



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

27 May 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the informal interactive dialogue held with Mr Antonio Guterres, candidate for Secretary-General, on Friday 7 May 2021 in the General Assembly Hall. At the end of the informal interactive dialogue, Mr Guterres offered to answer, in writing, questions from those Member States on the speakers list which were not able to take the floor. Following the dialogue, questions were sought from those Member States on the list through my Office and passed on to the candidate.

Mr Guterres also undertook to answer the four questions from civil society and other stakeholders which were drawn at the start of the informal interactive dialogue but, due to time limitations, were not answered during the meeting.

Mr Guterres' answers to both sets of questions are attached to this letter. The answers will also be posted on the page of my website dedicated to the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General (www.un.org/pga/75/sg-selection).
Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Volkan BOZKIR".

Volkan BOZKIR

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

Informal interactive dialogue with Candidates for the position of UN Secretary-General

- Mr António Guterres, 7 May 2021, 10am-1 pm, GA Hall

Additional Member State questions

Bangladesh

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this informal interactive dialogue with the Secretary General.

We commend the Secretary General for his leadership during this difficult time. The UN has been successful in demonstrating its relevance and delivery-oriented competences in this difficult period that we are going through.

I thank you, Secretary General for sharing your vision statement. We share many of the priorities that you have outlined. We welcome your decision to seek reappointment.

I have two specific questions, Mr. Secretary General:

First, you are aware that the Least Developed Countries (LDC) are one of the hardest-hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The graduating LDCs are doubly jeopardized, both by the COVID consequences and the loss of LDC specific support measures. Against this backdrop, LDC5 Conference will take place in Doha in January 2022. In an earlier conversation with LDCs, you had said that "*graduation should be rewarded, not punished*". That was very reassuring and should be the spirit guiding the efforts of the international community, especially now when there is a positive momentum in graduation. Sixteen countries are at different stages of graduation at this moment.

My question is: **What is your vision to institutionalize an incentives mechanism to make graduation sustainable and irreversible? And how do you plan to engage the UNDS to contribute to an ambitious outcome of the LDC5 conference?**

Answer: Development assistance is needed more than ever, and I will continue strong advocacy efforts to urge donors and international institutions to step up. We need both an increase in ODA and a much greater proportion of ODA being channeled to support the most vulnerable people. The pandemic has shown that even when countries reach a certain income level, they may still require international development cooperation. Debt standstills and relief must be extended to countries that need it most – including middle-income countries – without creating stigma or compromising their sovereign ratings. Reforming the international debt architecture is also critical, as a debt crisis amidst the COVID-19 emergency would put the Sustainable Development Goals out of reach. With the reforms of the UN development system now bearing fruit, we will step up our efforts to help LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and other countries that need it the most to mobilize partnerships and resources to address their development priorities. The aim of the reform is to ensure a support system that works for these countries – that connects them to tailored policy advice and builds their technical capacity to address the challenges they face.

Second, your prevention agenda promises to do everything to help countries to avert outbreak of crisis and high toll on humanity. We appreciate your efforts to strengthen this agenda during your first term. Yet conflicts continue leading to complex humanitarian crisis and endless sufferings for those affected. As you are aware, Mr. Secretary General, my country is hosting over a million Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar. They are one of the most persecuted people on earth; the root causes of their miseries are not new or unknown. Yet they continue to be persecuted and keep fleeing their homes. There are many other such protracted situations where prevention and early warning could not avert those crises.

My question is: **In your next term, how do you intend to address such situations in implementing the sustaining peace concept? [And] how do you envisage finding solutions to such protracted situations? We would like to hear of your concrete plans. We wish to see greater urgency and actions in finding solutions.**

Answer: Given that the complexity of current conflicts continues to outpace our solutions, there is a great urgency to review available mechanisms and tools to make sure they are fit to respond to these challenges. I will continue working closely with Member States to enhance the UN system's ability to address different conflict drivers from a prevention-oriented perspective, as well as seek to invest more in preventing crisis. There is a need to look at the peace continuum holistically in light of today's challenges. The sustaining peace approach has underpinned the peace and security reforms, informed the repositioning of the UN development system and been reflected in the shared commitments on UN peacekeeping operations. We have and will continue to enhance policy coordination across the UN and build partnerships, including with IFIs, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society, in support of sustaining peace.

