as the Decade of Action—will require a strong UN development system, as well as effective collaboration between the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and multilateral development banks. The 2020 Sustainable Development Report notes that progress had been made in some areas, such as improving maternal and child health, expanding

¹² Guterres, António. “Briefing to the Security Council on Global Governance Post-COVID-19.” United Nations Secretary-General. 24 September 2020. Accessed on 20 November 20, 2020.

¹³ For the Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN), visit: <http://c4unwn.org/>. For Together First, visit: <https://together1st.org/shoutbox>. Both accessed on 6 February 2020.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly. *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. A/RES/55/2. 18 September 2000. <https://undocs.org/A/RES/55/2>; UN. General Assembly. *2005 World Summit Outcome*. A/RES/60/1. 24 October 2005. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf Both accessed on 10 February 2021.

access to electricity, and increasing women's representation in government.¹⁵ Yet even these advances were offset elsewhere by growing food insecurity, deterioration of the natural environment, and persistent and pervasive inequalities—challenges made more difficult in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#2 We will protect our planet. In light of growing environmental threats and climate related challenges, including natural disasters, drought, desertification, food shortages, water scarcity, wildfires, sea-level rise, and depletion of the oceans, this commitment calls for immediate collective action around the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, so as to boost adaptation and mitigation, including for those areas of the world that bear disproportionate impact of climate change, such as small island developing states, least developed countries, and landlocked developing states. Current efforts around the world are projected to lower end-of-century warming to 2.9°C, which would be an unmitigated disaster for humanity.¹⁶ The planet is already experiencing 1.1°C warming and will likely overshoot 1.5°C unless net-zero emissions can be achieved by 2040.¹⁷ The re-entry of the United States into the Paris Climate Agreement, combined with new zero net carbon goals by other UN Member States, such as the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, Hungary, New Zealand, China, Japan, and South Korea (along with the EU), may signal a new window of opportunity to boost climate action at national and international levels in the run-up to COP26, planned for this November in Glasgow. Yet continued reliance on fossil fuels and a new surge in deforestation, especially in the Amazon basin, continue to pose challenges around critical common global goods.¹⁸

#3 We will promote peace and prevent conflicts. Recognizing the importance of abiding by the UN Charter and other agreed international instruments, the commitment acknowledges multiple threats to peace and security and calls on the UN Secretary-General to enhance “the diplomatic toolbox” to prevent conflicts “on land, at sea, in space and in cyberspace.” From the inception of the UN peacebuilding architecture in 2005, to the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions in 2015, the introduction of the Member State endorsed sustaining peace framework in 2018, and implementation of the Secretary-General's peace and security architecture reforms (2017–present), the UN has worked to adapt its response to 21st century threats. However, the increasing state-based violence over the past decade in fragile states and its attendant humanitarian consequences, the continued development of nuclear weapons, and geopolitical tensions among great powers remain recurring challenges only heightened during the pandemic.¹⁹ Moreover, the expansion of non-traditional security threats, such as climate change, irregular migration, transnational crime, and human trafficking, demand novel prevention and peacebuilding strategies, as well as new kinds of partnerships and refashioned institutions for collective security.

#4 We will abide by international law and ensure justice. This commitment stresses the importance of respect for the UN Charter and international law more generally as the indispensable foundation for peace, prosperity, and justice in the world. Moreover, UN Member States vow to promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights by strengthening transparent and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions. In the form of SDG#16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, this commitment had already been made, in 2015, integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, according to the 2020 Sustainable Development Report and its SDG Index, only scant improvement globally can be seen with regard to this

¹⁵ Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020. Accessed 18 February 2021.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopmentreport/2020/2020_sustainable_development_report.pdf,

¹⁶ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. “Special Report: Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate.” September 2019, Section 1.5.

¹⁷ Cho, Renee. “The U.S. Is Back in the Paris Agreement. Now What?” Earth Institute, Columbia University. 4 February 2021. Accessed 18 February 2021. <https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2021/02/04/u-s-rejoins-paris-agreement/>.

¹⁸ Sue Branford and Thais Borges (2021) "Brazil guts agencies, 'sabotaging environmental protection' in Amazon: Report." Mongabay, 1 February. Accessed 18 February 2021. <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/02/brazil-guts-agencies-sabotaging-environmental-protection-in-amazon-report/>.

