OUR COMMON AGENDA
Comms pack for external partners

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00am (NYC Time) 10 SEPTEMBER 2021

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I. Launch

The Secretary-General will present the Common Agenda report to the General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York on Friday, 10 September 2021 at 10.00am EST. The event will be livestreamed on UN WebTV: https://media.un.org/en/webtv

Following the presentation, the Secretary-General will engage with the press on the Common Agenda as part of his pre-General Assembly press conference.

II. Common Agenda report

The Common Agenda report will be launched online on 10 September 2021 at 10.00am EST in 6 languages at: https://www.un.org/common-agenda-report

The Common Agenda landing page is live and available in 6 languages at: https://www.un.org/common-agenda

III. Key messages

Key messages could be used by external partners when speaking to media. They can serve as a guide to editorial and content production teams who may tailor the language for their audiences.

On the 75th anniversary of the UN, Member States pledged to strengthen global governance for the sake of present and coming generations. They requested the Secretary-General to report back with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.

- We are at an inflection point in history. The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a wake-up call and with the climate crisis now looming, the world is experiencing its biggest shared test since the Second World War.
• **Humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: breakdown or breakthrough.** The choices we make — or fail to make — today could result in further breakdown and a future of perpetual crises, or a breakthrough to a better, more sustainable, peaceful future for our people and planet.

• **To achieve a breakthrough, we must recognize that humanity’s very future depends on solidarity, trust, and our ability to work together as a global family to achieve common goals.** No community or country, however powerful, can solve its challenges alone. We have to find a way to trust and care for one another again.

• **In this time of division, fracture and mistrust, the United Nations is needed more than ever.** Multilateral action has achieved an enormous amount over the past 75 years, from preventing a third world war to eradicating smallpox and mending the hole in the ozone layer. Our Common Agenda must be a starting point for ideas and initiatives that build on these achievements.

• **Our Common Agenda is an agenda of action, designed to strengthen and accelerate multilateral agreements – particularly the 2030 Agenda – and make a tangible difference to people’s lives.**

*The Secretary-General makes recommendations across four broad areas.*

1. **A renewal of the social contract, anchored in human rights, to rebuild trust and social cohesion.** Much of our global unease is rooted in persistent poverty, hunger, lack of access to health care, education and income security, growing inequalities and injustices as well as misinformation and lack of confidence in institutions. Key recommendations include:

   o Tackling the “infodemic” of misinformation plaguing our world by ending the ‘war on science’ and introducing a **global code of conduct** that promotes integrity in public information.

   o Addressing tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, money-laundering and illicit financial flows, through a new joint structure on **financial integrity**.

   o Reinvigorating our thinking around **human rights**, including our online lives.

   o Achieving universal social protection coverage, including universal health care, concretized at a **World Social Summit in 2025**.

   o Eradicating violence against **women and girls** and ensuring their full and equal participation, including in emergency response plans and backed by a global campaign to eliminate damaging social norms.

   o Correcting blind spots in **how we measure progress and prosperity** by introducing measures that complement the gross national product (GDP), and ensure profits do not come at the expense of people and planet.
2. **A focus on the future, through a deepening of solidarity with the world’s young people and future generations.** Those that inherit the consequences of the decisions we take today are barely represented in decision-making which is heavily weighted towards the short term. Key proposals include:

- Transformative measures on education, skills training and lifelong learning, including a **Transforming Education Summit** in 2022.
- A **Futures Lab** to take full advantage of our unprecedented capacity to predict and model the impact of policy decisions over time.
- The appointment of a **Special Envoy for Future Generations** to serve as a voice for the 10.9 billion people expected to be born this century, as well as an upgraded **UN Youth Office**.
- The **repurposing of the Trusteeship Council** to make it a deliberative body on behalf of succeeding generations.
- A **Declaration on Future Generations**

