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146th IPU Assembly Manama (11–15 March 2023)

Workshop in preparation for the United Nations Summit of the Future

Monday 13 March, 14:30 – 16:00
Grand Hall E, Room 2

Concept note

Background

“Just as the founders of the United Nations came together determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we must now come together to save succeeding generations from war, climate change, pandemics, hunger, poverty, injustice and a host of risks that we may not yet foresee entirely. This is Our Common Agenda.”

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

On 22 and 23 September 2024, the United Nations will hold a Summit of the Future with the aim of “reaffirming the Charter of the United Nations, reinvigorating multilateralism, boosting implementation of existing commitments, agreeing concrete solutions to challenges, and restoring trust among Member States”. Capturing these various strands, the full title of the Summit will be: “Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow”.

The case for this special Summit was first made by the UN Secretary-General in his report [Our Common Agenda](#), which came in the wake of the Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2020. The Declaration formulated 12 broad commitments (see [Annex](#)) touching on key issues where urgent action is needed to put the world back on a sustainable and peaceful course.

Indeed, 75 years since the creation of the UN, the future looks bleak. As the UN Secretary-General notes in his report, the world faces “a scenario of breakdown and perpetual crisis” resulting from deadly pandemics, an uninhabitable planet and destabilizing inequalities. How can this scenario be turned into a more positive “breakthrough scenario” leading to “a greener, safer and better future”?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 are meant to address almost all of today’s global challenges. However, according to the UN Secretary-General’s report, future progress will depend on nations and the world as a whole embracing a new social contract built on trust (institutions that listen, no corruption, fair taxation, digital access, etc.), on inclusion, protection and participation (universal social protections, decent work, health coverage, etc.), and on a people-centred new economic model (i.e. new measures of progress that are not based on economic growth alone).

This new social contract will only be possible if nations are able to work together in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity, and with an eye to the well-being of future generations. This, in turn, requires a stronger multilateral framework revolving around a more “networked” UN and related institutions of global governance in order to manage “global commons” that remain relatively unregulated (i.e. the atmosphere, outer space, cyberspace, the high seas and Antarctica) as well as “global public goods”, which are defined as “those issues that benefit humanity as a whole and that cannot be managed by any one State or actor alone” (i.e. health, finance, information, science, the environment and peace).

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#IPU146

The road to the Summit of the Future

In the original proposal, the Summit of the Future was envisaged as a companion event to the SDG Summit to be held in September 2023. However, following further consultations among Member States, it was concluded that more time was needed to shape the agenda for the Summit of the Future in order to add real value without duplicating existing follow-up processes for the SDGs and other such global agreements.

With a longer timeline now available, the first step on the road to the Summit of the Future will be to determine the scope of the Summit (i.e. the issues to be discussed) and the negotiation process for its outcome document. This work, which is led by Germany and Nigeria, is just beginning (the first consultations will be held on 14 February 2023) and is expected to take most of 2023.

The second step on the road to the Summit will involve intergovernmental negotiations to arrive at the Summit's "action-oriented" outcome document, which will be entitled "A Pact for the Future". This process will likely begin towards the end of 2023 and will continue well into 2024.

In early 2022, the UN Secretary-General established the [High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism](#) (HLAB) in order to help with the initial substantive discussions among UN Member States. The HLAB is tasked with submitting a report to the UN General Assembly in early 2023. As part of the HLAB's consultations with various stakeholders, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was invited to contribute its thoughts as to the ways and means in which parliaments and the Organization can help to further strengthen global governance through the UN.

Objectives

Considering that preparations for the Summit are in the early stages, and given the broad agenda that UN Member States are asked to build together, the key objectives of the workshop will be as follows:

- To familiarize IPU Members with the preparation process for the Summit, so they are able to engage governments (foreign ministers, Permanent Representatives to the UN, etc.) accordingly, including by demanding regular briefings on the negotiations to be undertaken
- To engage parliaments in an initial reflection on the possible scope of the Summit, which should not merely duplicate or echo existing processes but instead explore new policy arenas for the UN
- To initiate deeper reflection, within the parliamentary community, on some of the key issues to be addressed in the Summit's Declaration.

Format

The workshop will consist of two segments:

- Panel discussion (14:30 – 15:00)

In this segment, two or three senior UN officials and UN observers will outline the expectations of the Summit, the critical issues that are likely to be on the agenda, and the negotiation process ahead. Questions and comments will also be invited from the floor.

- Interactive brainstorming session (15:00 – 16:00)

This segment will explore, in greater depth, the possible scope of the Summit and some of the issues to be brought to the attention of negotiators in New York. The workshop format will allow participants to work together on a series of questions touching on various aspects of the report *Our Common Agenda*.

This segment will be guided by the following overarching question: Does current thinking about the future, as reflected in *Our Common Agenda*, strike at the root of the world's sustainability and peace problem?

The conclusions of the workshop will serve as a preliminary position for the IPU to advocate on behalf of the global parliamentary community in New York. A more comprehensive IPU position on the Summit of the Future will be developed at other meetings in the course of 2023.