¹⁹ Uppsala Conflict Data Program. Department of Peace and Conflict Research. *Number of Conflicts 1975 - 2019*.; UN News. *DPRK nuclear activities still 'cause for serious concern', says UN atomic energy chief*. Cimmino, Jeffery et al. *Taking Stock: Where Are Geopolitics Headed in the COVID-19 Era?* June 2020, 2. Atlantic Council.

goal.²⁰ What can be observed in several countries is backsliding with regard to democracy and the rule of law. At the global level, while the mass exodus of African countries from the International Criminal Court did not materialize, the Philippines and Burundi have withdrawn from its Rome Statute. In an effort to protect the rules based global order, the Alliance for Multilateralism was established in 2019.

#5 We will place women and girls at the center. Acknowledging the essential role that women play in conflict prevention and resolution, sustainable development, the promotion of human rights and other priorities, this goal seeks to address persistent gender inequalities and abuse, including sexual- and gender-based violence, and to accelerate action to "achieve gender equality, women's participation, and the empowerment of women and girls in all domains." Progress worldwide on this front has included more girls in schools, fewer girls forced into early marriage, and reformed laws to advance gender equality. Yet, even before the pandemic, this agenda faced persistent hurdles, such as a lack of women in positions of power, educational inequality, deeply entrenched sexism and discrimination against women (e.g., increasing hate speech targeting women), and other forms of violence towards women, such as domestic and sexual violence. In addition, even as women are at the forefront of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the outbreak has reversed some of these advances and introduced new challenges, including reduced access to health, labor market participation, and social protection, as well as a sharp surge in gender-based violence.²¹

#6 We will build trust. As poverty and the expansion of inequality, both within and across countries, undermines trust in institutions and fuels discrimination, intolerance, and social exclusion, the international community must better comprehend and address the root causes of both poverty and inequality. Despite progress in addressing poverty and inequality, for instance through higher education standards, employment growth, rising incomes, and increased longevity for hundreds of millions, major structural distortions remain within and between societies; for example, the world's richest twenty-six people account for half of the world's wealth today.²² The vast gaps globally in accessing COVID-19 vaccines shed light on some of the most persistent injustices across borders, undermining trust in both national governments and international institutions. Besides tackling the immediate health emergency, ensuring a durable, green, and broad-based post-pandemic recovery will be essential to spreading the benefits of development and climate action, as well as restoring faith in governments and institutions.

#7 We will improve digital cooperation. This commitment acknowledges the profound societal transformations brought about by digital technologies and stresses that humanity is now, more than ever, in need of tangible and reliable global digital cooperation. It harbors immense opportunities, such as making decisive contributions to the 2030 Agenda, but also threats, including spreading instability, eroding human rights, and expanding inequalities. Ensuring safe and affordable digital access for all is, hence, one of the major priorities identified for the UN going forward. Since 2020, there are more than four billion internet users worldwide. However, large parts of the global population remain without access, especially in poorer countries. Moreover, capacities for international cooperation lag behind the pace and scale of technological change, as observed by the UN Secretary-General's 2019 High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation.²³ In June 2020, the Secretary-General presented the "Roadmap for Digital Cooperation,"²⁴ which, for instance, calls for a UN Envoy on Technology by the Secretary-General at the Under-Secretary-General-level and common elements of understanding on digital trust and security among UN Member States. The implementation of these and

²⁰ See Figure 12. Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. *The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020. 40. Accessed 18 February 2021.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopmentreport/2020/2020_sustainable_development_report.pdf.

²¹ UN Women. "Violence against women and girls: the shadow pandemic."

Statement by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women. 2020. Accessed 18 February 2020.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>

²² UN News. "Social development key pillar for 'sustainable and resilient' world – Commission hears." 8 February 2021. Accessed February 18, 2021. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1084162>.

²³ United Nations. Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. *The Age of Digital Interdependence*. June 2019. 7.

²⁴ United Nations. Report of the Secretary-General. *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*. June 2020. Accessed 18 February 2020. https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap_for_Digital_Cooperation_EN.pdf.

related recommendations and further transforming the UN into a platform for all stakeholders to participate in digital cooperation deliberations, as this commitment sets out, will be a litmus test for living up to the goal of “improving digital cooperation.”

