Nations large and small: a new global deal to deliver global public goods and address major risks
CHAPTER IV

IV. Nations large and small: a new global deal to deliver global public goods and address major risks

60. A renewed social contract at the national level and stronger intergenerational solidarity must find expression in a new deal at the global level. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that we are more interconnected and interdependent than ever before in human history. International cooperation mitigated some of the harms caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the response to the pandemic also exposed serious gaps in the effectiveness of multilateral action when it was needed most. We cannot afford to ignore those gaps if we are to be ready for the potentially more extreme, or even existential, threats that may lie ahead of us. To achieve the breakthrough scenario, a serious renewal of the principles and practices of collective action at the global level is needed, building on what is working and what has been achieved.

A. Protecting the global commons and delivering global public goods

61. The twin concepts of the global commons and global public goods are used in various contexts and fields, including law and economics. While they lack agreed definitions, for our purposes they represent a useful starting point for a serious review of where we stand. The global commons usually refer to natural or cultural resources that are shared by and benefit us all. They include the four conventionally understood commons that are beyond national jurisdiction — the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica and outer space — all of which are now in crisis. Public goods are understood as those goods and services provided to and benefiting all of society, which at the national level may include street lighting, fire departments, traffic control or clean water. Certain public goods have long been acknowledged as being global in nature, in that they cannot be adequately provided by any one State acting alone and they concern the welfare of humanity as a whole. These have traditionally ranged from global aspirations for peace, to practicalities, such as international civil aviation regulation. Ultimately, what distinguishes these precious domains is that their protection is an increasingly urgent task that we can only undertake together. Despite this, the multilateral system is not yet geared for the strategies, investments or solidarity needed, leaving all of us vulnerable to crises, such as in global public health, demonstrated by COVID-19, in the global economy and financial system, as in the 2008 financial crisis and current COVID-19 shock, and in the health of our planet, resulting in the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution we now face.

62. One of the strongest calls emanating from the consultations on the seventy-fifth anniversary and Our Common Agenda was to strengthen the governance of our global commons and global public goods. This does not require new institutions. Rather, we need new resolve and ways of working together that are suited to the challenges we face and the diverse landscape of actors (public, civic and private) that have the capacity to contribute to solutions. The balance between a global breakthrough and a breakdown scenario hinges on the choices we make now. These choices are ultimately in the hands of Member States, with the support of other relevant stakeholders.

63. Drawing on our extensive consultations and the guidance of the seventy-fifth anniversary declaration, I set out below some areas of international concern that could be considered
PROJECTED DEGRADATION OF THE GLOBAL COMMONS

ATMOSPHERE

Trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration over 800,000 years
Mean carbon dioxide concentrations globally ppm

![Graph showing trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration over 800,000 years.](Image)

Carbon dioxide concentrations are now at the highest level in at least 2 million years, 148% above pre-industrial levels.


Projections for global GHG emissions under different scenarios
Note: Projections do not take into account commitments announced in early 2021.

OUTER SPACE

As the density of objects in orbit increases, so does the likelihood of collisions, where each collision will create further debris in a chain reaction potentially rendering space unusable for generations.

![Graph showing cumulative number of catastrophic collisions in outer space.](Image)


ANTARCTICA

Antarctic ice sheet mass loss
as sea level equivalent, change relative to 1986–2005

![Graph showing Antarctic ice sheet mass loss.](Image)

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019.

HIGH SEAS

Projected pollution of the sea
Even with an extremely ambitious scenario (no further emissions in the ocean by 2020), the level of microplastics in the ocean could double by mid-century as already accumulated plastic waste slowly degrades into smaller pieces.

![Graph showing projected pollution of the sea.](Image)

Source: Lebreton and others, 2019.
as global public goods where action is needed. I also consider how these global concerns could be better served or protected. In some areas, robust agreements and momentum exist but they are failing to keep pace with the gravity of the challenge or are suffering from lack of implementation, while in other areas agreements or road maps are dated, fragmented or nascent.

**Global public health**

64. The costs of our failure to heed the warnings of a possible pandemic and work together more effectively once the virus took hold will reverberate for generations to come. We must ensure this never happens again. Mechanisms to manage health as a global public good effectively and proactively are essential for the very sustainability and safety of human life. To achieve many of the proposals set out in this report, we must first work to end and recover from the pandemic. We must also address the gaps and inequities that made us so vulnerable in the first place, building on what has worked and drawing lessons from what has not.

65. Governance of global public health is underfunded, siloed and distorted by a lack of incentives for equity. Improvements in recent decades in response to specific crises have not always been sustained or implemented in full. Global leadership has been impeded by limitations in the mandate of the World Health Organization
(WHO) and its chronic underfunding, with 80 per cent of its $2 billion annual budget dependent on earmarked contributions, which undermines its independence and capacity to deliver on its mandate. However, even in the face of necessary but hard questions, it is important not to lose sight of what has gone right, thanks in part to a robust ecosystem of partnerships, as well as recent steps to strengthen WHO, the International Health Regulations (2005) and regional capacities, such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Had the virus broken out a decade or more earlier, the consequences would have been more dire. Improved health surveillance, scientific advances and public-private partnerships have been vital to the unprecedented development of effective COVID-19 rapid tests, treatments and vaccines.

66. The recommendations of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response provide an important starting point. I lend my support to many of its findings and offer the following additional proposals.