Argentina

1) Usted ha colocado la cooperación digital como un tema prioritario en la agenda de las Naciones Unidas y ha llevado a cabo numerosas iniciativas para promover una mayor visibilidad de esta temática. Entre ellas, la convocatoria al Panel de Alto Nivel para realizar un informe con recomendaciones sobre la Cooperación Digital, luego la publicación del "Road Map for Digital Cooperation", la designación de un enviado especial sobre tecnología, y la búsqueda de fórmulas que permitan fortalecer al "Internet Governance Forum" (IGF).

¿Cómo evalúa el progreso hasta el momento y cuáles serían las próximas acciones que prevé tomar para continuar impulsando el fortalecimiento del IGF y promoviendo un mayor compromiso de los Estados Miembros en torno de la cooperación digital?

Answer: We are at a critical inflection point for digital issues, with the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating digitalization and magnifying both opportunities and challenges of digital technology. Only by working together can we fully reap the benefits of digital technologies and contain potential harms. Collectively, our task is to help design digital environments that can connect everyone to a positive future. This is why we need a common effort, with collaboration among national and local governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and multilateral organizations. As with other technologies of the past, we can work to create "guard rails" that ensure that digital transformation is a force for good. It is encouraging that Member States have

asked to improve digital cooperation and to use the United Nations as a platform for dialogue to build a more open, free and secure digital future for all.

In terms of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), as mentioned in my roadmap on digital cooperation, reform discussions are centering on an IGF Plus model while incorporating elements from the other two models proposed by the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (distributed co-governance and digital commons). While discussions on the different digital architecture models proposed by the Panel are ongoing among stakeholders, a number of ideas have emerged to make the IGF more responsive and relevant to current digital issues, including creating a strategic and empowered multi-stakeholder high-level body, which among other things would bring together more senior-level participants for IGF and relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations to the appropriate normative and decision-making forums.

Nos hallamos en un punto crítico de inflexión en materia digital, ya que la pandemia del COVID-19 está acelerando la digitalización y magnificando tanto las oportunidades como los retos que conlleva la tecnología digital. Solo si trabajamos juntos podemos beneficiarnos plenamente de las ventajas de la tecnología digital y contener los posibles daños. Entre todos, nuestra tarea es ayudar a diseñar entornos digitales que puedan conectar a todo el mundo a un futuro positivo. Por ello necesitamos aunar esfuerzos, con la colaboración de gobiernos nacionales y locales, el sector privado, la sociedad civil, el mundo académico y las organizaciones multilaterales. Tal y como sucedió con otras tecnologías en el pasado, podemos trabajar para crear “barandas de protección” que garanticen que la transformación digital sea una fuerza positiva. Es alentador que los Estados Miembros hayan pedido mejorar la cooperación digital y emplear las Naciones Unidas como plataforma para el diálogo, con miras a crear un futuro más abierto, libre y seguro para todos.

En cuanto al “Internet Governance Forum” (IGF, en sus siglas en inglés), tal y como mencioné en mi hoja de ruta sobre cooperación digital, los debates sobre la reforma se centran en un modelo IGF Plus al tiempo que incorporan elementos de los otros dos modelos propuestos por el Panel de alto nivel sobre cooperación digital (cogobernanza distribuida y bienes comunes digitales). A la vez que las discusiones sobre los diferentes modelos de arquitectura digital propuestos por el Panel están en curso entre las partes interesadas, se han planteado varias ideas para hacer que el IGF sea más relevante y receptivo a los problemas digitales actuales, entre ellas: crear un organismo estratégico y empoderado de alto nivel que conste de múltiples partes interesadas y que, entre otras cosas, convocaría a más participantes de alto nivel para el IGF y transmitiría los enfoques y recomendaciones de políticas propuestas a los foros normativos y de toma de decisiones apropiados.