#8 We will upgrade the United Nations. The commitment supports the ongoing revitalization efforts of the Secretary-General, while calling for the reform of the Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and the peacebuilding architecture. Since 2017, the Secretary-General’s reforms have succeeded in, for instance, modernizing personnel policies, empowering field-based UN development system resident coordinators, and reorganizing the UN’s peace and development departments. At the same time, the Security Council’s Intergovernmental Negotiations (underway since 2009) and annual resolutions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly (since 2005) have shown little progress beyond improving basic working methods. While the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has instilled new purpose in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has streamlined its country-level integrated peacebuilding strategies and innovated regional frameworks, both ECOSOC and the PBC continue to lack fundamental formal authorities and the ability to mobilize and steer significant resources relative to other major global economic and political-security bodies.

#9 We will ensure sustainable financing. Given the need for predictable and sustainable funding, UN Member States are urged to pay assessed contributions fully and on time, with full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, improvements to transparency and accountability, and more joint public-private financing. In addition to recommitting to multilateralism by contributing to the pool of resources within the present COVID-19 context, key challenges ahead include preventing a potentially devastating debt crisis and containing the sharp fall in economic activity worldwide. Other areas meriting urgent attention are the need to support countries most in need of humanitarian assistance through a globally coordinated response, as well as promoting trade and stimulating inclusive growth by eliminating trade barriers that restrict supply chains.²⁵ Positive steps within the context of the pandemic include the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative for Poorest Countries, which benefits all IDA countries and LDCs currently undergoing debt servicing through the IMF and the World Bank. The initiative, which has helped 46 of 73 eligible countries defer \$5.7 billion in 2020 debt service payments—freeing up funds for countries to fight the pandemic and shore up their economies, has been extended until mid-2021²⁶.

#10 We will boost partnerships. This commitment aspires to make the UN system more inclusive, creating more space for meaningful engagement by a broader range of stakeholders, so as to boost multilateral cooperation between Member States and vis-a-vis their societies. Since the 2030 Agenda was launched, the private sector has demonstrated its centrality in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.²⁷ In addition, the Secretary-General Global Conversation for UN75 has mobilized an unprecedented level of engagement from civil society and private sector actors in reimagining the United Nations. This momentum must now be harnessed to make the system more inclusive and effective. This includes strengthening links to regional organizations, which have shown a widely varying level of effectiveness in face of the pandemic and other challenges. Furthermore, COVID-19 restrictions have been used as a pretext for infringement on basic civic and political freedoms, particularly by authoritarian regimes. Global civic space is shrinking, and the UN needs to do more to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in policymaking, including by de-politicizing practices such as ECOSOC accreditation.²⁸

²⁵ United Nations. Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020*. New York: United Nations, 2020. Accessed 18 February 2021. <https://developmentfinance.un.org/press-release-financing-sustainable-development-report-2020>.

²⁶ UN LDC Portal (2020) "G20 debt relief to IDA countries/LDCs" Accessed 18 February, 2021. <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/g20-debt-relief-to-ida-countriesldcs/>.

²⁷ Brown, Kaysie and Pratik Desai. “2018 In Review: How Partnerships Drove SDG Progress.” United Nations Foundation. December 19, 2018. Accessed 18 February 2021. <https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/2018-in-review-how-partnerships-drove-sdg-progress/>.

²⁸ CIVICUS Global Alliance. “State of Civil Society Report 2020.” May 2020, 265. Accessed 19 February 2020. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2020>.

#11 We will listen to and work with youth. In 2020, the Secretary-General's UN75 Global Conversation placed youth at the center in an effort to listen to their aspirations for the future. The adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth (1995) and Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), in 2015, produced noteworthy progress on discussions regarding the development of YPS National Action Plans, national youth policies, a comprehensive UN Youth Strategy (Youth 2030), the convening of robust global dialogues with youth on issues ranging from violent extremism to economic empowerment, and the Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. However, despite these normative policy developments, youth participation, including in peacemaking efforts, remain limited as policy frameworks and implementation are still required at the national levels.²⁹ Similarly, challenges such as youth unemployment, access to education, poverty, and young people's inclusion in public affairs have only been heightened by the pandemic. Youth have been disproportionately affected by unemployment and, due to closure of schools, 65 percent young people reported having learned less since the beginning of the pandemic.³⁰

