

# Decision on the Scope of the Summit of the Future

## *A Comprehensive Breakdown*

### **Background on the Intergovernmental Negotiations:**

On Friday 1st September 2023, the UN General Assembly adopted the [Decision on the Scope of the Summit of the Future](#) by consensus.

Those following the negotiations will know that it has been a tough process. So let us unpack what has happened over the past five months.

Behind closed doors at the UN Headquarters in New York, Member States embarked on a tumultuous journey to find consensus on a framework for the Summit of the Future (SOTF). The Permanent Representatives of Germany and Namibia to the UN were appointed by the President of the General Assembly “to facilitate open, transparent and inclusive intergovernmental consultations on the preparatory process” of the SOTF.

These negotiations were for Member States to agree on a text that laid out the scope and elements of the Summit of the Future. It was purely meant to be a procedural process. However, this did not go according to plan. The negotiations quickly became a space where Member States were debating language and more substantive issues - a process that is supposed to begin in January 2024.

Germany and Namibia as the co-facilitators of this process published several drafts of the Scope and Elements of the Summit of the Future which Member States could not agree on (a Zero Draft, Rev1, Rev2, and Rev3!). The most contentious issues include human rights, gender equality, youth, peace and security, technology transfer, common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR), and Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs), among others. The disagreements over these ‘elements’ caused negotiations to stall and led to their removal from the Decision entirely.

Hence, we went from having Scope and Elements to just the [Scope of the Summit of the Future](#).

## *What Does the Decision on the Scope Mean?*

The [Decision](#) begins by recalling the resolution on the [Modalities of the Summit of the Future](#) from 2022 and agrees that the outcome of the SOTF “would adopt a concise, action-oriented outcome document entitled “A Pact for the Future”, agreed in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations”. We are expecting the negotiations for this Pact to start in January 2024.

The Decision then agrees that the Pact will be divided into five chapters:

- I. Sustainable development and financing for development;
- II. International peace and security;
- III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation;
- IV. Youth and future generations;
- V. Transforming global governance.

It also decides that a series of issues would be “taken into account in the relevant chapters of the Pact for the Future”. These include:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its pledges / commitments to:
  - leave no one behind
  - end poverty and hunger everywhere
  - combat inequalities within and among countries
  - build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies
  - ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources
  - creating conditions for sustainable, inclusive, and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity, and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities.
- The realization of the human rights of all.
- The achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

It ends by calling on the President of the General Assembly to:

- Appoint two Member States, one from a developed country and one from a developing country, to co-facilitate the intergovernmental negotiations of the Pact (by 31st October 2023).
- To designate, as necessary, pairs of coordinators, each comprising one from a developed country and one from a developing country, taking into account gender balance, for specific chapters or elements.
- Appoint two pairs of co-facilitators, each comprising one from a developed country and one from a developing country, taking into account gender balance, for the negotiations of a global digital compact and a declaration on future generations, which would be annexed to the Pact for the Future if intergovernmentally agreed.

## *What happened to the Elements?*

Despite disagreements between Member States on several issues, informal consensus was reached on several aspects of the third revised draft of the Decision, which can provide a strong basis for the negotiations of the Pact. While these were streamlined in the final text that was adopted, the areas that enjoyed agreement include support for:

### *Chapeau*

- The [Charter of the United Nations](#), the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), and the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#);
- The three pillars of the United Nations – development, peace and security, and human rights – and how they are interlinked and mutually reinforcing;
- Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, as the greatest global challenge and indispensable requirement for sustainable development;
- The Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations ([UN75](#)).

### *Chapter 1: Sustainable Development & Financing for Development*

- Accelerating the full achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its [Sustainable Development Goals](#), and building on the [2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit](#);
- Fulfilling all commitments under the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), including on financing for development;
- Building on the outcomes of recent United Nations high-level meetings related to sustainable development and financing for development;
- Addressing all obstacles to achieving sustainable development.

### *Chapter 2: International Peace and Security*

- Promoting and maintaining international peace and security, and addressing threats including root causes thereof, through the peaceful settlement of disputes, refraining from the threat or use of force, in any manner inconsistent with the UN Charter,
- Prevention of conflicts, while promoting a culture of peace, diplomacy and mediation, confidence building measures;
- Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, in accordance with International Law, including full adherence to the UN Charter, its purposes and principles, and UN resolutions.

### *Chapter 3: Science, Technology and Innovation and Digital Cooperation*

- Strengthening all aspects of global digital cooperation and bridging digital divides, through the elaboration of a [Global Digital Compact](#), to be intergovernmentally negotiated and which would be annexed to the Pact if intergovernmentally agreed.

#### *Chapter 4: Youth and Future Generations*

- Promoting the meaningful, inclusive, and effective engagement of youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations in the work of the United Nations;
- Thinking and Acting in the interests of Future Generations, including through the elaboration of a Declaration on Future Generations, to be intergovernmentally negotiated and which would be annexed to the Pact of the Future if intergovernmentally agreed.

#### *Chapter 5: Transforming Global Governance*

- Reforming three of the principal organs of the United Nations: reform of the [Security Council](#), revitalization of the work of the [General Assembly](#), and the strengthening of the [Economic and Social Council](#);
- Strengthening of the [Peacebuilding Commission](#);
- Deepening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations as appropriate according to their respective mandates;
- Developing a framework on measures of progress on sustainable development that complement or go beyond gross domestic product;
- Reforming the International Financial Architecture and ongoing efforts to improve the international debt mechanisms;
- Promoting a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system;
- Fostering peaceful and sustainable uses of Outer Space.

The past few months of intergovernmental negotiations have taught us a lot. Not only has this process highlighted the numerous contentious issues amongst Member States, but it has also shown us how rapidly space is shrinking for civil society and youth participation.

The SOTF is a defining process that can shape the future of existing generations and those to come. It can and should be used as a mechanism to catalyze progress to realize the full potential of the UN Charter, 2030 Agenda, and so much more.

