



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9 July 2020

**Subject:** High-level week of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly

Excellency,

Sequel to my letter dated 16 June 2020, seeking comments on elements for consideration for the high-level week of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, I would like to thank all delegations for their constructive comments and suggestions.

We have seen from the letter of the Secretary-General of 7 July 2020, informing Member States that, assuming that New York City continues to meet its milestones for reopening, the United Nations Headquarters in New York will transition to phase 1 on 20 July 2020. While a positive development, it nonetheless underscores the importance of taking a sequenced approach to safeguard the health of delegates and staff as we ensure the business continuity of the Assembly.

Based on consultations, and in light of the continuous spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), it is surmised that the limitations on international travel and convening of large in-person meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic may, in varying degrees, still be in effect in September 2020. Indeed, we all continue to face the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in new challenges not only for Member States, but also for this Organization. In this context, I am pleased to present the attached short draft decision of the General Assembly.

The high-level meeting of the Assembly to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations will take place as previously scheduled on 21 September 2020, and the Declaration, whose negotiations successfully concluded earlier this week, will be formally adopted at the meeting. The General Debate of the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly will also commence as previously scheduled, from 22 September 2020, in order to allow for 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.

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

Furthermore, taking into account the need for physical distancing and expected limitations on the number of individuals physically present in the UN building at the same time, the aforementioned decision revises the schedule for other 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.

The modalities of these three high-level meetings will remain essentially the same and I will be pleased to finalize the organizational arrangements of these meetings

Due to these exceptional times, the decision is also authorizing, without setting a precedent, the admissibility of pre-recorded video statements to only the General Debate of the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly, the high-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, and the other mandated high-level meetings planned for the high-level week.

In keeping with the established practice, the provisional list of speakers will be established; the time limit for statements is to be observed; multilingualism respected; arrangements will be made for statement delivered in a language other than the official languages of the Assembly; there will be live and on-demand streaming coverage; and footage will be made available to Member States. To limit the footprint and the number of people into the United Nations building, physical access and presence will be limited using the usual secondary pass in addition to regular grounds pass.

As per usual, the Secretariat shall prepare an information note for delegations to provide details on the arrangements for high-level meetings and the General Debate of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. Meeting risk assessment will be conducted by the Secretariat to put in place the relevant mitigation measures in the UN building to minimize the risks to staff and delegates.

Member States are encouraged to move all side events to virtual platforms to limit the footprint and number of people in the UN building.

I intend to present this draft decision to the General Committee shortly to proceed to adoption under silence procedure in accordance with decision 74/544, as extended by decision 74/558.

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.



Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

## ANNEX – DRAFT DECISION

The General Assembly,

*Noting with concern* the situation concerning the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the limitations recommended on meetings within the United Nations premises as precautionary measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19;

*Recalling* its resolutions 57/301 of 13 March 2003 and 73/299 of 14 June 2019,

- (a) *Decides*, without setting a precedent, that, each Member State, Observer State and the European Union<sup>1</sup> is encouraged to submit a pre-recorded statement that either its head of state, vice-president, crown prince or princess, head of government, minister or vice-minister wishes to deliver in the General Debate at its seventy-fifth session, the high-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the high-level meetings referred to in paragraph (b) below, which shall be played in the General Assembly Hall and shall have an equal status as any statement made by any other representative who is physically present in the Assembly Hall; and that the pre-recorded statements shall be included in the verbatim records of the General Debate and the high-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations;
- (b) *Further decides* that the summit on biodiversity, held pursuant to resolution 74/269 of 31 March 2020, shall be held on Wednesday, 30 September 2020; the high-level meeting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held pursuant to resolution 73/340 of 12 September 2019, shall 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, held pursuant to resolution 74/54 of 12 December 2019, shall be held on Friday, 2 October 2020; and *requests* the President of the General Assembly to finalize the other organizational arrangements of these meetings.
- (c) *Also decides* that these procedures shall only apply to the meetings of the General Debate at its seventy-fifth session, the high-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, and the high-level meetings referred to in paragraph (b) above.

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of the European Union, the pre-recorded statements shall be made either by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.