#12 We will be prepared. Recent global crises have engendered changes in the multilateral system that have strengthened global preparedness and demonstrated that international cooperation is essential to address transnational challenges. Over the last two decades, the G20 upgrade to Heads of State-level Summits in response to the 2008–9 global financial crisis was credited with facilitating the global economic recovery.³¹ In 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted to strengthen disaster risk governance worldwide, to build greater resilience, and reduce the heavy toll exacted by natural and man-made disasters.³² However, many challenges persist. The health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated a continued lack of preparedness in global health systems. Despite various disease outbreaks over the years, there is no effective global health system in place that ensures global access to essential medical equipment, such as personal protective equipment, sanitation items, medicines and vaccines. At the same time, structures of global governance for public health, beginning with the World Health Organization, lack the formal authority to steer countries, especially large powerful ones, in any agreed policy direction or on the basis of best practices.³³

To be explored further, on 4 March 2022, during the expert roundtable's thematic discussions, given that the above UN75 Declaration commitments on *boosting partnerships, building trust, ensuring sustainable financing, and abiding by international law and ensuring justice* relate to all three major pillars of the United Nations (peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights), they should, as such, be treated as cross-cutting commitments. Accelerating and sustaining progress on all twelve commitments, including by addressing capacity gaps, confronting detractors, and overcoming other barriers, will also depend, in part, on steps to further innovate and strengthen the United Nations and the broader global governance system.

²⁹ Altiok, Ali and Irena Grizelj. "We Are Here: An integrated approach to youth-inclusive peace processes." April 2019. 10. Accessed 18 February 2021. <https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2019-07/Global%20Policy%20Paper%20Youth%20Participation%20in%20Peace%20Processes.pdf>.

³⁰ International Labour Organization. "COVID-19 disrupts education of more than 70 per cent of youth." 11 August 2020. Accessed 12 February 2021. https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_753060/lang--en/index.htm.

³¹ Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy. "G20's achievements for global economy since the 2008 crisis." *The Economic Times*, 9 September 2016. Accessed 27 January 2020. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/g20s-achievements-for-global-economy-since-the-2008-crisis/articleshow/54251577.cms?from=mdr>; G20. "The Group of 20, Origin and Evolution." Accessed 26 January 2020. https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/The_Group_of_Twenty_20.pdf.

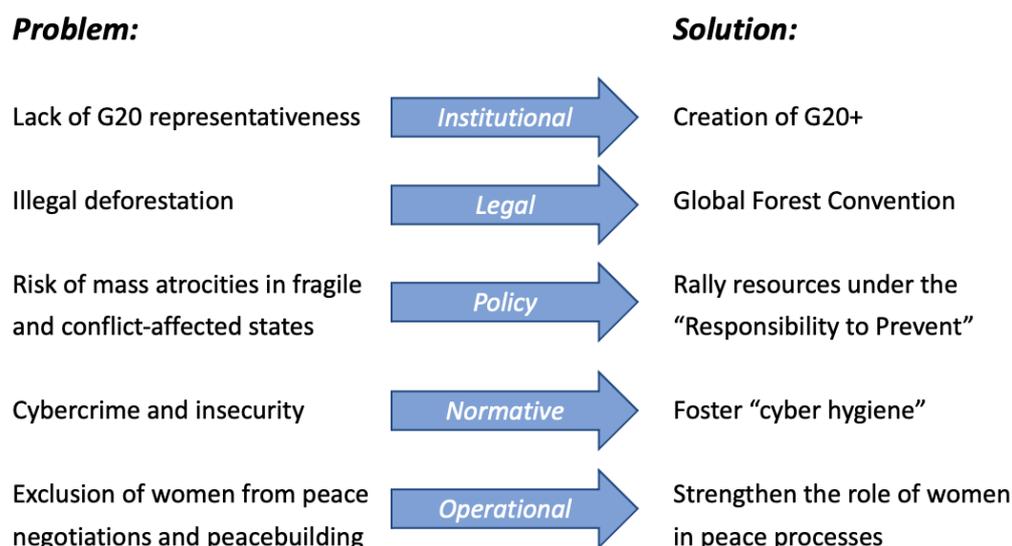
³² United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2020." First Edition, 2015. Accessed 26 January 2020. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf.

