

Declaration on Future Generations

Preamble

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high representatives, having met at the Summit of the Future, at the United Nations Headquarters on 22 and 23 September 2024,
2. Reaffirming our commitments to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as our respective obligations under international law,
3. Also reaffirming our commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration, and our pledge to future generations as set out, inter alia, in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,
4. Cognizant that future generations are all those generations that do not yet exist, and who will inherit this planet,
5. Observing that many existing national legal systems, as well as some cultures and religions, seek to safeguard the needs and interests of future generations and promote intergenerational solidarity, justice and equity,
6. Recognizing that the decisions, actions, and inactions of present generations, have an intergenerational multiplier effect, and therefore resolving to ensure that present generations act with responsibility towards safeguarding the needs and interests of future generations,
7. Acknowledging that we must learn from our past achievements and failures, and their consequences, in order to ensure a more sustainable, just and equitable world for present and future generations, and understanding the interconnectedness of past, present and future,
8. Recognizing children and youth as agents of change and the need for intergenerational dialogue and engagement, including with and among children, youth and older persons, to be taken into consideration in our policy and decision-making processes in order to safeguard the needs and interests of future generations,
9. Acknowledging that investing in building a strong foundation for lasting international peace and security, sustainable development, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and upholding the rule of law is the most effective way to safeguard the needs and interests of future generations,
10. Recognizing the complex and interrelated opportunities, challenges and risks faced by present generations, as well as the implications of projected global demographic trends,
11. Further committing to build a stronger, more effective and resilient multilateral system based on international law, with the United Nations at its core, underpinned by transparency, confidence and trust, for the benefit of present and future generations.

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Guiding Principles

In order to seize the opportunity that present generations possess to leave a better future for generations to come and to fulfill our commitment to meet the demands of the present in a way that safeguards the needs and interests of future generations, while leaving no one behind, we observe the following guiding principles:

12. The maintenance of international peace and security, and the full respect for international law, must be promoted in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter,
13. The pursuit and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, encompassing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which includes the right to development, must be respected, protected and promoted, without distinction or discrimination of any kind,
14. The opportunity for future generations to thrive in prosperity and achieve sustainable development must be ensured, including by eliminating the intergenerational transmission of poverty and hunger, inequality and injustice, and acknowledging the special challenges faced by the most vulnerable countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States,
15. The promotion of intergenerational solidarity, as well as intergenerational dialogue, and social cohesion is an indispensable part of the foundation for the prosperity of future generations and, in this regard, the role of families as contributors to sustainable development must be recognized,
16. A clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, where humanity lives in harmony with nature, must be created and maintained by urgently addressing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, and scaling up collective action to promote environmental protection,
17. The promotion of the responsible and ethical use of science, technology and innovation, guided by the principles of equity and solidarity, is necessary to foster an open, fair and inclusive environment for scientific and technological development and digital cooperation while bridging the scientific, technological, and innovation divides, including digital divides, within and between countries,
18. The achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind are necessary requirements for a sustainable future,
19. The full and equal participation of persons with disabilities of present and future generations in society, including the opportunity for them to be actively involved in decision-making processes, is critical to ensuring that no one is left behind,
20. The elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as the achievement of racial equality and the empowerment of all people, are required for a prosperous and sustainable future,

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21. An inclusive, transparent and effective multilateral system is essential to enhance international solidarity and cooperation, rebuild trust and create a world that is safe, just and sustainable, where human dignity is ensured.

Commitments

Guided by these principles, we hereby pledge to:

22. Promote international stability, peace and security, including by steadfastly advancing our efforts to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, where conflicts and crises are resolved through peaceful means,
23. Ensure peaceful, inclusive and just societies, while addressing inequalities within and among nations and the special needs of developing countries, as well as people in vulnerable situations,
24. Implement policies and programmes to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence, harassment and abuse against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, and ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in all spheres of society,
25. Eliminate all forms of persistent historical and structural inequalities, including by acknowledging, addressing and remedying past tragedies and their consequences, and eradicate all forms of discrimination,
26. Honor, promote and preserve cultural diversity and cultural heritage, as well as languages, knowledge systems and traditions, and foster intercultural and interreligious dialogue, including through raising awareness of the importance attached by the countries of origin to the return or restitution of cultural property that is of fundamental spiritual, historical and cultural value to them, so that they may constitute collections representative of their cultural heritage, and strengthening international cooperation on the restitution to countries of their cultural properties, in line with relevant international conventions and national legislation, where applicable, recognizing that this will ensure mutual understanding, tolerance and inclusion,
27. Recognize, promote and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, their territories, lands and ecosystems, while safeguarding their traditions, spiritual beliefs and ancestral knowledge, strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State and ensure their right to participation in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights,
28. Undertake comprehensive and targeted strategies to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, food security, and the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, and to combat the feminization of poverty, in order to meet the needs of the present generations, achieve global resilience and establish a more prosperous foundation for future generations,

