



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

8 June 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to inform you that a virtual ceremony to mark the commemoration of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) will be held on 26 June 2020. In accordance with resolution 73/299, the event will form part of the activities to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. It will offer a unique opportunity to take stock of both the successes and lessons learned in implementing the United Nations Charter over the last 75 years, as well as to look ahead and examine how best to collectively overcome current and upcoming challenges.

By reflecting upon the elements of the UN75 Declaration, the virtual ceremony aims to inspire confidence in international cooperation, and galvanize action to build the future we want. The concept note for the event is attached. The event will be streamed live on UN WebTV (webtv.un.org).

Kindly note that due to time constraints, the Chairs of the United Nations Regional Groups of Member States will deliver statements on behalf of their respective groups. Member States are invited to submit a short message (video or written) about the relevance of the UN Charter today and in the future, to be submitted via email to nevena.toaso@un.org and denise.kling@un.org. Thereafter, the messages will be posted on the dedicated website of the event, which will serve as a bridge between the aforementioned event and the UN75 Commemoration to be convened in September 2020.

For further inquiries, please contact Mr. Alexandre Stutzmann (alexandre.stutzmann@un.org), Senior Advisor and Team Leader in my Office.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



CONCEPT NOTE ON THE COMMEMORATION OF UN CHARTER DAY

Date: Friday, 26 June 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (EST)

Venue: Virtual meeting, New York City

Mandate

In the framework of the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 73/299 decides “to commemorate, on 26 June 2020, the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, through a meaningful observance ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York, open to Member States and observers of the General Assembly, as well as non-governmental organizations that are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council”. Per the aforementioned resolution, the modalities of the ceremony have been determined by the President of the 74th session of the General Assembly. These modalities take into account the views of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and youth.

The UN Charter: Past, Present and Future

The Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24 October 1945. The UN was conceived as a means of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The Charter calls for the UN to maintain international peace and security; promote social progress and better standards of life; strengthen international law; and promote human rights.

The values and goals of the Charter are just as relevant today as they were 75 years ago. The celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Charter’s signing will coincide with the conclusion of intergovernmental negotiations on a concise, substantive, forward-looking and unifying declaration that captures the collective commitment of Member States to multilateralism, and the United Nations and their shared vision for a common future. The declaration will be adopted by consensus at the high-level UN75 commemoration meeting of the General Assembly on 21 September 2020.

In this framework, the theme for this commemoration will be reflecting on the meaning of the Charter –today and for decades to come –for all nations and peoples of the world. This is especially necessary in light of our current difficult circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic is the first truly global pandemic in the past century, and poses one of the most significant challenges the United Nations has faced since its inception. The Charter’s 75th anniversary provides a unique opportunity to take stock both of the successes and the lessons learned in its implementation over the last decades, as well as to look ahead and examine how to best collectively overcome current and future challenges. Such stock-taking will include the voices of Member States, as well as relevant stakeholders such as youth, civil society, and the private sector, in line with the inclusive spirit of the aforementioned UN75 Declaration.

The Decade of Action to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement are the best concrete illustrations today of the universal values embodied in the UN Charter. Building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic will require international and cross-sectoral cooperation. By reflecting on successes, as well as lessons learned, from the Charter’s past and current implementation, this event aims to inspire renewed confidence in multilateralism and galvanize collective action to build the future we want.

Commemoration Online Platform

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated limitations on holding large in-person meetings at UN Headquarters, this event will be held in a virtual format, fully respecting the UN principle of multilingualism. The President of the General Assembly informed the membership of this by letter on 1 May 2020.

Additional information about the platform and log-in details will be shared in a follow up letter nearer the date.

Lastly, it is imperative that this event reaches out to the general public, engaging them with accessible themes and language. This will serve to introduce the UN and its work to many who are not familiar with it, with the aim of garnering wider support for international cooperation.

Commemoration Programme

The Charter Commemoration event is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (EST), and will be structured in 3 parts:

1. Solemn Charter Commemoration

An introductory video will celebrate some UN milestones and achievements of the Charter.

Statements about the significance of the Charter will be delivered by the Heads of the Main Organs of the UN:

- The President of the General Assembly.
- The Secretary-General.
- The President of the Security Council.
- The President of the Economic and Social Council.

- The President of the International Court of Justice.

Statements will also be delivered by the Chairs of the 5 regional groups on behalf of their respective member states.

This segment will close with a video that reflects stakeholder inputs to the UN75 Declaration: youth, civil society, and private sector.

Member State wishing to provide a message (written or video) on the significance of the Charter are invited to send their messages via email to nevena.toaso@un.org and denise.kling@un.org. Thereafter these messages will be posted on the dedicated website of the Charter Day Commemoration, which will serve as a bridge between this event and the September 21st High-Level Debate and UN75 Commemoration.

2. [Interactive dialogues about the Charter’s relevance today and in future](#)

Two successive panel discussions will be held on the significance of the Charter. Each panel will last for up to 50 minutes, and will comprise a moderator and 3-4 panelists chosen with due regard to gender and geographic balance.

Panel 1: “The United Nations in the past, present and future. A view from the outside”

Anniversaries provide an opportunity for reflection. They can serve as a powerful reminder of mission, and as a catalyst for renewal. This panel will engage eminent thinkers in a forward-looking discussion on multilateralism. The panelists will take an honest look at key points in UN history, situate the current moment within them (e.g. the pandemic as accelerating or disrupting trends) and put forward big-picture ideas for the future.

The discussion will be based on the firm belief that the UN, as rooted in the Charter, is indispensable and continues to play a critical role in securing peace, stability and prosperity throughout the world. The UN has meant a lot to people around the world and it’s even more indispensable in the current world with humanity facing enormous challenges. However, as with every organization it has flaws and, over the course of its history, the UN has struggled to live up to the hopes and aspirations of the people it serves. Reflecting on lessons of the past will enable us to address challenges of the present and future with more urgency and insight. This is crucial as the decisions taken in this 75th anniversary year will have profound implications for future generations.

The panel will incorporate themes from the UN75 initiative, centered on questions such as: What can we learn from (the highs and lows of) UN history? How do we strengthen multilateralism going forward? Panelists will be asked to give their views on whether the world will be better or worse off in the future (and why), their top priorities and concerns; and their proposals for collective action and solutions.

Panel 2: “The 2030 Agenda: fulfilling our commitment to the future we want”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a vision for people, planet, peace and prosperity to be achieved through partnership and solidarity. The transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda lies in achieving the SDGs and targets through an integrated approach. The launch of the Decade of Action during the 75th anniversary year provides an opportunity to stretch our collective capacity to deliver on our commitments and respond to global challenges, such as increasing poverty and hunger, the devastating impact of climate change, widening inequality within and between countries, and attacks on multilateralism.

The draft declaration to be adopted on the occasion of the 75th anniversary draws our attention to the need to reinvigorate commitments to multilateralism. Determined action and stronger international cooperation across the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – will draw us closer to realizing the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other internationally agreed commitments.

The interactive dialogue will comprise pre-recorded statements from five individuals who will present their future-oriented perspectives as to how the UN can deliver on its commitments to the Charter, while addressing global challenges. These statements will provide a sense of realism and urgency at the outset of the discussion.

The video statements will be followed by a forward-looking conversation between panelists, prior to an interactive exchange with Member States and other stakeholders via a dedicated chat box.

3. [Commemoration Closing Ceremony](#)

- A musical performance will play as a tribute to the host country, and to both cities which are central to the Charter's history.