



PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## **Civil Society Townhall with**

**H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly**

**on**

***Priorities for the 78<sup>th</sup> Session and Meaningful Civil Society Engagement***

**12 December 2023, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York**

### **Concept Note**

#### **Background**

The UN system – including the General Assembly as the most universal and representative Principal Organ of the organization – have long recognised and embraced the importance of partnerships including the value of meaningful engagement with all relevant stakeholders to advance the principles, objectives and ideals enshrined in the UN Charter.

Undoubtedly, the worsening climate crisis; the deteriorating peace and security situation globally, as evidenced by intensified conflicts in **Ukraine**, the **Middle East**, **Africa**, and the strife in **Haiti**; among many other geopolitical challenges, do reaffirm that our today's world is severely marred by multiple complex and interlocking crises that no country without exception can effectively address alone.

It is already acknowledged that governments acting alone – whether big or small, developed or developing – cannot deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. It is therefore unsurprising that SDG17 of the 2030 Agenda is about Partnerships for the Goals.

As we slowly transit the midpoint towards 2030, it is evident that the international community is falling far short on the 2030 Agenda. Of serious concern, is the burgeoning financing gap which was recently estimated at **4 trillion USD annually**. This calls for urgent action and effective mobilization of productive partnerships between governments and all relevant stakeholders, including Civil Society Organizations.

#### **Context of the Townhall**

In his Vision Statement and upon assumption of office on 5 September, H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, has committed to enhance multilateralism and pursue the vital objectives of *Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability* for all.

He has committed to open, inclusive, and transparent consultations with all relevant stakeholders, by listening intently to ensure clear and effective communication with the membership and with civil society alike to forge global consensus for enhanced multilateralism that better addresses our complex global challenges.

In this regard, and building on previous practice, the Office of the President alongside other UN stakeholders such as UN-DESA have recently initiated consultations with representatives of Civil Society to kickstart the engagement process on matters before the 78<sup>th</sup> Session.

In his recent open message addressed to the stakeholders, **dated 13 November 2023**, the President highlighted that the UN is meant to represent the voices of “*we the peoples*” and should act as an inclusive space where the views of all stakeholders should be considered.

The President also expressed determination to continue to implement measures and initiatives to enhance the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly in the General Assembly-related processes.

In addition, the President has recently launched the “*ASKPGA*” platform on the Office’s website as the vehicle to also engage with the public; so that they can pose important questions on matters that underpin the work of the organization and their wellbeing.

During the 78<sup>th</sup> Session, Member States will continue to engage in consultations on a range of topics, including the preparation of the **Summit of the Future** and other processes.

In his letter of **21 October** announcing appointment of Co-Facilitators and Co-Chairs, the President has called upon all of them to ensure that all relevant stakeholders participate and engage meaningfully in the consultations under their leadership.

### **Objectives of the Townhall**

It is against this backdrop, the Townhall with representatives of Civil Society Organizations is being organized.

This will be an opportunity to engage with the President of the General Assembly on his priorities for the 78<sup>th</sup> Session, and exchange ideas and hear proposals to facilitate meaningful participation of civil society in the work of the General Assembly.

The overarching objective should also be to enlist the input of Civil Society Organizations as their contribution to the theme of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, ***Rebuilding trust and reigniting solidarity: Accelerating Action on the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs towards Peace, Prosperity, Progress & Sustainability for all.***

The Townhall is supported by the Department of Global Communications.

## Provisional Programme

<b>Segment 1: Priorities of the President of the General Assembly</b>	
11.00 am	Introductory remarks by moderator
11.05 am	Opening Statement by the President of the General Assembly
11.10 -11.55 am	Questions and answers with the President of the General Assembly on his priorities at the 78 <sup>th</sup> session
11.55 am	Conclusion by moderator

### Format

The Townhall will be held in-person, in the **ECOSOC Chamber**, UNHQ, New York. The meeting will be webcast live on UN WebTV.

### Logistics

Civil Society Organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, formally associated with the Department of Global Communications, and other stakeholders are invited to attend. All in-person participants are required to register in advance [here](#) by 1 December 2023.

### Accessibility

Participants are requested to inform the Secretariat, in advance, of accessibility requirements to better facilitate participation in meetings. For any enquiries regarding available assistive tools, please contact the Accessibility Centre (email: [accessibilitycentre@un.org](mailto:accessibilitycentre@un.org); phone: 212 963 7348/9). More information is available [here](#).

### Additional Information

The Townhall will be immediately followed by a DGC-led session on planning for the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference (9 – 10 May, Nairobi, Kenya).

Speakers will include representatives from UN entities and civil society.