67. The greatest near-term test of multilateralism is the effort to end the COVID-19 pandemic, notably by winning the race between vaccines and variants. As of mid-July 2021, over 3.4 billion vaccine doses had been administered globally, but in an uneven manner leaving us all vulnerable. We need over 11 billion doses for the global population to cross the 70 per cent vaccination threshold that might end the acute phase of this pandemic. This will involve the largest public health effort in history. In short, the world needs a global vaccination plan to: (a) at least double the production of vaccines and ensure equitable distribution, using the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility as the platform; (b) coordinate implementation and financing; and (c) support countries’ readiness and capacity to roll out immunization programmes while tackling the serious problem of vaccine hesitancy. To realize this plan, I have called for an emergency task force which brings together all the countries with vaccine production capacities, WHO, the Gavi Alliance and international financial institutions able to deal with the relevant pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers, as well as other key stakeholders. Greater sharing of technology and know-how will need to underpin such an effort, including strengthening and building local production capacities around the world. It is critical that efforts are sustainable, so that we are better prepared to respond to the next health emergency.

68. Longer-term governance of global health must focus more on prevention, preparedness and equity. There are several areas where collective action is urgently needed. First, the independence, authority and financing of WHO must be strengthened. This includes greater financial stability and autonomy, based on fully unearmarked resources, increased funding and an organized replenishment process for the remainder of the budget. As recommended by the Independent Panel, it also requires empowerment of WHO with respect to normative, policy and technical guidance and evaluation, as well as full access to information and information-sharing. WHO needs to play a leading and coordinating role in the emergency response to a pandemic, and WHO country offices must have the resources and be equipped to respond to technical
THE CASE FOR COOPERATION: POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRAJECTORIES FOR COVID-19

**Scenario: Less cooperation**

- Health emergencies not on the political agenda
- International Health Regulations cover only cholera, plague and yellow fever
- Weak systems for outbreak detection and reporting
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions could have been slower to ramp up, leading to more intense disease transmission
- Data to inform vaccine production could have been slower to disseminate

Assuming **no vaccine could have been available** in the first 12 MONTHS

**Projections for the first year:**

- The global loss in GDP could have been $6.6–7.9 TRILLION
- The total death toll could have been **10–19 MILLION**

**The reality**

- Lessons learned from SARS-CoV-1, MERS-CoV and Ebola virus epidemics
- Strengthened international health regulations
- New platforms and partnerships (WHO Health Emergencies Programme, Gavi Alliance, CEPI, etc.)
- New models for designing, testing and manufacturing multiple vaccines

**Vaccine development and approval took about 10 MONTHS**

**In the first year of the pandemic:**

- The global loss in GDP was around $5 TRILLION
- The estimated total death toll was around 5 MILLION

**Scenario: We can do better**

- Faster detection and reporting of a novel pathogen
- Faster ramp-up of non-pharmaceutical interventions to slow or contain disease transmission
- Faster vaccine development and greater manufacturing capacity
- More equitable vaccine distribution

Assuming **vaccine development and approval could have taken 7–9 MONTHS**

**Projections for the first year:**

- The global loss in GDP could have been $2.7–4.2 TRILLION
- The total death toll could have been 1.0–2.6 MILLION


Note: These estimates are based on simulations of the potential trajectory and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic under different levels of multilateral cooperation. The simulations used contemporary demographic and population mobility data and ran from the start of the pandemic through 28 February 2021, covering approximately the first year of the crisis.

Abbreviations: CEPI, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; MERS, Middle East respiratory syndrome; SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome.

a This is an estimate of total deaths; reported COVID-19 cases and deaths over the same time period are lower due to underreporting.
requests from Governments to support pandemic preparedness and response.

69. Secondly, global health security and preparedness (particularly investment in pandemic preparedness, but also for a broader set of potential health challenges) need to be strengthened through sustained political commitment and leadership at the highest level. I encourage States to consider the recommendations made by the Independent Panel, including the updating of national preparedness plans for future health crises and a universal periodic peer review process to foster accountability and learning between countries. The international system for pandemic preparedness and response, including systems to ensure early detection, an independent verification capacity for WHO and the containment of emerging pathogens, must be adequately and predictably financed, possibly through a facility that builds on existing global health financing mechanisms to reduce fragmentation. I encourage States collectively to commit to increasing international financing for pandemic prevention and preparedness, as recommended by the G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. We also need a more robust toolbox for compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005). Efforts by WHO member States to achieve a pandemic preparedness and response instrument are welcome in this regard. The platform for complex emergencies, proposed below, would also be available in the event of a future pandemic as a complement to any measures taken by WHO to strengthen its global surveillance system and declare public health emergencies of international concern.

70. Thirdly, building on the ACT-Accelerator model, product development and access to health technologies should be accelerated in low- and middle-income countries, especially for neglected or emerging infectious diseases, but also for a wider range of health threats such as antimicrobial resistance. This will require more resilient manufacturing and supply chains, including at the regional level, along with incentives that link research and development investments with health results rather than profits, such as reward systems or health-impact funds to foster future innovations. Further consideration could be given to technology transfers and commitments to voluntary licensing in agreements where public funding has been invested in research and development.

71. Finally, COVID-19 has shown the deep social impacts of global health crises. Some Governments have taken steps to put in place universal health coverage, including for mental health, and all countries are urged to do so without delay. Measures to address the social determinants of health are also vital. This means recognizing the interconnection between people, animals and plants and their shared environment through concepts such as One Health, reducing pollution, de-risking our food systems, reducing poverty and gender inequality, and promoting global biosecurity.

