



CLUB DE MADRID

www.clubmadrid.org

Noemi Becerra Molina, Senior Programme Officer, nbecerra@clubmadrid.org

Chapeau

The United Nations 2024 Summit of the Future will be taking place at a truly critical juncture in the history of humanity, one marking a transition characterized by vertiginous technological changes, converging, multidimensional crises, and complex geopolitical shifts. This evolving landscape demands that leaders and institutions move to effectively address emerging challenges and opportunities. The Summit represents a unique opportunity to forge a transformative Pact for the Future, deeply rooted in the collective aspirations of the global community.

The Pact for the Future must serve as a guide for reforming the multilateral system and our collective pursuit of a sustainable, just, and peaceful future. It must help accelerate the implementation of existing international agreements, particularly those related to the outcomes of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which will take us to the 2030 horizon and beyond.

Faced with this transformative opportunity, UN Member States must firmly recommit to the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. The Pact for the Future will allow Member States to demonstrate their true commitment to the ideals of global cooperation and peace, and to strengthen the United Nations as the central institution for cooperative and effective problem-solving at the global level.

Essential to the Pact for the Future should be the commitment of Member States to place human rights at the center of global dialogues on peace, security and sustainable development. Emphasizing the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, the Pact for the Future should unequivocally integrate a human rights-based approach in all proposed initiatives. This commitment is both a moral imperative and a strategic necessity, ensuring that every aspect of global cooperation and policy-making is guided by the fundamental principles of human rights.

Tackling today's global challenges and achieving our 2030 goals will require a strong focus on gender equality. The full, equal, and meaningful participation of women is fundamental to economic growth, sustainable development, and prosperous societies. The United Nations must lead by example and ensure gender equality throughout the UN system with strong internal policies, regulations, and accountability measures ensuring equal representation and participation of men and women in all areas and activities. These measures should be a fundamental characteristic of the Organization's work, setting a global standard and demonstrating that gender equality is both a strategic imperative and a cornerstone of effective global governance.

The Summit of the Future will also provide us with the opportunity to establish "eco-social" contracts, integrating both social and environmental considerations with the aspirations and rights of present and, above all, future generations. These contracts, anchored in the principles of human rights, gender equality, peace and solidarity, are critical to guiding global economies and societies toward greater sustainability.

The Summit should underscore the need for fair fiscal arrangements between citizens, businesses and states. These are essential for the mobilization and allocation of the financial resources needed for the effective implementation of the eco-social contracts. Such policies must ensure a fair distribution of financial responsibilities within and between nations as an integral part of a just and inclusive path to sustainable development.

In addition, the Summit should focus on advancing the concerns of the Global South and serve as a platform for bringing their unique challenges and aspirations into the global dialogue. The emphasis on inclusive and equitable development ensures that the perspectives and needs of the Global South are at the center of international policies and initiatives.

Finally, the Pact of the Future should be aligned with key international frameworks and agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This alignment will ensure a coherent and integrated approach to achieving a sustainable, resilient and equitable future for all, and underscore the UN's commitment to multilateralism, solidarity and shared responsibility in the complex landscape of global development.

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

Fostering an Enabling Environment for System Change:

The Summit of the Future should emphasize the need to create an environment conducive to global, systemic change. We recommend supporting labor-intensive and inclusive growth strategies fostering green structural change leading to increased formal employment and household income. Strengthening state capacity is essential to foster long-term political consensus for progressive socio-economic reforms and to negotiate fair transnational corporate investment. The Summit of the Future is an opportunity to call for the development of democratic, transparent, and accountable institutions alongside efforts to reduce power asymmetries in North-South relations, thereby enhancing international cooperation, growth, and solidarity. The Pact of the Future must promote a public discourse that emphasizes shared interests and values, responsibilities and benefits, moving away from harmful polarization.

Making Domestic Resource Mobilization Equitable, Effective, and Sustainable:

The Summit of the Future could constitute a platform from which to launch the much needed reform of domestic resource mobilization in order to make it constructive, equitable, effective and sustainable. It would be a good opportunity to promote the implementation of progressive tax policies, including wealth and capital taxes. Strengthening tax enforcement and transparency, especially for wealthy individuals and large corporations, and aligning tax policies with sustainable development goals is critical. Tax systems must be fair and equitable, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups, promoting greater solidarity in tax reform processes.

