



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5 April 2019

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 11 January 2019, conveying the synopsis of the main part of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, I would like to share with you a brief summary of our collective work during the first trimester of 2019.

To ensure transparency and to facilitate the work of the Assembly, including negotiation processes and the high-level events, at the start of the resumed part of the seventy-third session I held a briefing for Member States on the main priorities for the remaining part of my presidency. I was also glad to convene informal plenary meetings to hear the briefings by the Secretary-General about his priorities for the 2019, as well as on the financial situation of the Organization, later on in February.

I appointed six additional co-facilitators to lead informal consultations with Member States on different mandates, including the new process for the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations. In total, I have appointed **32 co-facilitators, out of which 17 are women**. I take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Ms. Audra Plepytė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, and H.E. Mr. Adonia Ayebare, Permanent Representative of Uganda, for the successful conclusion of negotiations on the draft outcome document of the **Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation**. I also congratulate Argentina for hosting a successful Conference in Buenos Aires on 20-22 March.

I maintained regular monthly meetings with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as the Presidents of the ECOSOC and the Security Council, to increase coordination and synergies in the work of the principal organs of the UN, for greater impact of the Organization.

High-level and commemorative meetings of the General Assembly

The first **high-level event** of 2019 marked the global launch of the **International Year of Indigenous Languages**, which I convened on 1 February at the request of Member States and in accordance with Resolution 73/156. The event was attended by Member States, including at the Head of State level by the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and representatives of indigenous peoples, as well as UN entities. It provided an opportunity to exchange views and best practices about preservation, promotion and revitalization of indigenous languages.

All Permanent Representatives and
Observers at the United Nations
New York

To keep the continued focus on the topic of migration, I convened the **High-Level Debate on International Migration and Development** on 27 February as part of the “migration week”, a designation I made to denote the number of accompanying events, including the Expert Symposium on International Migration and Development on 26 February, as well as the International Dialogue on Migration on 29 February on “Youth and migration: Engaging youth as key partners in migration governance”. The “migration week” ensured a rich and constructive dialogue amongst Member States, the UN system and civil society. It is my conviction that the debate has successfully proven the importance and the need of including migration and migrants in development policies, if we are to ensure that no one is left behind. The summary of the event was shared with Member States to help inform the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Women empowerment and gender equality has been my priority throughout the session. I am glad that my initiative to organize the **High-level Event on Women in Power on 12 March 2019** has put this topic under international spotlight both by high-level participation, as well as through social media. I am grateful to all women Heads of States and Governments who were able to participate in the event – Presidents of Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago and the Prime Minister of Iceland – as well as other leaders for their valuable contribution to the discussions. The event focused on the promotion of women’s leadership by identifying barriers, lessons learnt and best practices during the interactive roundtables on ‘How Women Leaders Change the World’ and ‘The Future of Women’s Leadership’. The high-level event also fostered an environment of mentoring and dialogue between present and future leaders through a luncheon with young women leaders. The event resulted in a **“Call for Action”** for concrete efforts to promote women’s leadership in the areas of policymaking and advocacy. *I encourage all Member States to join the Call to ensure broad support for women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. It requires joint efforts of all women and men leaders to achieve, without delay, real equality for women for the benefit of all humanity.*

On 25 March, the General Assembly held two **commemorative plenary meetings to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** focused on the “Mitigation and countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies” pursuant to A/RES/73/262 and the **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade** focused on the theme “Remember Slavery: Power of the Arts for Justice”.

I used the mandate from General Assembly resolution 72/219 to showcase the importance of synergies between climate and sustainable development for present and future generations of humankind. The **High-level meeting on Climate and Sustainable Development For All** was attended by 3 Presidents, 2 Prime Ministers, and more than 20 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Environment, as well as high-level representatives from 80 Member States, and 80 youth representatives, as well as representatives of civil society and private sector. It aimed at facilitating greater ambition by Member States in time for the implementation phase of the Paris Agreement in 2020. The deliberations of the meeting will feed into the review of SDG 13 (Climate Action) at the HLPF under ECOSOC, the Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit, as well as COP25 in Chile in December. The event was organized in collaboration with the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy; the President of ECOSOC and the COP Troika (Fiji, Poland and Chile); as well as YOUNGO, as an important gesture of solidarity to preserving climate for present and future generations and upholding multilateral commitments. A Leaders’ Roundtables Luncheon provided participants with the opportunity to delve deeper into the synergies between climate action and the 2030 Agenda. In addition to the nine thematic coalitions, three roundtables were hosted to galvanize broader participation of the UN membership and relevant stakeholders.