A global economy that works for all

72. The COVID-19 pandemic is only the latest reminder of our vulnerability to economic shocks. Rapid improvements were made to global systems to avoid a worldwide recession in response to the 2008 crisis, but blind spots in national economic policies continue to be mirrored at the global level, including the tendency to judge success by narrow, short-term measures of profit and growth and the perverse incentives of business practices that put shareholders’ interests above those of all other stakeholders. The pandemic also exposed other problems, not least the limits of GDP as a threshold for determining international support despite other risks and vulnerabilities, the lack of resilience in international trade and supply chains and the short-sightedness of a system that cannot agree to invest adequately in a global vaccine drive that could save half a million lives in 2021 and add $9 trillion to the global economy through 2025, a return that far exceeds the estimated costs of $50 billion.

73. A global economy that is sustainable and equitable has characteristics of a global public good, requiring robust international cooperation.
together with a rethinking of the interdependence between the economy, people and the planet. Economic governance is driven disproportionately by a small number of States and financial actors, and is siloed from other areas of international agenda-setting and decision-making, despite welcome efforts being made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, among others, to better account for sustainable development, human rights and preparedness and resilience. Building on the spirit of previous proposals for an Economic Security Council, as well as the collaboration observed during the pandemic, I propose a Biennial Summit at the level of heads of State and Government between the members of the G20 and the members of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General and the heads of the international financial institutions to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy. This would allow us to combine more systematically the respective strengths of relevant bodies and to make fuller use of the follow-up to the intergovernmental process on financing for sustainable development. Immediate matters this biennial gathering could promote include ultra-long-term and innovative financing for sustainable development and a Sustainable Development Goals “investment boost” for a green and just transition for all countries in need, more flexible research and development incentives to foster innovation and a process to resolve longstanding weaknesses in the international debt architecture. Agreement could also be pursued on a “last mile alliance” to catalyse and elevate policy action to reach those furthest behind as part of efforts to achieve the Goals.

74. A fairer and more resilient multilateral trading system would be open, rules-based, transparent and non-discriminatory. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is being reinvigorated and updated to take account of twenty-first century realities, such as electronic commerce and the digital economy, which offer opportunities for the inclusion of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and women in international trade. Efforts are also needed, however, to align international trade with the green and circular economies, including by broadening negotiations on environmental goods and services. We must move away from protectionist approaches, maximizing trade at all costs, with massive spillover effects, towards a system that incentivizes the adoption of welfare-improving practices and effective multilateral trade agreements. This also means promoting and valuing technological capacity, innovation and resilience in developing countries, including through more flexibility in intellectual property rights, technology transfer, trade facilitation support and limits on the use of trade restrictions, especially in a global pandemic. Reinstating an effective dispute settlement mechanism to be able to address trade tensions is key.

75. A resilient global economy would also see more countries able to support their own inhabitants, through financing for sustainable development linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. This, in turn, requires adequately resourced public sectors and private actors who understand themselves to be contributing to and benefiting from the delivery of global public goods. Stronger global cooperation to promote financial integrity by addressing endemic tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, as well as illicit financial flows, is long...
overdue (as discussed in chap. II above). Measures to increase fairness, such as a minimum global corporate tax and solidarity taxes, would be clear signals that private enterprises and the very wealthy who benefit most from current economic models must contribute to the national and global public good. Efforts to find consensus on complementary measures to GDP could be reinforced by a global shift away from relying on GDP to determine access to concessional finance and support, led by international financial institutions along with the United Nations. Indices of vulnerability to external shocks and systemic risk criteria could be given greater weight. Multilateral development banks could also revise their operations and asset management rules to increase their capacity to support investment in developing countries.

76. Achieving this new dynamic for the global economy means changing business models to better connect businesses, markets and society. Strong and sustainable businesses are built on global values, including human and labour rights, environmental sustainability and fighting corruption, all of which are embodied in the United Nations Global Compact. Coordinated action by the business community to align their business practices with global goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, is crucial.

77. Finally, we still lack pre-negotiated ways to convene relevant actors in the event of a global economic crisis. As with future pandemics, the proposed emergency crisis response platform (see chap. IV.B below) could be available in the event of future economic crises and shocks of sufficient scale and magnitude. In addition to being prepared for a crisis, we should be doing everything we can to invest in resilience and prevention; thus economic models and policies to secure sustainability, wellbeing and the future, as recommended throughout this report, are the most vital steps of all.

A healthy planet for its people

78. We are waging a suicidal war against nature. We risk crossing irreversible thresholds and accelerating crises that could take centuries or even millennia to reverse. Our climate, our environment and our planet are critical global commons that must be protected for all people, now and in the future. We are already at 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and rising rapidly. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned us in August 2021 that we are at imminent risk of hitting the dangerous threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius in the near term. Every fraction of a degree represents lost lives, livelihoods, assets, species and ecosystems. We should be dramatically reducing emissions each year, towards a 45 per cent reduction by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050, as made clear by the Panel, yet temperatures continue to rise. We should be shoring up our populations, infrastructure, economies and societies to be resilient to climate change, yet adaptation and resilience continue to be seriously underfunded.