³³missing citation

III. Major types of UN system innovations

Due to the urgency of current and emerging global challenges, while accounting for a complex political climate, devising forward looking, ambitious yet realistic initiatives for reforming, strengthening, and revitalizing existing institutions, processes, and norms is imperative. There is no shortage of such ideas.³⁴ By way of illustration and to encourage further discussion, five innovation ideas from the Stimson Center’s and Plataforma CIPÓ’s recent work are presented,³⁵ spanning the institutional, legal, policy, normative and operational dimensions (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Five Innovation Ideas for Strengthening Global Governance



1. Institutional innovation

Institutional innovation is not only about creating new organs, but also making sure existing ones are fit for purpose and better connected within the wider global governance architecture. The G20 is a prime example for the latter. In the wake of the 2008–09 global financial crisis, the 2009 Pittsburgh G20 Summit pledged to turn the G20 into the “premier forum” overseeing international economic and financial cooperation. In the intervening decade, however (and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), economic inequality increased sharply in many quarters of the globe, further concentrating income and wealth. Moreover, while G20 Member States’ economies generate about three quarters of global GDP with roughly two-thirds of the world’s population, the G20 does not give representation to another 174 other countries. Both G20 and non-G20 members are concerned with sustaining global economic growth while maintaining economic stability and addressing the

³⁴ Together First. *Stepping Stones for A Better Future. 10 Ideas for World Leaders Who Are Serious About Building Back Better*. May 2020. Accessed 16 February 2021. https://together1st.org/storage/novapages/SteppingStones_Final.pdf; Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace. *Advancing Cyberstability*. Final Report. November 2019. Accessed 16 February 2021. <https://cyberstability.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GCSC-Advancing-Cyberstability.pdf>.

³⁵ Ponzio, Richard et al. *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance-75 Years beyond San Francisco*. The Stimson Center. June 2020. Accessed 16 February 2021. <https://www.platformglobalsecurityjusticegovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UN-2.0-Report-June-2020.pdf>; Albright-Gambari Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, *An Innovation Agenda for UN75, The Albright-Gambari Commission Report and The Road To 2020*. Washington D.C. The Stimson Center, 2019. 25. Accessed 16 February 2021. https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/file-attachments/GloCo_report_2019_June17_Update_WEB_0.pdf; Abdenur, Adriana Erthal. “A Global Forest Treaty Is Needed Now.” *PassBlue*, 10 December 2020. Accessed 16 February 2021. <https://www.passblue.com/2020/12/10/a-global-forest-treaty-is-needed-now/>.

economic, social, and political threats posed by pandemics like COVID-19 and the accelerating challenge of climate change.

If the G20 is to live up to its ambition of becoming the “premier forum” of global economic and financial governance, it should be upgraded to a “G20+.”³⁶ This idea entails that the G20 establish formal links with intergovernmental organizations for implementation and follow-through. Specifically, it should assemble at Heads of State and Government level every two years at UN Headquarters, in a way that coincides with the gathering of all world leaders at the UN General Assembly. Furthermore, the G20 should also acquire a more stable institutional presence to provide it with collective institutional memory. A small secretariat could be created for the G20+ to give it such presence and promote better-integrated economic, social, and environmental approaches to international problems.

2. Legal innovation

For particularly pressing global issues, legal innovations may be necessary, in particular new international, legally binding commitments and frameworks on critical global common goods. For instance, illegal deforestation is reaching new peaks, showing that—despite growing engagement by civil society and parts of the private sector—there is a need for a firm commitment from states to curb and prevent activities such as illegal land invasions, induced forest fires, illegal logging, and illegal mining in forested areas. In 1992, the idea of a Global Forest Convention was put forth at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro but was promptly shelved due to political resistance. Since then, international pressure on governments that promote environmental destruction, especially in rainforest areas, has reached new heights.

Climate change has migrated to the center of the global agenda; many states and organizations have signaled renewed commitment to mitigation and adaptation; and climate and environmental activists, especially youth, have become more vocal and visible. And yet too many states have failed to comply with their commitments to the Paris Agreement, including due to destructive forest practices. The time is ripe for relaunching efforts to draft and campaign for the ratification of a Global Forest Convention. This innovative proposal for the global governance of forests, led by led by Plataforma CIPÓ, is based on four pillars: (a) solid evidence-based assessment by a panel of independent experts; (b) broad adherence not only by heavily forested countries, but also by countries that import forest products; (c) meaningful engagement by civil society and the private sector across all phases, from norms-setting to implementation monitoring; and (d) respect for the rights of indigenous and other traditional peoples of the forest, as well as other people whose jobs and income depend on the forest.³⁷

3. Policy innovation

Innovations can also focus on particular policies, rallying capacities, expertise, and funds around a well formulated global governance priority. One of these could be the “Responsibility to Prevent,” a dimension of the Responsibility to Protect principle with great potential that remains thus far neglected. While the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged rich and poor countries alike, fragile and conflict-affected countries have come under particularly acute strain. Current prevention efforts are modest in scale relative to the need and insufficient to address the complex, asymmetric nature of contemporary conflicts.