2) Este año, el Grupo de Trabajo de Composición Abierta sobre los avances de las tecnologías de la información y las comunicaciones en el contexto de la seguridad internacional logró aprobar un informe por consenso que refiere a cuestiones importantes para la agenda de ciberseguridad internacional.

¿Cómo evalúa el progreso realizado, cuáles son los desafíos pendientes y cómo piensa que la Secretaría puede contribuir al logro de consensos y la institucionalización de la temática en las Naciones Unidas?

Answer: I am encouraged by the consensus report from the OEWG and hope that this will catalyze further progress on cooperative cyber governance. The UN Secretariat, through the Office of Disarmament Affairs, provides support to Member States on these processes and this will continue. As committed in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, capacity is being established to make available good offices to contribute to the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflict stemming from malicious activity in cyberspace. Cyberspace remains an under-governed area, and we will continue to promote governance that supports a safe, open, and accessible digital commons.

Me parece alentador el informe consensuado del Grupo de Trabajo de Composición Abierta y espero que actúe de catalizador para nuevos avances en materia de gobernanza de internet cooperativa. La Secretaría de las Naciones Unidas, a través de la Oficina de Asuntos de Desarme, presta apoyo a los Estados Miembros en estos procesos y así seguirá siendo. Tal y como queda establecido en la Agenda del Secretario General para el Desarme, se están creando recursos para que sus buenos oficios contribuyan a la prevención y resolución pacífica de conflictos derivados de actividades maliciosas en el ciberespacio. El ciberespacio sigue siendo un área infragobernada y seguiremos promoviendo una gobernanza que apoye un dominio público digital seguro, abierto y accesible.

3) La pandemia COVID19 ha significado y continúa significando un desafío inédito a nivel mundial, y en dicho marco las tecnologías digitales (TD) han tenido un rol central facilitando la continuidad de numerosas actividades e incluso el mismo funcionamiento y continuidad del trabajo de las Naciones Unidas.

¿Cuáles son las lecciones aprendidas hasta el momento en el uso de las TD en el seno de Naciones Unidas? ¿Cómo piensa que deberían continuar utilizándose una vez superada la pandemia?

Answer: The UN's working methods can indeed benefit from leapfrogging in terms of digitalization. The opportunities provided for online learning and online exchanges must be harnessed and stimulated further to result in the learning organization we want to be. My digital roadmap provides the way forward in this regard.

Los métodos de trabajo de las Naciones Unidas pueden beneficiarse verdaderamente de las innovaciones tecnológicas en lo que se refiere a la digitalización. Debemos aprovechar las oportunidades de aprendizaje en línea y los intercambios en línea, y fomentarlos más, para llegar a ser la organización de aprendizaje que deseamos ser. Mi hoja de ruta digital señala el camino a seguir.

4) **¿Cuáles son las políticas adicionales que tiene previsto impulsar para lograr la transversalización de la perspectiva de género en las Naciones Unidas, con el objetivo de lograr la igualdad sustantiva entre los géneros?**

Answer: Unlocking the capacity of half of the world's population will directly contribute to more effective outcomes for everyone. I will continue to call on global leaders to act together to make gender equality a reality by: (i) realizing women's equal rights fully, through the repeal of discriminatory laws and the enacting of positive measures; (ii) ensuring equal representation – from company boards to parliaments, from higher education to public institutions – through special measures and quotas; (iii) targeting women's economic inclusion through targeted credit and

investments, protection of jobs, equal pay and significant investments in the care economy and social protection; (iv) ensuring each country enact an emergency response plan to address violence against women and girls as a priority and follow through with funding, policies and political will to end this scourge, and ; (v) give space to the intergenerational transition (that is underway) to young women advocating for the change we need.