79. We largely agree on what needs to be done. The Paris Agreement is a singular achievement, bringing all nations into common cause to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. To meet the demands of science and the goals of the Paris Agreement, we need the parties and all stakeholders to present more ambitious 2030 national climate plans and deliver on concrete policies and actions aligned with a net zero future, including no new coal after 2021, shifting fossil fuel subsidies to renewable energy and setting a carbon price. We
CLIMATE BREAKDOWN OR BREAKTHROUGH

**+4.4°C by 2100**

**Breakdown**

A scenario without climate action and no effective multilateralism to tackle climate change

Sea level rises by up to 1.01 METRES relative to 1995–2014

The world faces a reduction of more than 30% in global GDP per capita

Loss of 49%-89% of permafrost globally

Much higher risk of extreme sea levels, e.g. New York City (United States of America) is predicted to experience sea levels of around 2.75 m above normal once a decade versus once a century in the +1.5°C scenario. For a Pacific island like Tahiti, extreme sea levels of 1 m above normal would happen multiple times each year versus between 1 in 50 and 1 in 100 years in the +1.5°C scenario

**+2.7°C by 2100**

**Our current trajectory**

The trajectory with the latest commitments to reduce emissions

Sea level rises by up to 0.76 METRES relative to 1995–2014

The world faces a reduction of 15%–25% in global GDP per capita

Loss of most coral reefs is “very likely”

High confidence of a “drastic reduction” in global and African maize crops, with the possibility of tipping points that lead to the collapse of crops in some regions

**+1.5°C by 2100**

**Breakthrough**

A scenario where the world acts immediately to deliver a 45% reduction in emissions between 2010 and 2030

Sea level rises by up to 0.55 METRES relative to 1995–2014

The world faces a reduction of 8% in global GDP per capita

Arctic summer sea ice is “likely” to be maintained under 1.5°C

Loss of 17%-44% of permafrost compared with 49%-89% in the +4.3°C scenario

Limiting warming to 1.5°C rather than 2°C could reduce by 62–457 million the number of people exposed to climate risks and vulnerable to poverty

need a credible solidarity package of support to developing countries, one that includes meeting the goal of providing $100 billion every year, allocating 50 per cent of climate finance for adaptation and resilience, as well as the provision of technological support and capacity-building, which will all increase as needs expand. We need multilateral development banks and other financial institutions to align their portfolios to the Paris Agreement. The process to negotiate a new post-2025 climate finance goal that will begin in 2021 must also be based on, and respond to, the needs of developing countries.

80. It is equally important to jump-start a global effort to organize a just transition to create decent work and quality jobs as a key enabler for climate action and ambition. ILO and many other studies estimate that the transition from the grey to the green economy will result in the net creation of millions of jobs by 2030. I call on all countries to embrace the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All and adopt them as the minimum standard to ensure progress on decent work for all. The United Nations will fully support this just transition and efforts to ensure that thriving and prosperous communities emerge from this transition to a net zero future.

81. There are some signs that the world is waking up to the danger we face. A growing global coalition of Member States, including all Group of Seven nations, cities and businesses, has committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 and is setting the tough and credible interim targets needed to get there. The social movement to halt climate change and accelerate international cooperation, led by young people, has spread to every continent and every country. The price of renewable energy is falling rapidly, the end of coal is in sight and technologies are being deployed at a scale to achieve rapid reductions in emissions over the course of this decade. We can still limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, increase investments to promote resilience to impacts and combat ecosystem and biodiversity loss. To do so, however, we need faster, nimbler and more effective climate and environmental governance to enable socially just transitions.

82. At the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in 2021, all countries should commit to the goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius as the global benchmark for mitigation ambition. I would also urge the Conference, in line with my call for all States to declare a climate emergency, to accelerate action on an emergency footing, including by addressing new issues quickly and evolving with the science. In the Paris Agreement, Member States committed to regularly present updated and more ambitious nationally determined contributions. They also agreed to assess collective progress towards the Agreement’s long-term goals every five years at a global stocktaking of the Paris Agreement. I intend to convene leaders ahead of the first global stocktaking in 2023 to reach a political understanding on the urgent steps needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, protect people and communities from climate impacts and align public and private finance with the goals of the Paris Agreement.
83. The Conference of the Parties has the potential to act as a platform that captures the growing insistence of people all over the world on climate action, magnifying the voices of those most affected and who will hold us all to account. Fulfilling the objectives of the Paris Agreement is a responsibility of all stakeholders. Some companies have larger emissions profiles than entire countries and cities are responsible for over 70 per cent of emissions worldwide. I urge Governments formally to recognize the engagement and contributions of all stakeholders who significantly contribute to the delivery of countries’ commitments at the Conference. I also intend to invite leaders from civil society, the private sector and young people to the leaders meeting ahead of the first global stocktaking in 2023 and to ensure that they can meaningfully participate in that process.

84. Addressing risks to our planet needs to be part of every decision, every policy, every investment and every budget. The countries that are members of the G20 provided over $3.3 trillion in direct support for coal, oil, gas and fossil fuel power between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, 60 per cent of fossil-fuel subsidies went to producers and utilities despite Governments’ climate commitments. Fossil-fuel subsidies distort prices and risk increasing investment in emission-intensive assets that place the goals of the Paris Agreement out of reach. With too much of the international financial architecture still incentivizing economic growth with little or no consideration for sustainability and climate impacts, I urge States, international financial institutions and multilateral and national development banks to work with us to find complementary measures to GDP that account for the environment and to use this new measure to change fundamentally their mandates and investments.

