

UN@75 Overview

On the occasion of its 75th anniversary, in 2020, under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, the United Nations is departing from typical commemoration, instead launching its first ever world-wide dialogues. The UN will invite “We the Peoples” to discuss the kind of global cooperation needed to deliver on our shared aspirations for a just, peaceful and sustainable future. From classrooms to board rooms, lecture halls to conference halls, village houses to houses of parliament – the dialogues will represent the single-most ambitious effort in the history of the United Nations to engage the world’s citizens. Young people in particular will be drivers of the dialogues as they have perhaps the greatest to gain or lose, as well the energy and ideas to enable the transformational change that is needed.

This proposal presents a plan for ensuring the 75th anniversary maximizes this opportunity, with a strategic approach that is bottom-up and inclusive, and leverages networks, innovative ideas and different types of engagement across the globe. The initiative is aligned with the UN General Assembly’s plans for the seventy-fifth anniversary under the theme “The future we want, the UN we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”, with events planned to include Member States and other stakeholders, including civil society and youth; and through Member States own national and regional initiatives.

Institutions dedicated to international cooperation, with the United Nations at the core, must adapt at pace to confront risks and embrace opportunities with transformational thinking - and action. Systems changes are occurring faster than public institutions ability to adapt or regulate. Against an unprecedented confluence of existential threats, systems changes, and new actors, the United Nations looks to the future with the realization that we must embrace a reflection of our role in a more complex risk landscape which cannot be confronted by one organization any more than they can be met by one state acting alone. It must reconcile deep shifts in mind sets and attitudes, such as nationalism and consumerism, with the 2030 Agenda. States wrestle with a diminishing monopoly on power as mega-corporations and tech giants without a clear place in the global governance system. Managing the risks and potential of frontier issues such as the impacts of digital technologies requires cross-disciplinary, creative solutions with new partners. This will include a reflection of successes as well as failures, inviting transformational thinking about the potentially momentous paradigm shifts for how the multilateral system as a whole confronts global challenges.

Through thousands of dialogues at the local, national, and international level, the UN@75 initiative will collect diverse perspectives, about the disparity between the nature of global challenges and our collective capacity, and will, to confront them. More than a commemoration, this initiative will employ a mix of intellectual, communications, media, and engagement tools to rekindle inspiration and motivation around a global dialogue envisioning a world better united to face current and emerging challenges, and how a reaffirmed commitment to cooperation can secure a better world when the UN is 100 in 2045. In the current global political context, a new vision of people-centered multilateralism can offer a unifying vision about the world we want and the future we need. The UN Secretary-General believes a forward-looking, inclusive, youth-driven global dialogue is the most effective way to use the commemoration as an opportunity to progress toward this goal.

Objective

UN@75’s primary objective is to use the UN’s 75th anniversary to catalyze future-oriented public dialogues and inspire change and concrete actions to achieve the world we want around an envisioned world in 2045 (“The future we want”); and about the values, role and potential of multilateralism in achieving that vision amidst current and future threats. The intention of such a dialogue is to help transcend current social and political divides by spurring ideas, discussions, and solutions.

The aspiration is that through this global dialogue several impacts become possible. First, it aims to rekindle awareness of our common fate as global citizens, the importance of global cooperation and enhancing

commitment around the need for collective action and common purpose, including through consideration of the changes which may be needed to make multilateral cooperation more effective and responsive to ‘We the Peoples’ aspirations. Second, it aims to demonstrate, both through process and substance, that multilateralism is about people as much as it is about institutions; and as such should open the door for stronger, more sustainable and inclusive means for UN-stakeholder engagement. Third, public outreach would catalyze stronger public awareness of and support for the relevance of multilateralism, including for the 2030 Agenda, as well as trust in public institutions. In turn, this dialogue could identify and promote ideas and innovations in critical areas where collective action will be vital, and where accountability and cooperation can better evolve. Finally, it will become a launching pad for more sustained debate about future challenges, opportunities, and models for collective action beyond 2020, and a path for realizing proposed ideas and innovations with the most promise.