Creating Fair Global Fiscal and Financial Pacts: Detailed Proposal

SoFT could help explore the creation of a fair global fiscal pact. Debt relief through debt reduction and write-offs should be sought immediately (including mechanisms for commercial bank debt) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) should reach the 0.7 goal, tightening ODA classification of what counts to make sure it supports national development strategies in the Global South. Other instruments include increasing the minimum tax threshold for large multinational corporations to 25 percent, implementing new trans-border tax instruments for eco-social transformation and mobilizing new affordable financing for low- and middle-income countries. The role of the United Nations (UN) should be strengthened in the international financial architecture through a UN framework convention on international tax cooperation, a UN high-level expert group on fiscal policy and the creation of a UN tax body.

By combining debt relief, effective aid, and innovative financing with enhanced global governance, it lays the groundwork for a more equitable and sustainable global financial system.

Reform of the international financial architecture

The reform of the international financial architecture must encompass a transformation of the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Financing Institutions. Drawing on insights from reports like the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism and the SDG-stimulus, there is an evolving consensus on the need for these institutions to evolve to effectively address contemporary global challenges. This transformation includes enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the main International Financial Architecture, particularly in climate-related investments. The MDBs must refine their processes for greater effectiveness and inclusivity, ensuring that private sector mobilization and synergies across MDBs are optimized, as suggested in initiatives like the World Bank's efforts and the Paris Pact for People and Planet.

Financing for Climate Change: A Comprehensive Approach

The Summit of the Future could help address the urgent need to align climate finance with broader, people-centered national development goals, ensuring it not be considered in isolation, but as an integral part of a country's overall development strategy. The aim is to create synergies between climate action and economic growth, poverty reduction and social equity. The Brazilian G20 Presidency initiative "Global Mobilization Against Climate Change" points precisely in this direction.

One of the key recommendations in this area is to prioritize investments in infrastructure and technologies supporting sustainable livelihoods. This includes the development of renewable energy sources, climate-resilient infrastructure, and technologies that enhance the adaptive capacity of communities. Such investments are critical to facilitating the transition to sustainable energy sources, particularly in developing countries that are heavily dependent on fossil fuels.

Inclusive Climate Action

The Pact for the Future should recognize the importance of Inclusive Climate Action, one that recognizes and integrates the diverse perspectives and contributions of all stakeholders, particularly indigenous and traditional communities. Acknowledging the deep-rooted understanding and connection these communities have with the environment, this recommendation stresses the importance of incorporating their knowledge and practices into broader sustainable development strategies. This inclusive approach extends to addressing the challenges of climate migration, proposing policies that recognize climate migration as a legitimate form of adaptation. By integrating environmental refugees into national adaptation plans, Member States could ensure that these vulnerable groups are not only protected but also actively involved in shaping the responses to the climate challenges they face.

Social development

In our collective journey towards global development, it is imperative to focus our efforts on those most in need, ensuring that our actions resonate with the commitment to leave no one behind. This encompasses dedicating special attention to the poorer and more vulnerable groups, often the hardest hit by global challenges. Central to this approach are the overarching priorities of eradicating poverty, combating hunger and malnutrition, and reducing inequalities. Additionally, transformative education and comprehensive health policies are crucial in building resilient and empowered communities. In line with these objectives, we support the establishment of a Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. This initiative is pivotal in fostering an environment where equitable and sustainable development can thrive. By adopting such an inclusive and holistic approach, we are setting a strong foundation for the World Social Summit in 2025, aiming to create a pathway that ensures equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development for all, particularly for those at the margins of society.

Chapter II. International peace and security

Building on the Foundations of Collective Security and Modernization:

Consistent with the recommendations of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB) and the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, SoFT must emphasize the need to redefine peace as a global public good. The definition of collective security must be broadened to reflect the diverse range of political, economic, social, environmental and technological threats we face today. Recognizing the interconnected nature of these risks, the proposal calls for a holistic approach to collective security, affirming that true security can only be achieved when all countries and their citizens feel secure.