85. More broadly, all finance flows must be consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development. Public finance is critical, particularly for those investments that yield no financial returns, such as some adaptation action. We also need large-scale private finance to support countries in shifting from economies that are dependent on fossil fuels to ones that are low emission and climate resilient. I urge all countries to implement carbon pricing mechanisms and ultimately to set a carbon price, and I encourage Group of 20 nations to consider the proposal from IMF to create an international carbon price floor. Financial actors within the G20 are taking decisive steps by pledging net zero commitments, but now comes the credibility test: all financial actors must set verifiable targets that cover their entire portfolios to shift them away from high-emission sectors to the climate resilient and net zero economy, along with timelines to implement their pledges. The United Nations-convened Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance provides an important model with transparent and accountable targets. As initiatives around carbon markets multiply, the use of offsets must be the last resort. I urge all private actors to prioritize reducing absolute emissions and negative biodiversity impacts across their entire value chain and to hold to the highest standards of environmental integrity.

86. Even as we work tirelessly to prevent climate change, we need to be prepared for a drastically different climate and environment in the future. Most countries need to adapt their economies, their infrastructure and their services to account for the impact of climate change, with increased adaptation support for developing countries as stated above. Only one in three people globally are covered by early warning systems and it is essential to fully capitalize the World Meteorological Organization Systematic Observations Financing Facility to ensure that every person is covered. As the impacts of climate change worsen and displacement grows, the General Assembly could consider measures to address territorial threats of climate change, especially for small-island developing States and other States facing a severe risk. Building on the work of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, along with the Global Compact on Refugees, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Task Force on Displacement of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts,
further consideration could be given to finding ways to **prevent, protect and resolve situations of environmental displacement**.

### TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS
- Sustainable food systems and strong forest protection could **generate over $2 trillion per year of economic benefits**, create millions of jobs and improve food security, while supporting solutions to climate change.

87. Climate action is a central part of a fundamental reset in our relationship with nature. More broadly, a **strong post-2020 biodiversity framework** is needed to provide sufficient financing to reverse the catastrophic biodiversity loss the planet is currently experiencing. **Food systems** must also be transformed, aligning with health, climate, equity and the Sustainable Development Goals. Building on the outcomes of the Food Systems Summit, which will be held in New York in September 2021, we must anticipate and respond to risks of large-scale food insecurity and famine driven by our changing environment. Revisiting our patterns of unsustainable consumption and production should enable more efficient and greater equity in resource use, less food loss and waste, and sound management of chemicals and waste to minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment. Food systems need to ensure that all people have access to healthy diets that contribute to the restoration of nature, address climate change and are adapted to local circumstances. This transition can help to deliver across all the Goals and is best supported through inclusive participation of various stakeholders, in particular producers, women, indigenous people and youth. The international meeting “**Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity**” offers an opportunity to redefine humankind’s relationship with nature and to achieve a healthy planet for the prosperity of all. I would urge recognition of the **right to a healthy environment**.

### A new agenda for peace
88. Peace is the central promise of the Charter of the United Nations and one of the principal global public goods the United Nations was established to deliver. In crucial respects, our multilateral architecture has succeeded: there have been no world wars and nuclear weapons have not been used in war for the past 75 years, while some of the greatest risks of escalation have been prevented. Nevertheless, our collective peace and security is increasingly under threat as a result of emerging risks and dangerous trends for which traditional forms of prevention, management and resolution are ill suited. This includes protracted conflicts involving transnational networks and new actors, frequently associated with terrorism, rapidly evolving weapons technologies and a growing willingness of regional actors to participate directly in wars. Climate change is contributing to instability and is affecting livelihoods, access to resources and human mobility trends. With **significant numbers of people displaced** and overall levels of violence outside armed conflict reaching new highs, it would be hard to argue that we are delivering on the promise of the Charter. Risks to peace and security are growing: new technologies are placing the capacity to disrupt global stability in the hands of far more actors; longstanding agreements on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are increasingly fragile as trust among major powers continues to erode; and emerging domains of potential conflict or lawlessness, such as cyberspace, have highlighted gaps in our governance architecture. The world is moving closer to the brink of instability, where the risks we face are no longer managed effectively through the systems we have.

89. To protect and manage the global public good of peace, we need a peace continuum based on a better understanding of the underlying drivers and systems of influence that are sustaining conflict, a renewed effort to agree on more effective collective...
security responses and a meaningful set of steps to manage emerging risks. To achieve this, we need a new agenda for peace, potentially focusing on six core areas:

a) **Reducing strategic risks.** I have already proposed to work with Member States to update our vision for disarmament so as to guarantee human, national and collective security, including through broader support for non-proliferation, a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, effective control of conventional weapons and regulation of new weapons of technology. The new agenda for peace could be an opportunity to take this forward, in particular through establishing stronger commitments for the non-use of nuclear weapons and a time frame for their elimination, ensuring continued cooperation to prevent and counter-terrorism, strengthening digital transformation and promoting innovation by United Nations peace and security entities, banning cyberattacks on civilian infrastructure, putting in place measures to de-escalate cyber-related risks and tensions, and establishing internationally agreed limits on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in January 2021 was an extraordinary achievement and a step towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons;

b) **Strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new peace and security risks.** The proposals laid out in chapter III above to ensure the future of succeeding generations and chapter IV.B below on addressing major risks could allow us to identify and adapt to new risks to peace and security;

c) **Reshaping our responses to all forms of violence.** Large-scale conflict kills fewer people than other forms of violence, including violence from criminal groups and interpersonal violence in the home. At the same time, increases in some forms of violence, particularly against women, tend to be an early warning sign of diminishing law and order and rising insecurity that may catalyse into broader conflict. The new agenda for peace could consider how to more effectively address violence holistically. For instance, this could be through a multi-stakeholder effort to reduce violence significantly worldwide and in all its forms, including against women and girls, in line with target 16.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and building on the movement to halve global violence by 2030;