Building the capacity of states to prevent atrocities, therefore, requires far closer attention to the political, social, and institutional factors known to generate political extremism and violence. Moreover, the UN system needs greater capacity for integrated conflict preventive action, underpinned by enhanced institutional “situational awareness” and crisis warning capabilities. A “conflict analysis responsibility center”—located within the UN’s recently consolidated Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)—could both strengthen DPPA’s efforts at prevention and support the Office of the Special Advisers for Genocide

³⁶ Ponzio, Richard et al, *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance-75 Years beyond San Francisco*, 30-31.

<https://www.platformglobalsecurityjusticegovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UN-2.0-Report-June-2020.pdf>.

³⁷ Abdenur, Adriana Erthal, “A Global Forest Treaty Is Needed Now,” Accessed 16 February 2021.

Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, by coordinating information and analysis to enable quicker decision-making and early action.³⁸

4. Normative innovation

Innovation can also happen at the normative level by advancing global change in ethical standards. One area that could benefit from normative change is cyber security. Cybercrime has been estimated to cost the world almost U.S \$600 billion per year. Despite the wealth of expertise and technical resources in the international community, cybersecurity still lacks effective international coordination. According to the International Communications Union, there is “still a visible gap between many countries in terms of knowledge for the implementation of cybercrime legislation, national cybersecurity strategies, computer emergency response teams (CERTs), awareness and capacity to spread out the strategies, and capabilities and programmes in the field of cybersecurity.”³⁹

Against this backdrop, a new culture of cooperation among governments and greater “cyber hygiene” at the level of individual users are required. Regarding the former, a standby roster of cybercrime experts to assist countries in the development of critical cybersecurity capabilities, managed by a UN-affiliated global network of regional cybercrime centers, could draw on the experience and best practices and foster a global *esprit de corps* for securing the digital sphere. Regarding the latter, a global UN campaign promoting “cyber hygiene” would better inform internet users and teach them how to protect their data and assets from cybercrimes.⁴⁰

5. Operational innovation

Last but not least, innovations are also needed at the operational level to close gaps between agreed commitments and the actual workings of multilateral institutions. One area in need of much better operationalization is the inclusion of women in peace processes. Despite various United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), from 2000, prioritizing female representation in international peace processes and peacebuilding planning continues to be minimal. From 1990 to 2019, the role of women in major peace processes has been less than 10 percent: only 2 percent were mediators, 5 percent were witnesses or signatories, and 8 percent were negotiators.⁴¹

Closing several major gaps in the implementation of the WPS agenda is imperative to spur integration of women in international peace processes and domestic decision-making fora. Various UN-based initiatives can be leveraged to further support this recommendation, including the UN-Wide Gender Parity Strategy and the Elsie Initiative of the Canadian government, which seeks state-level collective action to achieve greater gender parity in peace operations.⁴² Furthermore, high-level meetings, such as the UN Peacekeeping Defense Ministerials, continue to show the resolve of individual states to further the goals of gender parity in peacekeeping. Several countries have reaffirmed such commitments, as seen, for instance, at the 2017

³⁸ Ponzio, Richard et al *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance-75 Years beyond San Francisco*, 36-37.

³⁹ Ponzio, Richard et al, *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance-75 Years beyond San Francisco*. The Stimson Center. June 2020. 38. Accessed 16 February 2021. <https://www.platformglobalsecurityjusticegovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UN-2.0-Report-June-2020.pdf>; International Telecommunications Union. *Global Cybersecurity Index 2018*. Geneva: International Telecommunication Union, 2018, 6. 81. United Nations. Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. *The age of digital interdependence*. June 2019, 7. www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf.

⁴⁰ Ponzio, Richard et al, *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance*, 39; Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace, *Advancing Cyberstability*, 43. See also Lute, Jane Holl and Peter J. Beshar. “Now is the perfect time for a cyberattack. Here’s how to stop one.” *Washington Post*, Last modified 18 May 2020. Accessed 25 May 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/17/now-is-perfect-time-cyber-attack-heres-how-stop-one/>.