KEY PROPOSALS ACROSS THE 12 COMMITMENTS

From the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations

All proposed actions are in line with and designed to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



1. Leave no one behind

- Renewed social contract anchored in human rights
- New era for **universal social protection, including health care and basic income security**, reaching the 4 billion unprotected
- Reinforce **adequate housing, education and lifelong learning and decent work**
- Digital inclusivity
- World Social Summit in 2025
- Identify **complementary measures to GDP**



2. Protect our planet

- Leaders meeting ahead of the global stocktaking in 2023
- Commit to the 1.5-degree Celsius goal and **net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner**
- Declarations of **climate emergency and right to a healthy environment**
- Package of support to developing countries**
- Measures for adaptation and resilience
- No new coal after 2021 and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies
- Account for the environment in economic models**, carbon pricing mechanisms and credible commitments by financial actors
- Post-2020 biodiversity framework**
- Transforming food systems** for sustainability, nutrition and fairness
- Action by the General Assembly on **territorial threats of climate change** and to prevent, protect and resolve situations of environmental displacement



3. Promote peace and prevent conflicts

- New agenda for peace to:**
 - Reduce strategic risks (nuclear weapons, cyberwarfare, autonomous weapons)
 - Strengthen international foresight
 - Reshape responses to all forms of violence
 - Invest in prevention and peacebuilding, including Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Commission
 - Support regional prevention
 - Put women and girls at the centre of security policy
- Peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space**, including through a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space



4. Abide by international law and ensure justice

- Human rights as a **problem-solving** measure, including by comprehensive anti-discrimination laws and promoting participation
- Application of **human rights** online and to frontier issues and new technologies
- Universal access to the Internet as a human right
- Human rights mechanisms on a more sustainable financial footing
- Legal identity for all**, end to statelessness and protection of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants
- New vision for the **rule of law**
- Global road map** for the development and effective implementation of international law



5. Place women and girls at the centre

- Repeal of gender-discriminatory laws
- Promote gender parity, including through quotas and **special measures**
- Facilitate women's economic inclusion, including investment in the care economy and support for women entrepreneurs
- Include voices of **younger women**
- Eradication of violence against women and girls, including through an **emergency response plan**



6. Build trust

- Global code of conduct that promotes integrity in public information**
- Improve people's experiences with **public institutions and basic services**
- Inclusive **national listening and "envisioning the future" exercises**
- Action to tackle **corruption** in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption
- Reformed **international tax system**
- Joint structure on financial integrity and tackling illicit financial flows**

PROPOSED KEY MOMENTS



7. Improve digital cooperation

- Global Digital Compact to:**
 - Connect all people to the Internet**, including all schools
 - Avoid Internet fragmentation
 - Protect data
 - Apply human rights online
 - Introduce accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content
 - Promote regulation of artificial intelligence
 - Digital commons as a global public good



8. Upgrade the United Nations

- High-level Advisory Board** led by former Heads of State and Government on improved governance of global public goods
- System-wide policy that **puts people at the centre**, taking into account age, gender and diversity
- More listening, participation and consultation (including digitally), building on the seventy-fifth anniversary declaration and Our Common Agenda
- Gender parity** within the United Nations system by 2028
- Re-establish the Secretary-General's **Scientific Advisory Board**
- "Quintet of change"** for United Nations 2.0, including innovation, data, strategic foresight, results orientation and behavioural science



9. Ensure sustainable financing

- Biennial Summit between the Group of 20, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General and the heads of international financial institutions** for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy including to:
 - Support a **Sustainable Development Goal investment boost**, including through a **last-mile alliance** to reach those furthest behind
 - Provide more flexible research and development incentives
 - Resolve **weaknesses in the debt architecture**
- Fairer and more resilient multilateral **trading system**, including a reinvigorated WTO
- New business models
- Improve the **United Nations budget process**



10. Boost partnerships

- Annual meetings between the United Nations and all heads of **regional organizations**
- Stronger engagement** between the United Nations system, international financial institutions and regional development banks
- More systematic engagement with **parliaments, subnational authorities and the private sector**
- Civil society focal points** in all United Nations entities
- United Nations Office for Partnerships to **consolidate access and inclusion**, including accessibility online



11. Listen to and work with youth

- Youth**
 - Remove barriers to political participation** and measure progress through a **"youth in politics" index**
 - United Nations Youth Office**
 - Transforming Education Summit in 2022
 - Recovery barometer** to track career paths and labour market outcomes for youth
 - High-ambition coalition** to promote green and digital-economy job creation
- Future generations**
 - Summit of the Future in 2023
 - Ensure long-term thinking**, including through a United Nations **Futures Lab**
 - Represent succeeding generations**, including through a **repurposed Trusteeship Council, a Declaration on Future Generations, and a United Nations Special Envoy for Future Generations**



12. Be prepared

- Emergency Platform** to be convened in response to complex global crises
- Strategic Foresight and Global Risk Report** by the United Nations every five years
- On global public health:**
 - Global vaccination plan**
 - Empowered WHO
 - Stronger global health security and preparedness
 - Accelerate product development and access to health technologies in low- and middle-income countries
 - Universal health coverage** and addressing determinants of health