Beyond what I encourage Governments to do, I'm committed to ensure that the UN leads by example. Gender parity has been established at the highest levels of the UN for the first time in the Organization's history, and I have increased the focus on funding for gender equality as insufficient investment is a significant obstacle to gender equality. To ensure the Organization is funding the most effective outcomes, targets have been set and progress is being monitored through system-wide budget and spending tracking and reporting. In addition, I have made five commitments for the UN system to: (i) advocate for GDP that include measures of wellbeing and sustainability; (ii) for unpaid care work to be valued; (iii) advocate for women's full role in peace processes; (iv) increase the understanding of the linkages between violence against women and girls, and international peace and security; and to (v) end default male bias and the data gap throughout the Organization's work.

Desatar el potencial de la mitad de la población mundial contribuirá directamente a obtener resultados más eficaces para todos. Seguiré pidiendo a los líderes mundiales que actúen todos juntos para alcanzar la paridad de género: (i) haciendo realidad la igualdad de derechos de la mujer en su totalidad, mediante la derogación de leyes discriminatorias y la promulgación de medidas positivas; (ii) garantizando una representación equitativa (desde los consejos de administración de las empresas hasta los parlamentos, desde la educación superior hasta las instituciones públicas) a través de medidas especiales y cuotas; (iii) centrándose en la inclusión económica de la mujer mediante créditos e inversiones específicas, protección del empleo, igualdad salarial e inversiones significativas en la economía asistencial y la protección social; (iv) asegurándose de que cada país promulga un plan de respuesta de emergencia para abordar la violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas como asunto prioritario, y llevarlo a cabo con financiamiento, políticas y voluntad política para poner fin a este flagelo; y (v) creando espacio para la transición intergeneracional (que está en marcha) de las mujeres jóvenes que abogan por el cambio que necesitamos.

Además de aquello que animo a que hagan los gobiernos, me comprometo a asegurar que la ONU lidera con el ejemplo. Se ha establecido la paridad de género en los niveles más altos de la ONU por primera vez en la historia de la Organización y he ampliado el énfasis en la financiación para la igualdad de género, ya que la inversión insuficiente obstaculiza significativamente la igualdad de género. Para asegurar que la Organización financia los resultados más efectivos, se han establecido objetivos y se monitorea el progreso mediante el seguimiento y la presentación de informes del presupuesto y los gastos de todo el sistema. Además, he adoptado cinco compromisos para que el sistema de la ONU: (i) abogue por un PIB que incluya medidas de bienestar y sostenibilidad; (ii) abogue para que se valore el trabajo asistencial no remunerado; (iii) defienda la plena función que desempeña la mujer en los procesos de paz; (iv) ayude a que se comprenda más la relación que existe entre la violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas y la paz y la seguridad internacionales; y (v) ponga fin al sesgo masculino de base y a las lagunas en materia de datos en todo el trabajo de la Organización.

5) Atento los últimos avances y desarrollos en materia espacial, incluyendo los del sector privado, ¿cuál cree que debería ser el papel de las Naciones Unidas para asegurar que contribuyan a un mayor bienestar global y al cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030?

Answer: New satellite mega-constellations have the potential to connect millions of people to the Internet, especially those in remote areas in both developing and developed countries. Private sector progress in the area of re-usable launch vehicles promise to reduce the cost of access to space and open pathways to accelerated discovery and science. The United Nations will continue to support Member States in fulfillment of commitments under the Outer-Space Treaty and use its convening abilities to bring together stakeholders from all sectors to set out norms for better governance and coordination.

Las nuevas megaconstelaciones de satélites tienen el potencial de conectar a internet a millones de personas, especialmente en zonas remotas de países desarrollados y en desarrollo. El progreso del sector privado en el área de los vehículos de lanzamiento reutilizables promete reducir el costo de acceso al espacio y abrir el camino hacia la ciencia y el descubrimiento acelerados. Las Naciones Unidas seguirá apoyando a los Estados Miembros en el cumplimiento de los compromisos asumidos en virtud del Tratado del Espacio Ultraterrestre y empleará su capacidad de convocatoria para reunir a las partes interesadas de todos los sectores, con el fin de establecer normas para una mejor gobernanza y coordinación.