⁴¹ Figure 3, Data from UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations. Albright-Gambari Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance. *An Innovation Agenda for UN75, The Albright-Gambari Commission Report and The Road To 2020*, Washington D.C. The Stimson Center, 2019. 25. Accessed 16 February 2021. https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/file-attachments/GloCo_report_2019_June17_Update_WEB_0.pdf.

⁴² Albright-Gambari Commission, *An Innovation Agenda for UN75*, 26.

ministerial meeting in Vancouver, where Canada, the United Kingdom, and Bangladesh pledged to lead a new international, military-led gender champion network.

IV. Possible pathways for global governance change

For global governance reform to be seriously deliberated upon, let alone adopted and implemented, enlightened political leadership, constructive and sustained non-governmental pressure and scientific evidence, and an inclusive strategy for change are all critical ingredients for progress.

Historically, global governance innovation has employed multiple avenues and vehicles for change. Two of the most common are (1) single issue or single institution focused reforms and, as outlined in section I, (2) more comprehensive (even systems-wide) approaches, often taking advantage of important anniversary milestones. A third pathway has combined these two approaches, sometimes referred to as a (3) “hybrid approach” by scholars and global governance change commissions.⁴³

Successful single issue or institution focused global governance reforms of the past two decades include the ratification of the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines (1998), the ratification of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (2002), the poorest country debt-reduction efforts of the Jubilee 2000 and follow-on campaigns that contributed to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (early 2000s), and the establishment of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (2013). One major advantage of this approach is that it facilitates a careful sequencing of reforms based on criteria, such as urgency, political feasibility, and cost, but at the same time allows easier weakening of specific ideas by one or two powerful opponents.

Beyond the single issue or institution-focused approach, the UN75 Declaration mandated the Secretary-General, in 2021, to recommend ways to advance its twelve commitments across the United Nations agenda with an eye to “current and future challenges.” This creates at least the possibility for Member States, the UN Secretariat, and non-governmental actors to rally behind a comprehensive institutional revitalization effort—akin to how the 2000 Millennium Declaration laid the groundwork for the ambitious 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. Learning from the early 2000s, the *little more than four-page* UN75 Declaration could set the stage and catalyze the development for, by for instance 2022 or 2023, a more detailed and ambitious program for strengthening vital aspects of the UN system (*note: by comparison, the 2005 UN60 Outcome Document consisted of thirty-eight pages*). An important advantage of the comprehensive approach is the identification of mutually reinforcing linkages between several major issue areas (allowing for deal-making central to effective multilateral diplomacy), while increasing the risk that highly contentious reforms (e.g., Security Council expansion) might hijack the broader reform process.

While some may argue that UN80 in 2025 may be more realistic for pursuing a broad and far-reaching global governance change program, the urgent need to better cope with, for example, the climate crisis, socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic, and the continued humanitarian emergency warrants a timely (e.g., over the next two-to-three years) UN system strengthening and renewal program. Fortunately, the political conditions have begun to ripen with the growth of the Alliance for Multilateralism, the new U.S. administration’s recent decisions to rejoin several international agreements and institutions, and the Secretary-General’s UN75 Global Conversation demonstrating overwhelming support for international cooperation to address global challenges. According to a joint op-ed, on 3 February 2021, by Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, Macky Sall, António Guterres, Charles Michel, and Ursula von der Leyen, “The most serious crises call for the most ambitious decisions to shape the future. We believe that this one can be an opportunity to

⁴³ Albright-Gambari Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance*, The Hague and Washington, D.C.: The Hague Institute for Global Justice and The Stimson Center, June 2015. xix and 110. Accessed 14 February 2021. <https://www.platformglobalsecurityjusticegovernance.org/publications-resources/albright-gambari-commission-report/>.

rebuild consensus for an international order based on multilateralism and the rule of law through efficient cooperation, solidarity, and coordination.”⁴⁴ This signals that some world leaders are ready to “mobilize resources, strengthen our efforts and show unprecedented political will and leadership,” as the UN75 Declaration calls for in its concluding paragraphs.

Fortunately, having to choose between a single issue/institution or comprehensive approach is neither inevitable nor necessary. A hybrid approach combines the strengths of both approaches while keeping options open to steer in the direction of either, as needed. Among the many possible pathways for global governance innovation, this might be a practical way forward in facilitating multilateral negotiations and sequencing reforms, with perhaps a higher potential for success in advancing a complex set of UN system-wide reforms.

