



23 June 2021

Excellency,

Building on the discussions at the General Assembly meeting on 16 June 2021 regarding the options and possible scenarios for the general debate of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, and a subsequent request from Member States, I have the honour to circulate herewith a working paper containing my proposals for High-level Week (HLW) in September 2021.

The General Assembly is the competent organ to decide on the format and arrangements of the meetings during the High-level Week, including the general debate.

I stand ready to further assist the General Assembly in its consideration of these arrangements.

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

Volkan BOZKIR

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

Working Paper

President's proposal for High-level Week (HLW) for the 76th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA76)

Introduction

The seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly is scheduled to open on Tuesday, 14 September 2021 and the general debate is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, 21 September 2021 and conclude on Monday, 27 September.

At the General Assembly informal meeting on business continuity on 16 June 2021, Member States discussed options for the High-level week of the 76th session and asked the President of the General Assembly (PGA) to reflect this in the form of a proposal. Member States underlined the need for an early decision to ensure that they can initiate preparatory work including on the level of representation in their respective capitals.

The PGA undertook to present a proposal for further discussion and decision by Member States. While it is not possible to predict with perfect accuracy the epidemiological situation in September, the trajectory in New York is very positive and planning must begin for a range of eventualities.

Summary Proposals/Decisions

- **Level of Representation in the General Debate:** Decision on the level of representation rests with each Member State.
 - **In-Person attendance:** The UN shall commence arrangement for in-person attendance by Heads of State and Government and Ministers.
 - **Pre-recorded Statements:** The option of providing a video statement introduced by a representative physically present in the Hall should delegations are unable to travel due to ongoing COVID-related concerns remains available; this could also be a backup in the unlikely event of a deterioration in the health conditions in New York prompting new restrictions.
- **Limitations on numbers:** Limitation of 1+3 in the GA Hall for the General Debate/High-level week, with 1+5 allowed in UNHQ overall, including the second floor for each Member State, Observer State and the EU.
- **Side Events:** No side events within the UNHQ; Member States, UN agencies and other interested parties to plan such events offsite
- **Bilateral booths at UNHQ:** More limited and well-spaced booths should be provided, for example, in the Visitors' entrance Hall, 15th and 27th Floor and possibly Delegate's lounge terrace, North Lawn with a temporary cover

- Presence of leaders and Ministers in New York for High-level week will result in significant opportunities for bilateral meetings, which will be logistically challenging to accommodate in Mid-Town, especially for smaller delegations, and difficult to justify from a health perspective when UNHQ itself would have more room than hotels or Missions.
- **Permanent Observers:** At least 1 representative each, be provided physical access and presence in the GA Hall, including the green seats in the balcony, for Permanent Observers and specialized agencies. The UN Secretariat shall develop modalities for the permanent observers.

Other Mandates

During HLW75, mandated high-level meetings were rescheduled to the week after the General Debate. It is proposed that the same approach be explored this year. Consequently, a decision would be required to change/decide on the dates of these meetings.

- High-level meeting to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action on Wednesday, 22 September (resolution 75/237).
- High-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of nuclear weapons on a date to be determined since the International Day falls on Sunday, 26 September (resolution 72/251).

The following High-Level meetings organized by the Secretary-General have yet to be scheduled and may need to be considered in determining the dates and room availability:

- Food Systems Summit
- High-Level Dialogue on Energy

Planning assumptions and principles

- **Safety:** The primary consideration continues to be safety of all participants in close consultation with the relevant host country authorities.
- **CDC Guidance:** UN restrictions should not be greater than those imposed by the local authorities. The guidance on meetings and COVID-19 restrictions for mass gatherings and events are set by New York State (NYS) and/or New York City (NYC).
- **Vaccination Status:** Member States should voluntarily disclose and confirm the vaccination status of those visiting and made a part of the High level. To the extent vaccination status is considered, an honour system may need to apply.

- **Additional Safety Measures:** Regardless of the specific modalities for HLW76, the following elements would continue to apply:
 - encouraging staff and delegates to stay home if sick.
 - provision of supplies for COVID-19 prevention.
 - provision and dissemination of health promotional materials for COVID-19 precautions.
 - implementation of clear plan in place if staff or delegates develop COVID-19 symptoms on- site during the GA.
 - enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of meeting rooms and facilities.