

**Special Session of the General Assembly in response to the Coronavirus
disease (COVID-19) Pandemic
3-4 December 2020
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Provisional Program
3 December 2020**

9:00 – 10:00 Opening Segment

Statements by:

- **H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir**, President of the General Assembly
- **H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres**, Secretary-General of the United Nations
- **H.E. Mr. Munir Akram**, President of the Economic and Social Council
- **H.E. Mr. Jerry Matthews Matjila**, President of the Security Council for the month of December 2020
- **H.E. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev**, Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries

10:00 – 21:00 General Debate¹

¹ In accordance with A/RES/75/4, statements during the general debate are to be delivered by Heads of State or Government, head of delegation or other dignitary of Member and Observer States, the European Union, and, time permitting, a limited number of representatives from relevant organizations attending the special session, in line with subparagraphs (d) and (e) of A/RES/75/4. Pre-recorded video statements will be played in the General Assembly Hall after introduction by the representative who is physically present in the Hall. The time limit for each statement is five minutes for individual delegations and seven minutes for each statement made on behalf of a group of States. Introductory remarks and length of the video itself shall be counted in the allocated time limit.

Provisional Program 4 December 2020

- 9:00 – 9:10 Opening by the President of the General Assembly
- 9:15 – 9:20 Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General
- 9:25 – 9:40 Presentation by the Director-General of the World Health Organization

9:45 – 18:00 Interactive Dialogue²

9:45 – 12:15 Panel I: The UN System Response to COVID-19

- Moderator: [Melissa Fleming](#), Under Secretary General for Global Communication – *in person*
- Panelists:
 - [Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#), Director General of the World Health Organization – *virtual*
 - [Mr. Mark Lowcock](#), Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator – *in person*
 - [Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria](#), United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – *virtual*
 - [Mr. Achim Steiner](#), Administrator of the United Nations Development Program – *in-person*
 - [Mr. Filippo Grandi](#), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - *virtual*
 - [Mr. David Beasley](#), Executive Director of the World Food Program – *virtual*
 - [Ms. Inger Ashing](#), CEO, Save the Children International – *virtual*
 - [Dr. Asha Mohammed](#), Secretary-General of the Kenyan Red Cross (representing IFRC and ICRC) – *virtual*

This discussion will take stock of the UN system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will examine comprehensive and coordinated responses of UN entities and partners, focusing on the most vulnerable people and those disproportionately impacted in different operational contexts, including those in low-resource settings, conflict situations, and

² The interactive dialogue is being organized in a hybrid format, with in-person participation, live-virtual engagement, and pre-recorded content.

displaced communities. The role of, and impact on, women and girls will be a focus, particularly women as front-line responders. The discussion will outline what has worked well, identify operational and policy gaps as well as lessons learned. It will highlight actions required for the continued immediate humanitarian and health response, protection of human rights, and the launch of urgent economic recovery and social protection measures.

12:45 – 15:15 Panel II: The Road to a COVID-19 Vaccine – a Global Public Good

- Moderator: [Lyse Doucet](#), BBC Presenter and Chief International Correspondent – *virtual*
- Panelists – Part I: The Science (12:45 – 14:00)
 - [Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#), Director-General of the World Health Organization – *virtual*
 - **BioNTech: Prof. Uğur Şahin and Dr. Özlem Türeci** – *virtual*
 - [Prof. Sarah Gilbert](#), Oxford University/AstraZeneca – *virtual*

[Pre-recorded video by [Adar Poonawalla](#), Chief Executive Officer, Serum Institute of India]

- Panelists – Part II: Vaccines for All (14:00 – 15:15)
 - [Dr. Seth Berkley](#), Chief Executive Officer of GAVI – *virtual*
 - [Ms. Henrietta H. Fore](#), Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund – *virtual*
 - [Dr. Richard Hatchett](#), Chief Executive Officer, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) – *virtual*
 - **Sir Andrew Witty, WHO Special Envoy for ACT-Accelerator** – *virtual*

Significant progress has been made in developing new tools and strategies in the fight against COVID-19, including vaccines, as the result of unprecedented international collaboration, much-needed investments, and world-class scientific efforts in research and development. The world is at a critical acceleration point in the vaccine development and deployment timeline, poised to turn the corner into the vaccine era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this dedicated discussion on a COVID-19 vaccine is to breakdown the process of vaccine development and address the 'infodemic' around it in publicly digestible terms. How many vaccines are currently being tested and at which stages in the process is each one? How will vaccines be produced and distributed? How is the multilateral system working with governments and private sector partners to ensure the equitable distribution of, and access to, a COVID-19 vaccine as a global public good? How are the financial resources required to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 tools,

including a vaccine, being mobilized? What other testing and treatments need to be readily accessible, pending the universal access to vaccines?

15:45 – 18:00 Panel III: Resilience and Recovering Better from COVID-19

- Moderator: [Femi Oke](#), International Journalist – *virtual*
- Panelists:
 - [Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#), Director General of the World Health Organization – *virtual*
 - [Dr. Natalia Kanem](#), Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund – *virtual*
 - [Mr. David R. Malpass](#), President of the World Bank Group – *virtual* (tbc)
 - [Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka](#), Executive Director of UN Women – *virtual*
 - [Mr. Guy Ryder](#), Director-General, International Labor Organization – *virtual*
 - [Mr. Robert Piper](#), Assistant Secretary-General for UN Development Coordination – *virtual*
 - [Mr. Pavan Sukhdev](#), President, World Wildlife Federation International / UNEP Goodwill Ambassador – *virtual*

This discussion will examine the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and consider the path toward a resilient recovery, including the requisite preparedness for future threats. There will be a focus on in trade and finance, including inclusive stimulus and recovery packages, addressing debt crises ensuing from the pandemic, mobilizing investment that support sustainable solutions and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The discussion will highlight opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through recovery plans and policies that favor inclusion, sustainability and resilience—such as expanding universal protection; promoting green jobs; making sustainable food systems; and increasing digital connectivity.

The Special Session will conclude with the Closing Segment.