3. **Urgent action to protect and deliver global commons** - high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica and outer space - **and global public goods** – such as peace, economic security, and global health. To achieve this, we need a **multilateralism that is more networked, inclusive and effective**. Key recommendations include:

- Immediate steps for a **global vaccination plan for COVID-19** and better integration of the global financial system with other decision-making processes through a **Biennial Summit** between the G20, ECOSOC, the Secretary-General and heads of international financial institutions.
- Better preparedness for future global shocks through an **Emergency Platform** that would be triggered automatically in response to large-scale crises.
- A **Summit of the Future** to forge a new consensus on the most critical global concerns that the international system must protect and deliver— including peace, climate action beyond 2030, the digital commons and outer space.
- A **High-level Advisory Board**, at the head of State/Government level, to inform the Summit of the Future and advance governance in the areas of greatest concern.

4. **An upgraded UN that is fit for a new era** – one that can offer more relevant, system-wide, multilateral and multi-stakeholder solutions to the challenges of the 21st century. The transformation will be driven by data, innovation, strategic foresight, predictive analysis and behavioural science. Key proposals include:

- Strengthening the UN as a **source of reliable data and evidence**
- Deepening engagement with local and regional governments, civil society, parliaments and the private sector.

Select infographics from the report

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00am (NYC Time) 10 SEPTEMBER 2021
SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM

PEACE

Despite ongoing international tensions, conflict and violence, the multilateral system with the United Nations at its centre has helped to avert a third world war or a nuclear holocaust.

Conflicts between States, 1946–2020


HEALTH

After a 10-year global effort led by WHO involving over 500 million vaccinations, smallpox was officially eradicated in 1980.

Today, 85% of the world’s children are vaccinated and protected from debilitating diseases.


HUMAN RIGHTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) has helped to ensure that billions of people live safer, longer and more dignified lives.

80% of Member States have ratified at least four core international human rights treaties, and all Member States have ratified at least one.


POVERTY ERADICATION

Total population (in billions) living in extreme poverty


ENVIRONMENT

Ozone depleting emissions since the Montreal Protocol, Index 1986 = 100%

-99% SINCE 1986

Source: UNEP, 2021.

GENDER EQUALITY

90% of United Nations Member States have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (percentage)


HUMANITARIAN ACTION

In 2020, the United Nations and partner organizations provided humanitarian assistance to more than 98 million people in 25 countries.

Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021.
THE CHOICE BEFORE US: A SCENARIO OF BREAKDOWN AND PERPETUAL CRISIS

DEADLY PANDEMICS
- COVID-19 is endemic, constantly mutating
- Richer countries hoard vaccines, no plan for equitable distribution
- Health systems are overwhelmed
- No preparedness for future pandemics
- A number of countries are poorer in 2030 than before the pandemic hit

UNINHABITABLE PLANET
- Owing to unchanged emission levels from human activity, global warming of 2°C will be exceeded during the twenty-first century
- Heatwaves, floods, droughts, tropical cyclones and other extremes are unprecedented in magnitude, frequency and timing and occur in regions that have never been affected before
- The Arctic is ice free in the summer; most permafrost is lost and extreme sea levels occur every year
- One million species are on the verge of extinction, with irreversible biodiversity loss
- More than 1 billion people live with heat that is so extreme that it threatens their lives

DESTABILIZING INEQUALITIES
- Continuous erosion of human rights
- Growing poverty, and massive loss of jobs and income
- Public goods like education and social protection systems are underfunded
- Protests spread across borders, often met with violent repression
- Technology fuels division
- New types of warfare invented faster than new ways of making peace

WARNING SIGNS

- $9.2 trillion – estimated cost to the global economy in 2021 alone if developing countries do not have equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines
- Increases in concentrations of greenhouse gases since around 1750 are unequivocally caused by human activities and have led to ~1.1°C of warming between 1850 and 1900
  Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2021.
- 36 low-income countries are in sovereign debt distress or at a high risk of falling into debt distress (February 2021)
  Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020.
- Up to 827,000 viruses that could infect humans exist in mammals and birds
- The extinction rate is now 10–100 times higher than at any other time in the past 10 million years
- By 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in the sea
- Rapid increase in non-State conflicts since 2010