Making the United Nations Relevant for All

On 4 February, I hosted **seven former Presidents of the General Assembly** in a special event to discuss “Revitalization of the United Nations in favor of a strengthened multilateral rules-based system” with Member States. It was encouraging to listen to particularly rich and honest conversations throughout the day, with primary focus on concrete recommendations on how to ensure that the UN delivers for the people, including through a reinvigorated multilateral system.

I continued to use the **Morning Mingas** to engage with Permanent Representatives and get their insights on critical issues, such as new opportunities, challenges and the ways to reinvigorate South-South cooperation, which I hosted ahead of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. The fourth Morning Minga also provided valuable input for consideration on how to improve participation in and effectiveness of the General Assembly’s work, including with respect to the quality and the cost of services provided at the UN.

With ever-increasing mandates and ongoing processes, coherence and synergies are important to ensure success of the work of the United Nations. In this regard, I was glad to team up with the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to convene on 31 January the inaugural **joint briefing of the Presidents**. Member States were briefed on five areas of work of the two organs, namely: i) the alignment process; (ii) High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development; (iii) Youth; (iv) Decent Work; and (v) Financing for Development.

Another **joint briefing**, which I believe Member States found useful, was convened with the SG Special Envoy, H.E. Luis Alfonso de Alba on **Roadmap to the 2019 Climate Action Summit** on 14 February. Member States were briefed on how a number of key events on climate relate to each other and how the General Assembly High-level Meeting on 28 March would contribute in the narrative setting and organization of the 2019 Climate Action Summit.

On 19 February 2019, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN-Habitat, I convened an event on the theme: “From Global Issues to Local Priorities: The Role of Cities in the Global Agenda, Including Cities for Sustainable Development, Food Security, Nutrition and Climate Change”, with the participation of Mayors of different cities. A Summary of the deliberations has been shared with Member States.

In furtherance of the frank and open discussions I have promoted on the future of multilateralism and how to renew trust in the United Nations, the **2019 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations focused on “Emerging challenges to multilateralism: a parliamentary response”**. The event, a successful collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), addressed ways in which domestic politics and institutions can help strengthen the multilateral system. A summary is to be issued as a GA document.

On 26 March the **first informal interactive dialogue between the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission** took place as an important part of the ongoing processes to strengthen peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and reinforce the advisory role of the PBC. The dialogue was a unique opportunity for Member States to exchange views ahead of the publication of the Secretary-General’s interim report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and subsequent General Assembly formal plenary debate in June 2019.

Pursuant to my unwavering commitment to gender equality, I established a **Group of Gender Equality Leaders**. The first meeting with group members on 29 January benefited from an interaction with Member States and the UN community. The next meeting of the Group will be held on 15 July 2019, in New York.

To strengthen the momentum on ensuring accessibility at the United Nations for persons with disabilities, in early February I launched the **campaign for universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**. I personally reached out to all Member States who have not yet done so to ratify the Convention. As part of the efforts to ensure accessibility, all high-level meetings are provided with closed captioning services. I am glad that the Co-chairs of the Steering Committee on Accessibility (SCA), PRs of Antigua and Barbuda and the Republic of Korea continue monthly meetings to make further progress.

I continued to engage with students and young people at every opportunity, including at the International Institute of Strategic Studies (ISIS) of Pakistan, National Defence College of Oman, San-Francisco University of Quito through videoconference, National Model United Nations Conference and UNAUSA Global Engagement Summit, as well as at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College.

During the reporting period, I gave almost 60 print and broadcast interviews. I also held larger press events, including the Q&A with former PGAs, as well as the press briefing with women Presidents on the margins of the Women in Power high-level event.

Other opportunities for engagement took place in the context of my travels. I had the privilege to visit a number of countries to highlight the importance and relevance of the work of the General Assembly and for bringing the UN closer to people. I engaged with government leaders, parliamentarians, women peacekeepers, youth, academia, think tanks and civil society representatives during my visits to Pakistan, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Finland and the European Union in Brussels. In Helsinki I participated in the 1st International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes to promote my priority on youth, peace and security. From these trips, I came back with a stronger belief in multilateralism and the role that the United Nations can play in this regard. Full reports of my trips can be accessed at the UN website.

This summary is also available as an [electronic magazine](#).

Excellency,

I wish to reiterate my appreciation for your country's commitment for the accomplishments so far during the 73rd session and I count on your continued engagement and support as we prepare for another intensive period of work of the General Assembly.

Together, we will make 2019 a defining year for collective action to fight climate change, accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and make the United Nations relevant for all.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés