

WORLDVIEWS

UN's Guterres Proposes a 2023 Summit of the Future in 'Our Common Agenda' Report

September 13, 2021 by [Richard Ponzio](#) and [Joris Larik](#)



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres briefs reporters on Afghanistan, Aug. 26, 2021. The essayists write that at the heart of Guterres's new "Our Common Agenda" report focusing on the 12 commitments made last year by world leaders in a global declaration, is the "idea of trust and solidarity" as the thread holding societies together. It is fast unraveling. EVAN SCHNEIDER/UN PHOTO

A year ago, as Covid-19 took its toll on countless lives and livelihoods and presented yet another reminder of how global crises inevitably require global cooperation and solutions, world leaders convened virtually to endorse a [declaration marking the United Nations' 75th anniversary](#). To achieve progress on the declaration's 12 commitments, member states

holding together society from the local to the global level — a fiber that is fast unraveling. Hence, the report proposes nothing less than a new social contract between governments and governed. According to “[Our Common Agenda](#),” such a contract is not an abstract term but includes, among other things, “the active and equal participation of women,” universal social protection, health coverage and universal Internet access as a “basic human right.”

To complement the social contract, the report calls for a new global deal to enhance the governance of the global commons and global public goods. While this is vital, as we argue in the “[Beyond UN75](#)” report, a new global deal should put to use a new social contract, including through global, regional, national and community-level plans for broad-based, green recovery from the pandemic and related policies, programs and funding.

Institutionally, the report must be praised for its various suggestions to create a United Nations 2.0 (for which we have further ideas in our report “[UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance 75 Years beyond San Francisco](#)”). For instance, “Our Common Agenda” links the overdue repurposing of the Trusteeship Council, which has been inactive since 1994, to the bold proposal of turning it into a “multi-stakeholder body to tackle emerging challenges and, especially, to serve as a deliberative forum to act on behalf of succeeding generations.”

In reforming the global economy, the proposal for a biennial summit among the members of the G20, Ecosoc (the UN’s Economic and Social Council), the secretary-general and the heads of the international financial institutions is equally welcome. However, even here one could go a step further and, as we [proposed recently](#), assemble a G20+ “at the Heads of State level every two years at UN Headquarters, timed to coincide with the gathering of all world leaders at the start of the UN General Assembly.”

A 2023 Summit of the Future

Together, the above and other far-reaching ideas — and the analysis underpinning them — create the basis for what may be viewed as the secretary-general’s most consequential proposal: a Summit of the Future, timed to coincide with the General Assembly’s high-level week in September 2023. Preceded by preparatory events and consultations, the summit would work to “advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in this report, and potentially others. . . . “

As argued in “[Beyond UN75](#),” the genius of such a holistic, intergovernmental process for global governance innovation is that it could generate meaningful results through deal-

To challenge his own ideas and offer member states in their pre-summit deliberations fresh thinking on the institutional and legal arrangements that are needed to better provide global public goods, Guterres will also convene a high-level advisory board, led by former heads of state or government. Ideally, this group could engage with select government and civil society representatives, as well as leading scholars, in a series of Track 1.5, off-the-record global policy dialogues timed to precede preparatory meetings. In addition to challenging conventional assumptions and helping to reframe narratives to overcome potential spoilers, each dialogue could emphasize — based on the findings of independently commissioned policy briefs — the need for creative and actionable proposals that would hold world leaders and international institutions accountable.

A more inclusive, networked and effective system of global governance for better coping with the challenges of current and future generations while seizing new opportunities is within our reach, but time is running short. Going forward, the international community must draw strength from the representative legitimacy — but also ideas and capabilities — of diverse state and nonstate actors. Meaningful change is possible, though making headway on this global road ahead will require imagination, persistence and, most of all, courage.



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2 thoughts on “UN’s Guterres Proposes a 2023 Summit of the Future in ‘Our Common Agenda’ Report”



Robert Kesten

September 14, 2021 at 10:26 am

In 1994 the United Nations approved the UN Decade on Human Rights Education. It offered the opportunity for the world to reconsider Human Rights, not just a pillar of the UN (one of three), but as the very foundation that the other pillars stand on.

The UDHR is the “Common Agenda” as it provides the tools needed for individuals to live successfully in society, even when there are vehement disagreements. It allows for the dignity of every woman, man, youth, and child...enfranchising us and giving us a reason to work for and be part of our world’s success.

We no more have to reinvent the wheel than we need to set up another group within the UN to consider how to solve global problems. The problem we have is that the solutions, as simple as they are (follow the 30 articles) difficult. Governments continually ask their people to surrender human rights for survival, it is a false premise that makes governing easier, but life more difficult. It enflames the public over time and makes our world less safe, domestically and globally.

Why is it that we keep coming back to square one? It is because after 73 years of the UDHR almost no one on the planet knows of it. Why is that? Because governments do very little to let the people know and claim their rights. Why? Because then government does not have to protect and defend them.

Human beings, and bureaucrats are good at building walls, and creating new organizations and committees to hide behind, but reality will continue to stare us in the face that we can do better, and the tools that have been in place since 1948 are still the best tools we have.

The democracies of this planet are fragile, no one believes the autocrats are going to honestly participate in a “new” roundtable to help sustain them. Yes, we learned

We saw, over this period, that it is possible to topple governments, threaten elections validity, abuse the mass media, both conventional and electronic...and that social media carries messages no matter how harmful they are. The United Nations summit will not stop tyrants from moving forward with their plans, it will not even slow them down. It will not bring us trust and solidarity.

Let us take up the banner that there are no “basic” human rights, as ALL Human Rights are basic. Let us integrate what we have into the very fabric of society and culture, let us challenge government to protect and defend the human rights of people everywhere as their mandate. Let us change the paradigm while there is still time to save ourselves and our planet.

The pickup trucks with waving flags that took to the streets and avenues in the United States during the 2020 election cycle were no different than those that flew over hills and dales in Afghanistan as the government there fell. They are funded by the same sources, or at least believers in the same goals and objectives. Let us not fool ourselves into believing another roundtable is the solution, we have the solution, now we have to come up with actions that support them. The people must be brought in, the people must have the information they need to make intelligent and thought out decisions about their future, their nation’s futures, and the world.

We have as small a window on the democracy and diplomatic front as we do on the environmental front. Both will lead to a mass extinction if we fail.

[Reply](#)



Hon. Dr. Ricardo Meneses Pilonieta

September 19, 2021 at 8:25 pm

Los nuevos tiempos requieren de una mayor participación y planificación (Global de alto nivel), para enfrentar los retos y superar la crisis que enfrenta la

humanidad con la aparición del COVI 19 y todas las manifestaciones que han derivado a partir de su existencia

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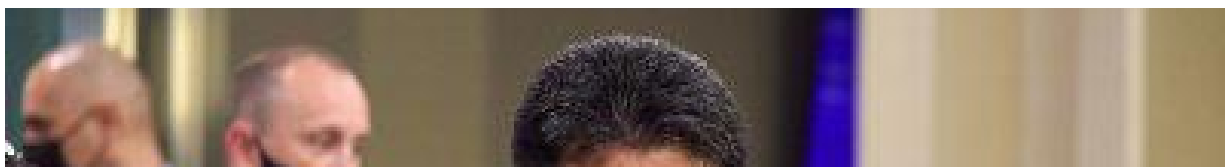




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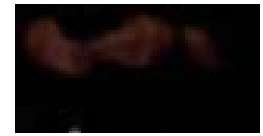


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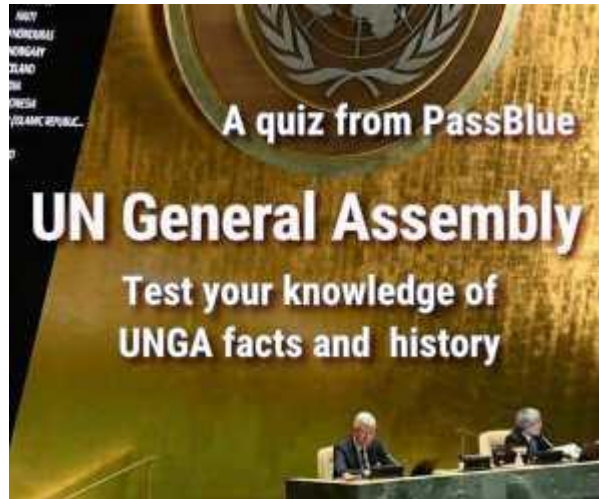
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