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29. Prioritize urgent action to address critical environmental challenges and implement measures to reduce disaster risk and build resilience, reverse the degradation of eco-systems, and ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; and reaffirm the importance of accelerating action to address climate change and its adverse impacts, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances, noting the importance for some of the concept of “climate justice”,
30. Harness the benefits of existing, new and emerging technologies and mitigate the associated risks through effective, inclusive and equitable governance at all levels, scaling up collaboration to bridge the digital divides within and between developed and developing countries, increasing capacity building efforts in the field of science, technology and innovation, and promoting the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms.
31. Strengthen cooperation among States in their response to demographic trends and realities, such as rapid population growth, declining birthrates and aging populations, as well as in addressing the interlinkages between population issues and development across all regions, taking into account the needs and interests of present and future generations, including children and youth, and the substantial contributions of older persons to sustainable development efforts,
32. Strengthen cooperation among States to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration between countries of origin, transit and destination, including through enhancing availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, while recognizing the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development,
33. Invest in accessible, safe, inclusive and equitable quality education for all, including physical education and sport, and promote opportunities for lifelong learning, technical and vocational training, and digital literacy, allowing for the intergenerational acquisition and transfer of knowledge and skills to advance the prospects of future generations,
34. Protect the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, through universal health coverage, and strengthened and resilient health systems, as well as equitable access to safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, vaccines, therapeutics and other health products, to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for present and future generations.

Actions

Acknowledging the primary role and responsibility of governments, at all levels, in line with their respective constitutional frameworks, towards safeguarding the needs and interests of future generations, we will implement, institutionalize and monitor the above commitments, in national, regional and global policy-making by:

35. Leveraging science, data, statistics and strategic foresight to ensure long-term thinking and planning, and to develop and implement sustainable practices and the institutional reforms necessary to ensure evidence-based decision-making, while making governance more anticipatory, adaptive and responsive to future opportunities, risks and challenges,

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36. Ensuring inclusive and equitable access to knowledge, science and information, while promoting innovation, critical thinking and life-skills to create generations of citizens that are agents of positive change and transformation,
37. Strengthening our systems of national and global accounting, including by promoting the use of forward-looking, evidence-based impact assessments, developing stronger anticipatory risk analyses and encouraging the use of measures of progress on sustainable development that complement and go beyond gross domestic product,
38. Investing in capacity to better prepare for and respond to future global shocks, crises and challenges, and using evidence-based planning and foresight to avoid and mitigate risks, while ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable do not bear disproportionate costs and burdens of mitigation, adaptation, restoration and resilience building,
39. Undertaking a whole-of-government approach to coordination, including at the national and local levels, on the assessment, development, implementation and evaluation of policies that safeguard the needs and interests of future generations,
40. Enhancing cooperation with stakeholders, including civil society, academia, the scientific and technological community and the private sector, and encouraging intergenerational partnerships, by promoting a whole-of-society approach, to share best practices and develop innovative, long-term and forward-thinking ideas in order to safeguard the needs and interests of future generations,
41. Equipping the multilateral system, including the United Nations, to support States, upon their request, in their efforts to implement this Declaration and embed the needs and interests of future generations and long-term thinking in policy-making processes by fostering cooperation and facilitating greater use of anticipatory planning and foresight, based on science, data and statistics, and raising awareness of and advising on the likely intergenerational or future impacts of policies and programmes,
42. Fostering an organizational culture that is future-oriented and mainstreamed across the United Nations system in order to facilitate science- and evidence-based decision-making by developing diverse capabilities, including anticipatory planning, foresight and futures literacy, and systematically promoting long-term and intergenerational thinking at all levels,
43. Recognizing the important advisory and advocacy role that the United Nations should play with respect to future generations, we:

Take note of the Secretary-General's proposal to appoint a Special Envoy for Future Generations to support the implementation of this Declaration; and

Decide to convene an inclusive high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on future generations that will review the implementation of this Declaration during the 83rd Session of the General Assembly and provide updates on the actions taken to safeguard the needs and interests of future generations; and

Request the Secretary-General to present a report on the implementation of this Declaration for consideration at the high-level plenary meeting to be held during the 83rd Session of the General Assembly.