Uruguay

En primer lugar, expresamos nuestro respaldo a la intervención y los conceptos planteados por la distinguida representante de Costa Rica que habló en nombre del grupo ACT que integramos.

En esta oportunidad queremos también expresar la satisfacción del Uruguay por la decisión del Secretario General de presentarse a la reelección y nos complace adelantar nuestro apoyo a su candidatura para un nuevo mandato.

Todos hemos apoyado las medidas que el Secretario General ha promovido para aliviar la crisis de la COVID 19, incluyendo las medidas políticas como el llamado a un cese al fuero global.

Hoy escuchamos al Secretario General exponer algunas de sus prioridades, en particular aquellas enfocadas a buscar soluciones para hacer frente a la crisis sanitaria y en especial la disponibilidad de vacunas para todos los países.

En el contexto de las prioridades que está pensando el Secretario General para su nuevo mandato nos gustaría saber que medidas concretas podría promover enfocadas a la post-pandemia, con el objetivo de contribuir a superar las crisis económica y social que ha causado. En especial queríramos saber si tiene previsto entre esas medidas el fortalecimiento de la coordinación, reforzando las complementariedades en las acciones de las Naciones Unidas con las instituciones financieras internacionales, con la OMC y la FAO en los campos financieros y comerciales.

Answer: To mitigate the effects of the pandemic and address the immediate needs and long-term socio-economic development strategies, in line with national strategic plans, UN country teams

have designed socio-economic response and recovery plans, and have started their implementation to deliver on the long-term socio-economic recovery, focusing on critical areas such as gender equality, job creation for youth, eradication of poverty, food security, which have catalytic effects on the implementation of the SDGs.

The Chief Executives Board for Coordination remains an important venue to ensure coordinated approaches and strengthened complementarities, including with WTO, FAO and the IFIs. It continues to serve as an internal coordination mechanism that provides high-level system-wide strategic guidance, promotes coherent leadership, shared vision and enhanced cooperation.

In terms of our partnership with the IFIs, the current crisis context presents an opportunity to continue strengthening collaboration with the IFIs at different levels. At the macro level, we need increased collaboration on strengthening the international economic financial architecture, addressing questions of debt and measures beyond GDP that recognize the vulnerability of countries. There is also an opportunity to strengthen collaboration at the country level, building on examples of joint socio-economic impact assessments and socio-economic response plans, developed to support countries in responding to the crisis.

Para mitigar los efectos de la pandemia y abordar las necesidades inmediatas y las estrategias de desarrollo socioeconómico a largo plazo, en consonancia con los planes estratégicos nacionales, los equipos de las Naciones Unidas de apoyo a los países han diseñado planes de recuperación y respuesta socioeconómica, y han comenzado a aplicarlos para cumplir la recuperación socioeconómica a largo plazo, centrándose en áreas críticas como la igualdad de género, la creación de empleo para los jóvenes, la erradicación de la pobreza y la seguridad alimentaria, que tienen efectos catalizadores en la aplicación de los ODS.

La Junta de los jefes ejecutivos del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para la coordinación sigue siendo un lugar importante para garantizar enfoques coordinados y reforzar la complementariedad con entidades como OMC, FAO y las IFIs. Sigue sirviendo de mecanismo de coordinación interna que presta orientación estratégica de alto nivel a todo el sistema, promueve el liderazgo coherente, una visión compartida y una mejor cooperación.

En lo que se refiere a nuestra colaboración con las IFI, el contexto actual de crisis brinda la oportunidad de seguir fortaleciendo la colaboración con las IFI en distintos niveles. A nivel macro, necesitamos una mayor colaboración para reforzar la arquitectura económica financiera internacional, abordar temas relacionados con deudas y medidas más allá del PIB que reconozcan la vulnerabilidad de los países. También existe la oportunidad de fortalecer la colaboración a nivel de país, tomando como base ejemplos de evaluaciones conjuntas del impacto socioeconómico y planes de respuesta socioeconómica que se han llevado a cabo para ayudar a los países a responder a la crisis.

