



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9 June 2020

**Subject: Elements for consideration for the high-level week of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly**

Excellency,

In preparation for the high-level week of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, I sought the advice of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), the Local Authorities, the Host Government, the UN Medical Director, and consulted with Member States. Based on these exchanges, I surmise that the limitations on international travel and convening of large in-person meetings as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, may, in varying degrees, still be in effect in September 2020.

As we contend with the COVID-19 pandemic, we should, in accordance with our common commitment to the values and principles set out in the United Nations Charter strive to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of the important work of the General Assembly. Thus, the Assembly should consider holding the General Debate and the high-level meetings scheduled for September 2020, in a different format.

In this regard, please find enclosed a paper outlining elements for consideration for the high-level week of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. To facilitate discussions on the enclosed paper, I have the pleasure to invite you to a virtual meeting on Friday, 12 June 2020, at 3 p.m. An information note on the virtual arrangements for the meeting will be circulated in due course.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my solidarity with Member States who are fighting COVID-19 and extend my sincere condolences for their loss.

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



**Elements for consideration for the high-level week of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly due to expected continued limitations on holding large in-person meetings as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in September 2020**

- The General Debate would take place as scheduled from 22 to 29 September 2020, to allow for the remainder of the seventy-fifth session, in both the plenary and the Main Committees, to proceed with the guidance usually expressed by national leaders during this Debate;
- The opening of the General Debate would take place with the President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly delivering his opening statement and the Secretary-General of the United Nations presenting his report on the work of the Organization in the General Assembly Hall on 22 September 2020;
- Heads of State and Government or Ministers representing Member States would address the General Debate via pre-recorded video statements. A video statement by one of these high-ranking officials should be submitted by each Member State to the United Nations Secretariat through the Permanent Mission. Alternatively, the Permanent Representative could deliver a statement in the General Assembly Hall. The video statement should be submitted under embargo five days in advance of the scheduled General Debate;
- The video statements would be played on screens in the General Assembly Hall based on a previously announced list of speakers. In this context, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) would receive requests for inscription in the list of speakers on the e-deleGATE portal per usual practice. Following the expiration of the deadline for inscription, DGACM would be able to prepare the Provisional List on the basis of “first come first served” and expressions of preference adjusted for established protocol;
- Head of State and Government or Ministers would be encouraged, as usual, to limit the length of their pre-recorded statements to 15 minutes;
- Physical presence in the General Assembly Hall for the General Debate would be limited to one or, if the situation allows, two delegates per delegation based in New York to limit the footprint and the number of people into the UN building, on condition that guidance of the UN Medical Services in September and the meeting risk assessment enable such large physical presence in the General Assembly Hall.

- All persons physically present in the General Assembly Hall would be required to be free of symptoms consistent with COVID-19. In addition, delegates would need to maintain the recommended physical distancing and to wear a face covering on the premises at all times;
- Similar arrangements would be made for the high-level meeting of the Assembly to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations scheduled on 21 September 2020. This high-level meeting of the Assembly will take place in the General Assembly Hall, with physical presence in the General Assembly Hall limited to one or, if the situation allows, two delegates per delegation based in New York to limit the footprint and the number of people into the UN building, on condition that guidance of the UN Medical Services in September and the meeting risk assessment are enabling such large physical presence in the General Assembly Hall.
- Heads of State and Government or Ministers representing Member States would also address the high-level meeting via pre-recorded video statements. A video statement by one of these high-ranking officials should be submitted by each Member State to the United Nations Secretariat through the Permanent Mission. The video statement should be submitted under embargo five days in advance of the high-level meeting;
- As a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, taking into account the need for physical distancing and limitations on the number of individuals physically present in the UN building at the same time, reducing the total capacity of conference rooms and the UN premises, there will be implications for the high-level meetings to be held in parallel to the General Debate, consistent with the modalities outlined in relevant resolutions. Taking into account the limitations to hold parallel meetings, Member States may therefore wish to consider revising the schedule for high-level meetings as follows:
  - the Summit on Biodiversity to be held on Wednesday, 30 September 2020;
  - the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held on Thursday, 1 October 2020; and
  - the high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons to be held on Friday, 2 October 2020.
- Similar arrangements would be made for the high-level meetings. Each high-level meeting will take place in the UN building, with limited physical presence to one or, if the situation allows, two delegates per delegation based in New York. Heads of State and Government or Ministers representing Member States would participate via virtual platform. Further details regarding each high-level meeting will be communicated in due course.
- All statements made in any of the six languages of the General Assembly would be interpreted into the other five languages in full respect of the commitment of the United Nations to multilingualism;

- Representatives of Member States delivering a statement in a language other than the official languages of the General Assembly would be required to record voiceover interpretation into any one of the official languages in their recorded statement;
- Member States will be encouraged to move all side events to virtual platforms to limit the footprint and number of people in the UN building. Member States will be encouraged to publish all these virtual side-events in the Journal of the United Nations, under the “Other Events” section;
- The United Nations Webcast Unit would provide live and on-demand streaming coverage of all the mandated high-level meetings, including the general debate. The coverage would be available on the UN Web TV website (<http://webtv.un.org>);
- Videos of the meetings will be archived by the UN Audio-Visual Library. The footage will be made available to Member States and the press per the usual practice upon requests made to the AV Library.
- In preparing for the high-level week, we will build on the experience gained from preceding meetings, in order to ensure that all, including stakeholders and civil society, are able to participate, as appropriate, in a meaningful way;
- Several procedural matters must be addressed, such as a decision of the General Assembly authorizing pre-recorded video statements in the General Debate and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the UN to be admissible, as part of official records of the General Assembly, and to request the President of the General Assembly to finalize the organizational arrangements of the three high-level meetings allowing for the use of virtual platforms and pre-recorded video statements and messages;
- Meeting risk assessment will be conducted by the Secretariat to put in place the relevant mitigation measures in the General Assembly Hall and other meetings rooms used during the high-level week;
- The United Nations Medical Service will remain available for advice until the high-level week. Any relevant information available to the United Nations Medical Services will be communicated to Member States.