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR MULTILATERALISM

- Social contract is eroded and geopolitical tensions rise
- International institutions are trapped in a cycle of underinvestment and underperformance
- Preference for unilateralism over solidarity
- No consensus on facts, science or knowledge
THE CHOICE BEFORE US:
A SCENARIO OF BREAKTHROUGH AND THE PROSPECT OF A GREENER, SAFER, BETTER FUTURE

SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY
- Vaccines shared widely and equitably
- Capacity to produce vaccines for future pandemics within 100 days and to distribute them globally within a year
- People in crisis and conflict settings have a bridge to better lives
- Revised international debt architecture
- Business incentives are reshaped to support global public goods
- Progress to address illicit financial flows, tax avoidance and climate finance
- Financial and economic systems support more sustainable, resilient and inclusive patterns of growth

HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLANET
- Global temperature rise is limited to 1.5°C
- All countries and sectors decarbonize by 2050
- Support provided to countries heavily affected by climate emergencies
- Just transitions to a new labour ecosystem are ensured
- A functioning ecosystem is preserved for succeeding generations
- Communities are equipped to adapt and be resilient to climate change impacts

TRUST AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
- Strong commitment to the universality and indivisibility of human rights
- Universal social protection floors, including universal health coverage
- Universal digital connectivity
- Quality education, skills enhancement and lifelong learning
- Progress on addressing gender, racial, economic and other inequalities
- Equal partnership between institutions and the people they serve and among and within communities to strengthen social cohesion

SIGNS OF HOPE

146 million people lifted out of extreme poverty by 2030 through investments in governance, social protection, the green economy and digitalization (including 74 million women and girls)

75% of methane emissions could be mitigated with existing technology today, up to 40% at no net cost
Source: UNEP, 2021.

Transitioning to low-carbon, sustainable growth approaches could deliver direct economic gains of $26 trillion through to 2030 compared with business-as-usual approaches

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR MULTILATERALISM

New era for multilateralism, as countries and other actors work to solve the problems that matter most

The international system acts fast for everyone in an emergency

All actors accountable for keeping commitments made

The United Nations is a trusted platform for collaboration between a growing number and diversity of actors
**CLIMATE BREAKDOWN OR BREAKTHROUGH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown</th>
<th>Our current trajectory</th>
<th>Breakthrough</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>+4.4°C by 2100</strong></td>
<td><strong>+2.7°C by 2100</strong></td>
<td><strong>+1.5°C by 2100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A scenario without climate action and no effective multilateralism to tackle climate change</td>
<td>The trajectory with the latest commitments to reduce emissions</td>
<td>A scenario where the world acts immediately to deliver a 45% reduction in emissions between 2010 and 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea level rises by up to 1.01 METRES relative to 1995–2014</td>
<td>Sea level rises by up to 0.76 METRES relative to 1995–2014</td>
<td>Sea level rises by up to 0.55 METRES relative to 1995–2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The world faces a reduction of more than 30% in global GDP per capita</td>
<td>The world faces a reduction of 15%–25% in global GDP per capita</td>
<td>The world faces a reduction of 8% in global GDP per capita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of 49%–89% of permafrost globally</td>
<td>Up to 1.26 billion person-days per year of exposure to deadly extreme heat across Bangladesh, India and Pakistan</td>
<td>Arctic summer sea ice is “likely” to be maintained under 1.5°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much higher risk of extreme sea levels, e.g. New York City (United States of America) is predicted to experience sea levels of around 2.75 m above normal once a decade versus once a century in the +1.5°C scenario. For a Pacific island like Tahiti, extreme sea levels of 1 m above normal would happen multiple times each year versus between 1 in 50 and 1 in 100 years in the +1.5°C scenario</td>
<td>The Arctic is “very likely” to be ice free in summer</td>
<td>Loss of 17%–44% of permafrost compared with 40%–80% in the +4.3°C scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of most coral reefs is “very likely”</td>
<td>High confidence of a “drastic reduction” in global and African maize crops, with the possibility of tipping points that lead to the collapse of crops in some regions</td>
<td>Limiting warming to 1.5°C rather than 2°C could reduce by 62–457 million the number of people exposed to climate risks and vulnerable to poverty</td>
</tr>
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THE CASE FOR COOPERATION: POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRAJECTORIES FOR COVID-19