Colombia

Deseo agradecer al Secretario General por su intervención en el día de hoy, así como por compartir su visión en torno a los próximos 5 años de las Naciones Unidas.

Este espacio contribuye a la transparencia y a consolidar los avances en el proceso de selección y nombramiento del Secretario General.

Coincidimos con su llamado a recuperar la confianza e inspirar una mayor esperanza a nivel global.

No cabe duda de que los tiempos actuales, marcados por la triple crisis global en términos de salud pública, economía y política -producto de la pandemia del Covid-19- exigen liderazgo, determinación y visión de largo plazo.

Debemos enfocar nuestros esfuerzos, entre otros, en asegurar una respuesta y recuperación efectiva de la pandemia; asegurar la paz y

seguridad internacionales; atender el cambio climático; cumplir con las metas de desarrollo sostenible; defender los derechos humanos; mantener el foco en la equidad de género; fortalecer el multilateralismo; y adecuar la organización a los retos del siglo XXI.

En nombre de Colombia, deseo expresar nuestro reconocimiento por el extraordinario trabajo que usted ha desarrollado desde el año 2017. Asimismo, reiterarle el apoyo político de Colombia a su reelección, la cual contribuirá a fortalecer el rol de las Naciones Unidas y el sistema multilateral.

Para culminar, quisiera preguntarle cómo puede Naciones Unidas fortalecer su acción en América Latina, especialmente en áreas claves como ODS, cambio climático y transformación productiva y digital?

Muchas gracias.

Answer: In July last year, I presented a special report on the impacts of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean, which highlighted an array of urgent and longer-term steps to recover better. In that report I made it clear that Latin American and Caribbean countries should not be excluded from global assistance, and the international multilateral response needs to be extended to middle-income countries. There is a need to tackle the broader structural challenges – addressing inequality, developing comprehensive welfare systems that are accessible to all, creating a fair taxation system, promoting decent jobs, strengthening environmental sustainability, reinforcing social protection mechanisms, promoting regional economic integration and ensuring women are able to participate fully and safely in public and economic life. There are also opportunities to promote the full use of the digital revolution so as not to leave anyone behind. The UN will remain a steadfast partner at this pivotal moment in building a better future for all.

En julio del año pasado presenté un informe especial sobre el impacto de COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe, que destacaba una serie de pasos urgentes y de largo plazo para una mejor recuperación. En ese informe manifesté claramente que los países de América Latina y el Caribe no deben excluirse de la asistencia mundial y que la respuesta multilateral internacional debe extenderse a los países de ingresos medios. Hay que hacer frente a los desafíos estructurales más amplios: abordar la desigualdad, desarrollar sistemas integrales de bienestar accesibles para todos, crear un sistema tributario justo, promover el empleo decente, fortalecer la sostenibilidad ambiental, reforzar los mecanismos de protección social, fomentar la integración económica

regional y asegurar que las mujeres puedan participar de forma plena y segura en la vida pública y económica. También hay oportunidades de promover el pleno uso de la revolución digital para no dejar a nadie de lado. La ONU seguirá siendo en este momento crucial un firme aliado en la construcción de un futuro mejor para todos.

Philippines

- Given the multiple, intersecting issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the equal number of data and scientifically proven responses to these various social, economic, environmental, and medical issues which will enable societies to build/bounce back better, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, what one response will you prioritize and why do you think this should be the focus of the United Nations?

Answer: The one area that the current crisis has demonstrated as absolutely essential to prioritize is the need for a renewed and reinvigorated multilateralism. Effective multilateralism with strong solidarity is needed to suppress transition of the virus and to address the debt and liquidity crisis to ensure developing countries have the financial resources to mount an effective crisis response and lay foundations to recover better for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies. This is essential for global recovery.

- The Philippines is keen to get the candidate's perspective on how the UN system should holistically and concretely address the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries (MICs) in this Decade of Action in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic specific to MICs, as shown by recent data from various UN entities. How does the candidate intend to sustain and further advance these discussions?