Even with a carefully designed reform process, progress will depend, in large part, on both the quality of reform ideas negotiated and political momentum in support of those ideas engendered by a constellation of international actors. Chief among them are UN Member States and the Secretary-General, whose bold and skillful leadership will prove pivotal to achieving successful outcomes. Creative, robust, and evidence-based ideas and constructive outside pressure on governments from think tanks, civil society advocacy organizations, and the media have also shown in the past—for instance, through the Coalition for the International Criminal Court or thousands of scholars, activists, and journalists who are involved in the annual intergovernmental climate negotiations—to move the needle during complex and politically fraught multilateral negotiations. Preparations for the Secretary-General’s report, *Our Common Agenda*, have similarly taken a promising path by welcoming diverse perspectives from a wide range of actors across the global academic community and civil society.

Long-time champions and innovators of today’s multilateral governance system, the European Union, its Member States and other European countries have an important role to play in taking forward the “post-UN75 agenda.” At the same time, it would be hubris to believe that Europe alone would be able to stem the challenge of turning the UN75 Declaration from commitments into tangible outcomes by itself. As the 2016 EU Global Strategy acknowledged, the “EU will lead by example on global governance. But it cannot deliver alone. It will act as an agenda-shaper, a connector, coordinator, and facilitator within a networked web of players.”⁴⁵ This more pragmatic sentiment is echoed in the recent EU Communication on strengthening the EU’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism, which was published in February 2021: “Multilateralism has been and will remain the cardinal principle of the EU as the most effective means to govern global relations in a mutually beneficial way. But we cannot be multilateralists alone nor only for the sake of it.”⁴⁶

The EU has long represented how countries can cooperate and pool their sovereignty to pursue common goals, reforming itself periodically, adopting key characteristics of a more capable and authoritative supranational institution over time. As further expressed by H.E. Ambassador Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the UN, in presenting the EU’s statement in response to the UN Secretary-General’s 2021 priorities briefing:

“We appreciate your continued strong dedication and leadership in having the organization come together under very challenging circumstances, and keeping it focused on our most pressing global challenges. All of which are well-captured in the **UN75 Political Declaration**, which – together with the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement – should serve as **our roadmap** going forward. Its **implementation should be a priority** during this session.

⁴⁴ Macron, Emmanuel, Angela Merkel, Macky Sall, António Guterres, Charles Michel, and Ursula von der Leyen. “Multilateral Cooperation for Global Recovery.” *Project Syndicate*, 3 February 2021. Accessed 14 February 2021. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/multilateralism-for-the-masses-by-emmanuel-macron-et-al-2020-02>.

⁴⁵ European Union. Global Strategy. “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy.” Accessed 18 February 2021. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

⁴⁶ European Commission. High Representative of The Union For Foreign Affairs And Security Policy. *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on strengthening the EU’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism*. 17 February 2021. 1. Accessed 18 February 2021. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93292/joint-communication-european-parliament-and-council-strengthening-eu%E2%80%99s-contribution-rules_en.

Au cœur de la déclaration se trouve la conviction, que nous partageons pleinement, que les nombreux défis mondiaux ne peuvent être résolus que par un multilatéralisme inclusif, avec l'ONU en son centre. Pour maintenir son fonctionnement efficace, nous devons continuer à mettre en œuvre le processus de réforme que vous avez si habilement piloté, Monsieur le Secrétaire général, et assurer un financement suffisant et durable afin de permettre à l'ONU de remplir son rôle ô combien crucial.

Esperamos con gran interés sus recomendaciones sobre la manera de avanzar nuestra agenda en común y de mejorar la gobernanza mundial de los bienes comunes globales antes del final de esta sesión. Le animamos a tratar de ello con el mayor número posible de interesados posible y a ser ambicioso y audaz en sus recomendaciones. Puede contar con la participación constructiva de la Unión Europea.”⁴⁷

Through the forthcoming virtual forum and expert roundtable on “European Perspectives on Taking Forward the UN75 Declaration: From Reflection to Innovation & Action,” the organizing team aims to generate a rich and open exchange on how the global governance system, especially the United Nations, can be upgraded to better confront today’s global challenges and opportunities, drawing ideas, lessons, and inspiration from, in particular, European insights and experiences in building a more inclusive and just international order.

⁴⁷ Ambassador Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the UN. *EU Statement in response to the Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization*, Item 115 - A/75/1 (Briefing by the Secretary-General on his priorities for 2021). 28 January 2021, 2.