d) **Investing in prevention and peacebuilding.** Investments in prevention and preparedness pay for themselves many times over in the human and financial costs that are spared, yet we continue to make the case in vain. The new agenda for peace could involve a set of commitments to provide the necessary resources for prevention, including at the national level; reduce excessive military budgets and ensure adequate social spending; tailor development assistance to address root causes of conflict and uphold human rights; and link disarmament to development opportunities. There has also been too little progress on adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, with demand for support from the Peacebuilding Fund significantly outpacing available resources. The new agenda for peace could renew calls for Member States urgently to consider allocating a dedicated amount to the Peacebuilding Fund from assessed contributions, initially through the peacekeeping budget and later through the regular budget, as a complementary investment that would increase the sustainability of peacekeeping outcomes and support the development agenda. Relatedly, the Peacebuilding Commission has reshaped the responses by the United Nations to multidimensional threats to development, peace and security through an inclusive approach. Member States are called on to
dedicate more resources to the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, with commensurate support from the United Nations system, to enable these important instruments to meet the increasing demand. Consideration could also be given to expanding the role of the Commission to more geographical and substantive settings, as well as to addressing the cross-cutting issues of security, climate change, health, gender equality, development and human rights from a prevention perspective;

e) Supporting regional prevention. Regional actors are central to sustaining peace and preventing and responding to insecurity, but these critical frontline responses require further consolidation. It is becoming urgent to secure predictable financing for peace support operations delivered under Chapter VIII of the Charter covering regional arrangements: these operations fill a critical gap in our global peace and security architecture and should not rely on ad hoc arrangements. More broadly, the new agenda for peace could consider how to deepen United Nations support for regional capacities, including with regard to security arrangements, military cooperation and joint peacebuilding work, cooperation to address complex transnational peace and security challenges, and by expanding into new areas such as the effects of climate change on security. My previous proposals for regional coordination platforms could provide a useful framework on which to build;

f) Putting women and girls at the centre of security policy. Building on the existing women and peace and security agenda and its principles of prevention, demilitarization and equality, the new agenda for peace would place women and gender equality at the heart of peace and security. Not least, the linkages between interpersonal violence and insecurity and between women’s equal participation in peacemaking and its effectiveness call for women’s equal participation in all peace and security decision-making and a reassessment of core assumptions, including how peace and security are defined, negotiated and sustained.

Peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space

90. Outer space has traditionally been acknowledged as a global common, beyond the jurisdiction of any one State. The potential for its peaceful, secure and sustainable use would benefit all humanity today and into the future. Governance arrangements for outer space, including the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, were established in an era of exclusively State-based activity and provide only general guidance on managing traffic in outer space, the permanent settlement of celestial bodies and responsibilities for resource management. We are in an era of renewed exploration and use of outer space, with active programmes to return humans to the Moon and beyond and the planned launch of mega-constellations of thousands of new satellites. Space assets have transformed the way we live and outer space systems are vital for understanding and solving global problems, such as implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. Many of these developments are driven by actors in the private sector. They also pose new risks to security, safety and sustainability. Increasing congestion and competition in outer space could imperil access and use by succeeding
generations. Our governance and regulatory regimes require updating in line with this new era to preserve outer space as a global common.

91. Recently agreed Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities have shown that progress in governance is possible, but many gaps remain. A combination of binding and non-binding norms is needed, building on existing frameworks and drawing in the full range of actors now involved in space exploration and use. Immediate actions could include the development of a global regime to coordinate space traffic and the elaboration of new instruments to prevent weaponization of outer space. To that end, consideration could be given to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space as part of a Summit of the Future (see para. 103 below) bringing together Governments and other leading space actors. The dialogue could seek high-level political agreement on the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space, move towards a global regime to coordinate space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer space activities.

**Reclaiming the digital commons**

92. The fourth industrial revolution has changed the world. The Internet has provided access to information for billions, thereby fostering collaboration, connection and sustainable development. It is a global public good that should benefit everyone, everywhere. But currently the potential harms of the digital domain risk overshadowing its benefits. Governance at the national and global levels has not kept pace with the inherently informal and decentralized nature of the Internet, which is dominated by commercial interests. Serious and urgent ethical, social and regulatory questions confront us, including with respect to the lack of accountability in cyberspace; the emergence of large technology companies as geopolitical actors and arbiters of difficult
social questions without the responsibilities commensurate with their outsized profits; exacerbation of gender bias and male default thinking when women do not have an equal role in designing digital technologies, as well as digital harassment that has particularly targeted women and girls and pushed many women out of the public conversation; and the use of digital surveillance and manipulation to influence behaviour and control populations.

International cooperation guided by international law

94. As underlined in the seventy-fifth anniversary declaration, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law remain timeless, universal and an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. International legal regimes underpin and are essential to the protection of the global commons and the delivery of many of the global public goods identified above, and more broadly to an international order based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The fact that international law, in particular international human rights law, underpins approximately 90 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals is a strong example of this.

95. States play the primary role in the development of international law, whether within the framework of international organizations such as the United Nations or outside it. The United Nations has also played and continues to play a unique role in the identification and development of customary international law. The ongoing discussions within the United Nations on the development of norms and standards for a number of matters of global concern, such as information and communications technology (see A/75/816), underscore the importance of the United Nations as a vital forum for the development of international law. For those many instruments already in place, I urge States to implement their obligations and stand ready to provide support through the various United Nations activities for capacity-building and technical assistance.