Answer: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused multiple crises, affecting all regions and exposing fragilities within and across all nations. In the global response, it will be critical for the UN to work with countries on their specific needs and to seize the opportunity to strengthen the foundations for sustainable and inclusive development in each region and each country, with a whole-of-society, whole-of-government approach, driven by compassion and solidarity. More specifically, since the beginning of the crisis, I have called for liquidity through a large issuance of Special Drawing Rights and a reallocation of unutilized SDRs, and proposed a three-phased approach to address debt burdens (a debt standstill, targeted debt relief for the most vulnerable, and a reform of the international debt architecture). Debt standstills and relief must be extended to countries that need it most – including middle-income countries, which are home to more than 60 percent of the world's poor – without creating stigma or compromising their sovereign ratings. Reforming the international debt architecture is also critical, as a debt crisis amidst the COVID-19 emergency would put the Sustainable Development Goals out of reach.

- The Secretary-General recently opened the online launch of the 2nd World Ocean Assessment, the major output of the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the States of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (21 April 2021, in connection with Earth Day 2021). What are your priorities to respond to the challenges of the degradation of the ocean? What are your thoughts on a new global treaty to tackle plastic pollution?

Answer: As I mentioned at the launch of the 2nd World Ocean Assessment, a better understanding of the ocean is essential. Ocean sustainability depends on us all working together — including through joint research, capacity development and the sharing of data, information and technology. We also need to better integrate scientific knowledge and policy-making. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which started this year, provides a global framework to act as one to achieve this goal. We must all work to prevent the decline of our oceans by ending unsustainable fishing practices, expanding marine protected areas and drastically reducing maritime pollution, including plastic. Restoring the ocean's ability to nurture humanity and regulate the climate is a defining challenge - it will influence the outcome of our efforts to stem biodiversity loss, implement the Paris Agreement and meet the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additional Civil Society questions

Mr. Aryan Mishra from India

Please let us know **what action plan you have to make sure no country is left behind for vaccination of COVID-19?** Millions of people are dying, how you see the **act of patent of vaccines** by developed nations and what implications it can have on the vaccination programme of developing nations?

Answer: The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for renewed and reinvigorated multilateralism; solidarity and effective multilateralism are the key to suppress transmission of the virus, including through equitable access to vaccines. No one is safe unless everyone is safe. The ACT-Accelerator – *the global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines* - and its COVAX facility are a good example of the solidarity needed. COVAX aims to deliver at least 2 billion doses of vaccines in 2021, bridging the gap between high-income economies and the rest of the global community.

Last week, I called on the G20 to set up a Task Force that brings together all countries with vaccine production capacities, the World Health Organization, the ACT-Accelerator partners and international financial institutions, able to deal with the pharmaceutical companies and other key stakeholders. It should aim to at least double manufacturing capacity by exploring all options, from voluntary licenses and technology transfers to patent pooling and flexibility on intellectual property rights. The Task Force should address equitable global distribution by using the ACT Accelerator and its COVAX facility, and it should be co-convened at the highest levels by the major powers who hold most of the global supply and production capacity, together with the multilateral system. I am ready to mobilize the entire United Nations System to support this effort.

In terms of patents, waivers of intellectual property protections regarding Covid-19 vaccines are important considerations as they open the opportunity for vaccine producers to share the knowledge and technology that will allow the effective expansion of locally-produced vaccines and can significantly increase the supply to the COVAX facility. We must also ensure that countries have the materials required to produce these vaccines. It will be important for us to use

the convening power of the UN to support leadership for a unified global push that is based on principles of equity and solidarity to: (i) get past COVID-19 as a health threat, in particular by ensuring vaccines are available to everyone everywhere as soon as possible; (ii) ensure a sustained joined-up approach to the pandemic's wider collateral impacts on economies and societies (including by supporting the national socio-economic response and recovery plans); and (iii) come together in an all-out effort to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to any future pandemics.