Reforming the UN Security Council:

In addressing the urgent need for reform of the United Nations Security Council, our recommendation emphasizes transforming this central institution to enhance its effectiveness in responding to today's global security challenges. The current composition and decision-making processes of the Security Council, dominated by a limited number of states and hampered by geopolitical polarization, have rendered it unable to address major threats to international peace and security. Comprehensive reform is essential to ensure the Council's relevance and functionality. Key aspects of this reform include expanding the Council to equitably represent all regions. In addition, the reform must democratize the Council's actions by re-evaluating the veto power to ensure that no single state can unilaterally control decisions. This process must also modernize the Council to adapt to new geopolitical landscapes and to include a wider range of voices and emerging issues in its deliberations.

Alongside these reforms, we propose a significant upgrade of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), expanding its mandate to address a broader range of risks, including non-military threats to collective security. This upgrade should include establishing formal links with international financial institutions, aligning global financial flows with actions that address the root causes of conflict, and identifying a broader range of gender-related security issues. The PBC should also focus on the impact of climate change on security risks and support the creation of regional resilience councils for prevention and peacebuilding. This expanded mandate could potentially transform the PBC into a more robust Peacebuilding Council, providing a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These reforms are essential to maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the United Nations in its mission to promote international peace and security, and to ensuring a more equitable and responsive system that truly represents and serves the global community.

Establishing a Collective Security Framework:

The Summit of the Future is an opportunity to support the establishment of a collective security framework between the UN and major regional bodies. This framework should lay a strategic and realistic foundation for large-scale investments in peace at the regional level, fostering collaboration and ensuring that peace initiatives are tailored to the specific needs and dynamics of each region.

Renewed Commitment Against Nuclear Weapons:

The Summit of the Future presents an unparalleled platform to explore the path towards a world with no nuclear weapons by 2045, incorporating well-defined, time-specific milestones and consensus on verification methods. In alignment with the global norm against the use of nuclear weapons, the Pact of the Future will provide an opportunity to call for a renewed commitment to the principle of “no first use” by all nuclear states. This is an essential step towards setting a date for total denuclearization, marking a concrete vision for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

AI Governance

There is a critical need for a global commitment to develop a comprehensive global framework for artificial intelligence (AI). This framework should encompass the design, development and use of AI, based on universally accepted standards and methodologies. This process should be grounded in human rights, aligned with existing AI standards, and develop additional standards to enhance the practice of safety and responsibility among AI practitioners. In addition, these efforts should reflect recent advances in global ethical frameworks for AI.

Just digital transition for all

We support HLAB's recommendation to establish a Global Commission on Just and Sustainable Digitalization. The proposed Commission would need to address human rights challenges in the digital age and ensure that digital progress does not come at the expense of fundamental freedoms and rights. It could oversee data governance and establish protocols and standards to effectively manage and protect data. The Pact for the Future must advocate for universal and meaningful connectivity, ensuring that digital progress is accessible to all and does not exacerbate existing inequalities. Recognizing the important role of the private sector and partnerships in implementing technological commitments, digital companies cooperating with governments should utilize tech design, algorithms, and business models to develop products and services that promote and enhance social cohesion rather than polarization.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

Youth

In light of the Summit of the Future, we recommend the enhancement of the United Nations Youth Office with more robust accountability measures to ensure youth inclusion. Addressing the significant gap in youth-focused engagement across the multilateral system, this proposal aims to ensure that youth participation is not only present but representative and impactful. By strengthening the accountability mechanisms within the UN Youth Office, the organization can guarantee that young voices are actively involved and influential in shaping the policies and initiatives of the United Nations, thereby fostering a more inclusive and responsive global governance system.

Future Generations

There should be a normative recognition of the rights of future generations, which ought to be a central theme of the Pact for the Future. The design of future-fit organizations and processes should be on the Agenda. These should integrate long-term analysis, goal-setting, and impact assessments, ensuring that the long-term implications of today's decisions are thoroughly considered. A robust system of accountability is essential to hold all actors responsible for their commitments to future generations. In this context, we endorse the Secretary-General's intention to appoint an envoy for future generations. This position should be endowed with a broad mandate to hold the multilateral system accountable for its commitments to future generations and be adequately resourced to lead future-oriented analyses and build capacities.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

(see above)