96. In the seventy-fifth anniversary declaration, States agreed to abide by the international agreements they have entered into and the commitments they have made, to promote respect for democracy and human rights, and to enhance democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent and accountable

COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE INTERNET

- Total global Internet usage rose 40 per cent during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

93. It is time to protect the online space and strengthen its governance. I would urge the Internet Governance Forum to adapt, innovate and reform to support effective governance of the digital commons and keep pace with rapid, real-world developments. Furthermore, building on the recommendations of the road map for digital cooperation (see A/74/821), the United Nations, Governments, the private sector and civil society could come together as a multi-stakeholder digital technology track in preparation for a Summit of the Future to agree on a Global Digital Compact. This would outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all. Complex digital issues that could be addressed may include: reaffirming the fundamental commitment to connecting the unconnected; avoiding fragmentation of the Internet; providing people with options as to how their data is used; application of human rights online; and promoting a trustworthy Internet by introducing accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content. More broadly, the Compact could also promote regulation of artificial intelligence to ensure that this is aligned with shared global values.
governance and independent judicial institutions. Building on these commitments, consideration could be given to a global road map for the development and effective implementation of international law. This could encourage more States to ratify or accede to treaties of universal interest, such as on disarmament, human rights, the environment and penal matters, including those for which I am the depositary (of which there are over 600). It could also urge States to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and to withdraw reservations to treaty clauses relating to the exercise of its jurisdiction. Assisting States in identifying and addressing pressing normative gaps could be another component, as well as, drawing on my role related to compliance mechanisms, understanding reasons for non-compliance. As a further part of this road map, States could consider holding regular inclusive dialogues on legal matters of global concern at the General Assembly. I continue to welcome the role of the International Law Commission, which, pursuant to article 1 (1) of its statute, is entrusted with making recommendations for the purpose of promoting the progressive development of international law and its codification.

B. Addressing major risks

97. A central question remains prevention in all its aspects. Our success in finding solutions to the interlinked problems we face hinges on our ability to anticipate, prevent and prepare for major risks to come. This puts a revitalized, comprehensive and overarching prevention agenda front and centre in all that we do. We need more innovation, more inclusion and more foresight, investing in the global public goods that sustain us all. Where global public goods are not provided, we have their opposite: global public “bads” in the form of serious risks and threats to human welfare. These risks are now increasingly global and have greater potential impact. Some are even existential: with the dawn of the nuclear age, humanity acquired the power to bring about its own extinction. Continued technological advances, accelerating climate change and the rise in zoonotic diseases mean the likelihood of extreme, global catastrophic or even existential risks is present on multiple, interrelated fronts. Being prepared to prevent and respond to these risks is an essential counterpoint to better managing the global commons and global public goods.

98. An effort is warranted to better define and identify the extreme, catastrophic and existential risks that we face. We cannot, however, wait for an agreement on definitions before we act. Indeed, there is an ethical imperative to act in a manner compatible with the dignity of human life, which our global governance systems must follow, echoing the precautionary principle in international environmental law and other areas. The cost of being prepared for serious risks pales in comparison with the human and financial costs if we fail.

99. Learning lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, we can seize this opportunity to better anticipate and prepare to respond to large-scale global crises. This requires stronger legal frameworks, better tools for managing risks, better data, the identification and anticipation of future risks, and proper financing of prevention and preparedness.
Many of these elements are set out in other parts of this report. Importantly, however, any new preparedness and response measures should be agnostic as to the type of crisis for which they may be needed. We do not know which extreme risk event will come next; it might be another pandemic, a new war, a high-consequence biological attack, a cyberattack on critical infrastructure, a nuclear event, a rapidly moving environmental disaster, or something completely different such as technological or scientific developments gone awry and unconstrained by effective ethical and regulatory frameworks.

100. First, to enable us to better anticipate and respond to such risks, it will be important for the United Nations to draw on a network of the best thinkers and data, externally and within the United Nations system, to present a **Strategic Foresight and Global Risk Report** to Member States every five years. This will be supported by the planned Futures Lab, as well as by existing mechanisms across the United Nations system and beyond, such as the **annual IMF early warning exercise**, to collect and analyse data and make sense of risk across the short-, medium- and long-term. This would also be linked to corresponding governance arrangements for such risks, as appropriate, as well as the action needed to address them.

101. Secondly, I propose to work with Member States to establish an **Emergency Platform to respond to complex global crises**. The platform would not be a new permanent or standing body or institution. It would be triggered automatically in crises of sufficient scale and magnitude, regardless of the type or nature of the crisis involved. Once activated, it would bring together leaders from Member States, the United Nations system, key country groupings, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, subject-specific industries or research bodies and other experts. The terms of reference would set out the modalities and criteria for the activation of the platform, including the scale and scope of the crisis; funding and financing; the identification of relevant actors who would form part of it; the support that it would be expected to provide; and the criteria for its deactivation. Other key components could include mechanisms for surge capacity; focal points and protocols to promote interoperability with existing crisis-specific response arrangements; regular exercises to test efficacy and identify and fill gaps; and the identification of a set of tools to make the international system crisis-ready. The platform would allow the convening role of the Secretary-General to be maximized in the face of crises with global reach.

### C. Next steps

102. It is ultimately for Member States, in close consultation with other relevant stakeholders, to identify and agree on those global commons or public goods that may require renewed commitments or governance improvements. To support their deliberations, I will ask a **High-level Advisory Board** led by former Heads of State and/or Government to build on the ideas I have shared here. Notably, I will ask the Advisory Board to identify global public goods and potentially other areas of common interest where governance improvements are most needed and propose options for how this could be achieved. This would need to take into account existing institutional
and legal arrangements, gaps and emerging priorities or levels of urgency, and the need for equity and fairness in global decision-making. The Advisory Board could also take into account the proposals made throughout this report, including the repurposing of the Trusteeship Council and the creation of an Emergency Platform.