COVID-19 IN 2000
Scenario: Less cooperation
- Health emergencies not on the political agenda
- International Health Regulations cover only cholera, plague and yellow fever
- Weak systems for outbreak detection and reporting
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions could have been slower to ramp up, leading to more intense disease transmission
- Data to inform vaccine production could have been slower to disseminate

Assuming no vaccine could have been available in the first 12 MONTHS

Projections for the first year:
- The global loss in GDP could have been $6.6–7.9 TRILLION
- The total death toll could have been 10–19 MILLION

COVID-19 IN 2020
The reality
- Lessons learned from SARS-CoV-1, MERS-CoV and Ebola virus epidemics
- Strengthened international health regulations
- New platforms and partnerships (WHO Health Emergencies Programme, Gavi Alliance, CEPI, etc.)
- New models for designing, testing and manufacturing multiple vaccines

Vaccine development and approval took about 10 MONTHS

In the first year of the pandemic:
The global loss in GDP was around $5 TRILLION
The estimated total death toll was around 5 MILLION

COVID-19 IN THE FUTURE
Scenario: We can do better
- Faster detection and reporting of a novel pathogen
- Faster ramp-up of non-pharmaceutical interventions to slow or contain disease transmission
- Faster vaccine development and greater manufacturing capacity
- More equitable vaccine distribution

Assuming vaccine development and approval could have taken 7–9 MONTHS

Projections for the first year:
The global loss in GDP could have been $2.7–4.2 TRILLION
The total death toll could have been 1.0–2.6 MILLION

Note: These estimates are based on simulations of the potential trajectory and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic under different levels of multilateral cooperation. The simulations used contemporary demographic and population mobility data and ran from the start of the pandemic through 28 February 2021, covering approximately the first year of the crisis.
Abbreviations: CEPI, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; MERS, Middle East respiratory syndrome; SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome.
* This is an estimate of total deaths; reported COVID-19 cases and deaths over the same time period are lower due to underreporting.
PROJECTED DEGRADATION OF THE GLOBAL COMMONS

ATMOSPHERE

Trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration over 800,000 years

Mean carbon dioxide concentrations globally ppm

Carbon dioxide concentrations are now at the highest level in at least 2 million years, 148% above pre-industrial levels.

Projections for global GHG emissions under different scenarios

Note: Projections do not take into account commitments announced in early 2021.


OUTER SPACE

As the density of objects in orbit increases, so does the likelihood of collisions, where each collision will create further debris in a chain reaction potentially rendering space unusable for generations.


ANTARCTICA

Antarctic ice sheet mass loss as sea level equivalent, change relative to 1986–2005

+1.5°C scenario +4.3°C scenario

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019.

HIGH SEAS

Projected pollution of the sea

Even with an extremely ambitious scenario (no further emissions in the ocean by 2020), the level of microplastics in the ocean could double by mid-century as already accumulated plastic waste slowly degrades into smaller pieces.

Source: Lebreton and others, 2019.
DGC Trello board for social media content in 9 languages (animated and static) for Twitter, Instagram and Facebook available at: https://trello.com/b/abS2T2cI/our-common-agenda

- Social media cards (quotes, key messages, GIFs, images)
- Video (quotes, key messages, GIFs, images)
- Handle / identifier
  - @UN
  - @antonioguterres

V. Contact

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