NYU Center on International Cooperation

Considering that there are many more people yet to be born in this century than are currently living and taking into the account the intergenerational impact of decisions that we make today (on climate, on violence, on issues of migration etc.). What will you do as a Secretary-General to ensure that the interests of future generations are accounted for in UN decision making? Would you consider setting up an accountability mechanisms or distinct office or agency to help the multilateral system take into account and consider the interests of future generations in its decision making?

Answer: This is an issue close to my heart. In my Call to Action for Human Rights, launched last year, I refer specifically to the rights of future generations, especially climate justice. The promises made in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration were explicitly to future as well as current generations. The climate emergency threatens the rights and dignity not only of millions of people worldwide but also of people yet to be born. We are currently developing ideas of how we can better take into account intergenerational justice in decision-making, and I will report on the outcome of these deliberations in the “common agenda” report in September 2021, offering concrete suggestions in this area.

Red Dot Foundation

What will you do differently to ensure that women and girls are not left behind and that we can accelerate gender equality?

Answer: Unlocking the capacity of half of the world’s population will directly contribute to more effective outcomes for everyone. I will continue to call on global leaders to act together to make gender equality a reality by: (i) realizing women’s equal rights fully, through the repeal of discriminatory laws and the enacting of positive measures; (ii) ensuring equal representation – from company boards to parliaments, from higher education to public institutions – through special measures and quotas; (iii) targeting women’s economic inclusion through targeted credit and investments, protection of jobs, equal pay and significant investments in the care economy and social protection; (iv) ensuring each country enact an emergency response plan to address violence against women and girls as a priority and follow through with funding, policies and political will to end this scourge, and ; (v) give space to the intergenerational transition (that is underway) to young women advocating for the change we need.

Beyond what I encourage Governments to do, I am committed to ensure that the UN leads by example. Gender parity has been established at the highest levels of the UN for the first time in the Organization’s history, and I have increased the focus on funding for gender equality as insufficient investment is a significant obstacle to gender equality. To ensure the Organization is

funding the most effective outcomes, targets have been set and progress is being monitored through system-wide budget and spending tracking and reporting. In addition, I have made five commitments for the UN system to: (i) advocate for GDP that include measures of wellbeing and sustainability; (ii) for unpaid care work to be valued; (iii) advocate for women's full role in peace processes; (iv) increase the understanding of the linkages between violence against women and girls, and international peace and security; and to (v) end default male bias and the data gap throughout the Organization's work.

Universal Esperanto Association

With its six official languages, multilingualism is central to the cooperative problem-solving work of the United Nations. In addition, with the urgent need to build back after COVID-19 and the vital work of striving for the Sustainable Development Goals, communicating with civil society in languages people understand is more important than ever. As an NGO in consultative status with the UN that promotes peace through intercultural understanding, the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) asks the candidates how they will advance multilingualism in day-to-day work throughout the UN community and in communication with civil society.

Answer: I have made multilingualism one of my priorities and used three of the official languages in my own statements. To advance multilingualism in the work of the Secretariat, we incorporated it in the compacts of senior managers, under "commitment to diversity", along with gender parity and geographical diversity. I receive annual updates on their progress in reaching this target. In 2021, we established a dedicated working group to oversee the development of the policy framework for multilingualism. The goal is to support the mainstreaming of multilingualism throughout the Secretariat, by integrating language considerations into decision-making, policy formulation, budgetary processes, programme implementation, knowledge management and reporting.

Our external communication efforts aim at communicating with as many people as possible in a language that they could understand. We produce daily content about our work in nine languages (six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese), which is disseminated through UN News and social media. We also produce, translate and share content in at least 126 languages through the global network of UN Information Centres and Resident Coordinator offices. Under the Verified initiative, a key pillar in our COVID-19 communications response, the United Nations and our partners have produced digital content in at least 50 languages. Our outreach efforts are also done in as many languages as possible, for example, through our guided tours at the UN premises, which continued virtually when we reduced our footprints in the buildings during the Covid-19 crisis. Ideally, we would want to communicate in more languages but it will depend on the financial support from Member States.