



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

11 November 2020

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the Special Session of the General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, to be held on 3 and 4 December 2020, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters in New York, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/4. The Special Session will be held at the level of Heads of State and Government and webcast live.

Programme of the Special Session

In accordance with resolution 75/4, the Special Session will consist of an opening segment, a general debate and a presentation by and an interactive dialogue led by the Head of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant United Nations entities, as well as a closing segment.

The opening segment will feature statements by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, including in his role as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the President of the Security Council and the Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The general debate will start at the end of the opening segment in the General Assembly Hall on 3 December 2020. To allow for maximum participation within the limited time available, and as set out in the resolution 75/4, statements in the general debate will be limited to five minutes for individual delegations and seven minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States. Introductory remarks and length of the video itself shall be counted in the allocated time limit. I urge your cooperation in adhering to the time limits for statements to allow the broadest possible participation.

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

I plan to organize the interactive dialogue in a series of panels covering key aspects of the impact of, and response to, the COVID-19 pandemic, including the UN system's response to date; the road to a COVID-19 vaccine; the human rights and humanitarian dimensions of the pandemic; and the socio-economic impact and road to recovery beyond UNGASS-31. The full programme of the interactive dialogue will be provided in due course.

The closing segment will comprise concluding remarks by the President of the General Assembly.

Participation, list of speakers, pre-recorded statements

The Secretariat will open the list of speakers for inscription on **Tuesday, 17 November 2020, at 10 a.m.** Delegations of Member and Observer States and the European Union wishing to deliver statements are invited to inscribe on the list of speakers at: <https://edegate.un.int>. In line with resolution 75/4, a list of speakers will be established in accordance with established practices of the Assembly. The provisional list of speakers for the general debate of the Special Session will be made available on **Wednesday, 25 November 2020.**

In accordance with resolution 75/4, each Member and Observer State and the European Union, as well as representatives from relevant organizations attending the Special Session, in line with subparagraphs (a), (d) and (e) of paragraph 3, can submit a pre-recorded statement by their Head of State or Government, head of delegation or other dignitary, which will be played in the General Assembly Hall during general debate of the Special Session, after introduction by their representative who is physically present in the Assembly Hall. Due to time constraints, it is expected that the introductory remarks will be kept concise.¹ The level of the speaker will be determined by that of the pre-recorded statement. Alternatively, representatives physically present in the Assembly Hall may deliver their own statements. Further details on the submission of the pre-recorded video statements will be circulated in due course.

In accordance with resolution 75/4, in addition to the verbatim records of the general debate, the statements delivered by Heads of State and Government or other dignitaries, by means of pre-recorded statements during the Special Session and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall, will be circulated as a document of the Assembly. Submissions in this regard should be made to estatements@un.org.

With respect to the representatives of non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, in the lead up to the Session I will submit a list of relevant representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society

¹ Model sentence:

Permanent Representative or other member of the delegation: Mr. President, I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement by [His/Her Excellency Mr./Ms. xxxx, President/Prime Minister of xxx].

organizations, academic institutions and the private sector who may participate in the special session, taking into account the principles of transparency and equitable geographical representation, with due regard for the meaningful participation of women, to Member States for their consideration on a non-objection basis, after which the final list will be transmitted to Member States.

In the light of the challenges posed by COVID-19 and the short duration of the Special Session, I recommend that the Assembly considers accepting the credentials submitted for the seventy-fifth session for purposes of the special session.

Access to the General Assembly Hall

The practical arrangements for the conduct of the Special Session of the General Assembly in person will be in line with the mitigation measures related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as reflected on the risk assessments and advice provided by the Occupational Safety and Health Committee of the Crisis Operations Group. The final risk assessment and mitigation measures will be communicated closer to the session.

International travelers are kindly reminded to familiarize themselves with local health requirements.

Further logistical details will be circulated in due course.

For further queries, please contact Ambassador Tegan Brink, Chef de Cabinet, Ms. Hila Wesa, Team Leader on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (wesa@un.org) and Ms. Inga Kanchaveli (inga.kanchaveli@un.org), Senior Advisor on General Assembly Affairs in my Office.

I would like to thank you for your cooperation as we prepare for this important special session. Your support in encouraging active participation and providing the pre-recorded statements in a timely manner is highly appreciated.

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



Volkan BOZKIR