103. Once the Advisory Board has reported its findings, it will be important to hold a high-level, multi-stakeholder “Summit of the Future” to advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in this report, and potentially others, where governance arrangements are nascent or require updating. It would be preceded by preparatory events and consultations. The Summit would most appropriately be held in conjunction with the high-level week of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly and could include high-level tracks on:

a) Advancing governance for global public goods and other areas, as appropriate, in the light of the findings of the Advisory Board;
b) Anticipating sustainable development and climate action beyond 2030;
c) Peace and security, for the new agenda for peace;
d) Digital technology, for the Global Digital Compact;
e) Outer space, to seek agreement on the sustainable and peaceful use of outer space, move towards a global regime to coordinate space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer space activities;
f) Major risks and agreement on an Emergency Platform;
g) Succeeding generations, for possible agreement on a Declaration on Future Generations.

104. As we work to update our systems of governance for the future, I offer the following overall observations and parameters. The context for collective action has evolved over the past 75 years. When the Charter of the United Nations was developed, multilateralism meant cooperation among a small number of States. Today, a broader range of State and non-State actors are participating in global affairs as part of open, participatory, peer-driven and transparent systems, geared at solving problems by drawing on the capacities and hearing the voices of all relevant actors rather than being driven by mandates or institutions alone. This is a form of multilateralism that is more networked, more inclusive and more effective in addressing twenty-first century challenges. Any effort to improve our governance of the global commons and public goods and to manage risks must navigate this complexity and seek explicitly to incorporate these new approaches where they are likely to deliver better outcomes.

105. Multilateralism that is more networked draws together existing institutional capacities, overcoming fragmentation to ensure all are working together towards a common goal. It goes beyond traditional silos, such as peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian action, and enhances coordination between regional and global actors and action. Networks can be flexible, allowing for variable participation by a wide range of actors and the possibility for open coalitions or small “mini-lateral” or even “micro-lateral” groups, growing over time to include more actors. To keep a diverse set of actors aligned, the most successful networks involve clear goals, such as the climate target of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Expert bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change can ensure networks are evidence driven. Networks do not, however, replace our core international institutions, which have a unique role in galvanizing diverse actors and making space for marginalized voices. With clear goals and targets, and international organizations to provide legitimacy, we can make better use of the power of networks to deliver global public goods. For my part, I will seek to enhance cooperation with regional organizations, development actors, international financial institutions and other relevant multilateral institutions (see chap. V).
PARAMETERS FOR NETWORKED – INCLUSIVE – EFFECTIVE MULTILATERALISM

NETWORKED MULTILATERALISM

- Draws on existing institutional capacities
- Cross-pillar, avoids fragmentation
- Coordination between regional and global levels
- Flexible
- Variable
- Clear goals
- Evidence driven

INCLUSIVE MULTILATERALISM

- Space for all voices
- Diverse set of States
- Parliaments
- International institutions, including international financial institutions
- Civil society
- Cities
- Private sector

EFFECTIVE MULTILATERALISM

- Delivers results
- Prepared and ready to act
- Resource priorities
- Accountability for commitments
106. More inclusive multilateralism is marked by a genuine possibility for States from all regions and of all sizes to engage in collective action, notably including a stronger voice for developing countries in global decision-making. It also means inclusion of a diverse range of voices beyond States. In addition to intergovernmental organizations, this can include parliaments, subnational authorities (cities and local and regional governments), civil society, faith-based organizations, universities, researchers and experts, trade unions, the private sector and industry, and local and grass roots movements, including those led by women and young people. This vision recognizes that States remain central to our collective ability to meet global challenges and have unique responsibilities in the multilateral system, while also acknowledging that solutions increasingly depend on the private sector and non-State actors, who should therefore be part of the deliberations and accountable for their commitments. The role of parliaments, cities and other subnational authorities is particularly being recognized in inclusive approaches, with, for example, voluntary local reviews of Sustainable Development Goal implementation providing a model on which to build. Civil society needs to remain part and parcel of our work across sectors and in multilateral forums. In the light of its power to shift the needle significantly on many of our most critical challenges, inclusion and accountability of the private sector are essential. Arrangements where the private sector commits to responsible innovation and to harnessing technology fairly provide a good basis on which to build, as do business models that support inclusion, human rights and sustainable development, such as investment funds that take into account environmental, social and governance factors.

107. Ultimately what matters is results. We need multilateralism that is more effective in delivering on its promises and consequently is more trusted. This means the multilateral system is prepared and ready to act or adapt in the face of present and new risks; prioritizes and resources the tasks that matter; delivers results; and can hold all actors, State and non-State, accountable for commitments made. Any conversation about improving governance of the global commons and global public goods should assess how well our current arrangements meet these criteria. Where they do not, options for better preparedness, prioritization, decision-making arrangements, resourcing, accountability and compliance would need to be considered. In particular, a balance is needed between voluntary and binding actions that is commensurate with the challenges we face. While international law is essential in delivering global public goods and I have called for a renewed commitment to its development, we also have ways to encourage mutual accountability through other frameworks, including peer-review models (such as the universal periodic review) and mechanisms for sharing good practices and transparent data gathering. Finally, key to ensuring effectiveness is that funding and financing are brought to bear in support of our collective commitments. The Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, which seeks to review the means to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, provides a promising example.