Outreach Modalities

Public outreach

- Throughout 2019 and 2020 the initiative will facilitate a record-number of local and global citizen consultations among different constituencies. In outreach to the diverse groups of citizens around the world, every effort will be made for inclusive participation of diverse groups of the public – with a focus on civil society and youth - and with Member State Governments.
- The UN and partners will develop and co-create a toolkit, in official and local languages, to most resonate with each audience and context (E.g. philanthropic, government, civil society, private sector, women, employees, students, refugees). Under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinators and UN Information Centres (where there is no UNRC), UN entities will deploy these toolkits to host dialogues together with local and national partners. Partners will host dialogue events in geographically diverse cities around the world, and in strategic locations with UN historical significance.
- Building on successful public consultations on climate and energy done in advance of the SDGs, COP21 and Paris climate summits, UN@75 will work with specialized partners to conduct global citizen consultations.
- Through multimedia and communications campaigns, consultations using social media, polling, and online platforms will partner with specialized communications and market research firms with a global reach and proven track record to conduct research assessing public views, in various regions, on the core values of multilateralism, and trust in governments to address global challenges.
- A combined use of new media, creative and digital tools will be used in outreach to target audiences, with a particular emphasis on youth. Innovative platforms already using new and creative ways of engaging citizens will facilitate a blend of live and online dialogues.

Networks, Coalitions and Partnerships

- The project is coordinating closely civil society coalitions and organizations on planned events and consultations at the global, national and sub-national level through partner networks. Coalitions such as UN2020, CIVICUS, Together First and others are dedicated to using the 75th anniversary as an opportunity to take stock and strengthen the organization and will be key allies. Others will include: World Federation of UN Associations, UN Foundation, SDG Networks - Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (coordinated by UN DESA), Department of Global Communications Civil Society Partner Network, UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (ECOSOC), Global Citizen and Project Everyone.
- A global, youth-driven reflection will be organized with high schools, universities, and home-grown youth movements. It will include the ECOSOC Youth Forum, as well as the Major Group on Youth, National Assemblies, sporting event and associations, United Nations Associations and their campus chapters, and the UN Youth Envoy. Organizations such as the World Future Council and the Model United Nations (MUN).

- A track on intellectual leadership and debate will work with academia, think tanks, and other global intellectual leaders will build on existing research and policy initiatives convening discussions, issuing research papers, and in some cases, offering recommendations on various dimensions of multilateralism tied to the UN's 75th Anniversary. Part of these conversations will necessarily include creating space for evaluation of successes, challenges, and failures that collective action has brought to date, and considerations of such performance against future needs.
- Partnering with similarly motivated, established philanthropic initiatives will enable powerful connections between partners and coalitions; while also increasing public knowledge about key challenges; and stimulating discussion and innovative thinking about major global risks.
- The project will engage Bretton Woods Institutions (E.g. IMF, World Bank) and regional organizations (E.g. OAS, AU) to facilitate forward-leaning ideas and recommendations.

UN System

- All UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) in 130 countries, engaging every UN Country Team, including UN Information Centres (UNICs) and their networks of national counterparts and partners. The format of these consultations will differ by context but will commonly aim to create a neutral, safe space for public consultations, and support efforts to link these with national government counterparts.
- The Department of Global Communication (DGC) will support the UN initiative, enlisting the heads of Communications across the UN system on a coordinated series of campaigns. It will integrate the UN@75 initiative into planned events throughout 2019-2020.
- UN Chief Executive Board have been briefed on the initiative; each UN entity will lead its own agency-wide strategies and actions, each leveraging their capacities, partners, field presences and programs to explore thematic aspects relevant to their mandates. Special attention will be given to include particularly vulnerable groups, such as refugees and migrants, stateless people, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, among others.
- UN Global Compact and UN Partnership Offices will reach out to business community partners to participate and support. This will include leveraging existing coalitions supporting the 2030 Agenda, such as Forum for the Future, Global Compact's Local Networks, and SDG Advocates.
- In tandem with Member States own efforts, the UN will work with national counterparts to encourage state institutions, including Parliaments and educational institutions to host their own dialogues, integrating the theme of multilateralism into their debates, policy discussions and school curriculums.

Following presentation of results to the UNGA, feedback will be shared among stakeholders to inform subsequent policy discussions or actions. Dialogue results will also be shared publicly within their own contexts to inform public debate and inspire public engagement on issues raised. A special follow up mechanism, to be determined, will aim to guide the most relevant and viable proposals toward implementation.