

Vision Statement

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Reasserting, Reforming, and Rallying Our United Nations

Article 97 of the United Nations Charter defines the role of the United Nations Secretary General as ‘Chief Administrative Officer’, with a mandate to oversee and implement the decisions of Member States. At this critical juncture, when the United Nations faces an unprecedented array of complex challenges, the Secretary General’s vision for the next five years must be practical and realistic.

Meeting this moment requires steady leadership and strategic judgement. Faithful to the Charter, the next Secretary General must work in partnership with Member States in *reasserting* the UN’s core principles and purposes; *reforming* its systems and practices; and, together, *rallying* towards the goal of a more agile and effective United Nations, capable of delivering across all three pillars of the Organization – peace and security, development, and human rights.

The next Secretary General must be proactive in engaging Member States, including to ensure that the United Nations is not on the periphery of issues that have global impact but asserts its presence in pursuit of the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

An effective Secretary General in today’s context must possess two essential strengths: discernment and versatility. She must be an administrator, peacemaker, mediator, broker, negotiator, convenor and spokesperson. More importantly, she must be able to discern which role is most appropriate in any given situation. While timely responses are critical, expediency must be tempered by careful consideration of actions that would yield meaningful results.

Reasserting

Over the past 80 years, the United Nations has delivered. From 51 Member States at its formation to 193 today, the influence and impact of the UN’s work are felt by every country.

From decolonization to dispute resolution; from the safety of our skies to regulating the use of our oceans; from poverty reduction and disease prevention to improved access to education; from cultural preservation to environmental protection; from frontline

humanitarian responses to advancing human rights for all – our United Nations has delivered. One of its greatest contributions is its role in setting the norms and standards to which we all aspire and agree to live by.

In all of this, multilateralism has triumphed, with the Charter of the United Nations at the center of our actions.

Today, as the UN faces mounting challenges and criticisms, we must reassert these ideals; the Charter remains relevant and multilateralism indispensable.

The United Nations is all of us – the 193 Member States who decide on its mandates and the team of dedicated staff who carry out these decisions. The responsibility of ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness is shared by all, and the Secretary General has a pivotal role in ensuring timely interventions, delivery on mandates, and prudent resource management.

As chief spokesperson of the Organization, she must communicate with clarity the breadth of the achievements of the UN, its challenges, as well as ongoing modernization efforts to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. This is crucial in strengthening visibility, mobilizing widespread support and resources for the UN's work, and in countering misinformation and disinformation which undermine public trust in the Organization.

Peace and Security

As conflicts proliferate, one of the main criticisms of the UN is its perceived inability to end or prevent conflicts. Millions continue to suffer the horrific consequences of war, including high levels of food insecurity. Humanitarian needs have increased exponentially while resources are shrinking. UN personnel are operating in increasingly challenging and dangerous environments.

The Secretary General must be proactive in seeking solutions, exploring all options, and willing to recalibrate when necessary. This involves engaging parties to the conflict and other stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations. All available tools must be used towards conflict prevention and resolution, including anticipatory decision making and foresight, to enable the Secretary General to bring to the early attention of the Security Council matters which may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated in Article 99 of the UN Charter. The availability and willingness of the Secretary General to use her good offices in furtherance of solutions to global challenges, including disputes that threaten international peace and security, must never be in doubt.

In peacekeeping, there is an emerging consensus that traditional models must be expanded to meet contemporary challenges to peace and security. As Member States consider options for the future of UN peacekeeping, we must recall that peacekeeping is not an end in itself. Simultaneously, there must be efforts towards sustainable political solutions. The Secretary General, working with all relevant parties, must be prepared to present recommendations to the Security Council to move these political processes forward. Successive generations should not perceive the presence of peacekeeping missions in their communities as the norm. It must be understood as a temporary bridge to reduce violence, support the political process, and ultimately move from conflict to durable peace.

Development

The deficit in advancing the development agenda is in implementation.

Meanwhile, persistent global poverty, food insecurity, the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, unsustainable debt in many countries, and increased and protracted conflicts continue to define the global development landscape and drive inequalities.

Member States adopted Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the global blueprint for sustainable development, and more recently, the Pact for the Future, which provided additional impetus to accelerate their implementation. Critical to implementation is access to finance as only 18% of the SDGs are on track to be achieved by 2030.

While trillions exist globally in potential financing, many developing countries continue to struggle with access. There has also been a profound shift in the risk landscape characterized by interconnected threats and climate-related challenges.

Working with Member States and building on ongoing efforts, the new Secretary General must champion the implementation of existing commitments, including the Sevilla Commitment and advocate for structural reform of the international financial architecture. Engagement with other stakeholders, including the private sector, must also be a priority in finding creative approaches to financing, mobilizing resources, promoting investments, and building resilience.

In addition, there must be continued support to Member States as they implement agreed commitments related to climate change. The Secretary General must use the convening power of her office to bring all stakeholders together to address climate impacts and protect the environment.

At country level, the Resident Coordinator System has improved UN delivery, internal coordination, and the efficient use of resources. As UN80 deliberations progress, the Secretary General, together with Member States, must ensure that development gains are not reversed and the focus remains on strengthening the RC system.

Human Rights

Human rights and human dignity must remain at the center of the UN's work across all pillars and institutions.

The Secretary General must be an unwavering advocate for human rights, non-discrimination and gender equality. Promoting universalization of human rights treaties, compliance with treaty obligations, accountability, widespread human rights education and public awareness must be prioritized.

When conflicts arise and development suffers, there is a direct impact on human rights. The Secretary General must ensure that human rights are upheld across the work of the United Nations, including in peace operations, humanitarian responses, and development programmes.

As new threats to human rights emerge in the digital space, including through the misuse of artificial intelligence, the UN must continue to discuss risks and consider potential frameworks to ensure rights are respected online and offline. The impacts on children and youth must be specially considered. All relevant stakeholders, including member States, the private sector and tech companies, must be part of efforts to ensure protection of human rights in the digital era.

Simultaneously, the UN must be innovative in using digital technologies to promote respect for human rights.

Reforming

The UN80 reform agenda, led by Member States and the Secretary-General, recognizes the urgent need for systemwide reform, improved efficiency in the Secretariat, mandate implementation review, and structural and programmatic realignment. Once completed, the reforms should result in a more streamlined UN that is better positioned to execute its functions.

The next Secretary General will have the responsibility of guiding the organization in implementing the UN80 reforms, and in so doing, must provide Member States with

timely information on where the implementation of specific reforms would result in decreased delivery, in particular, where the most vulnerable would be affected.

The Secretary General must ensure that mandates are continuously reviewed and be the voice of realism, given the UN's financial and human resource capacities.

Reform must be ongoing. As the UN strives for operational efficiency, the Secretary-General, working in partnership with Member States, must lead regular introspection to identify gaps, areas for adjustments, and opportunities for advancement, taking into account the evolving needs of Member States and technological developments.

UN staff are the organization's greatest asset and staff welfare is critical to ensuring effective delivery. In the reformed UN, human resource capacities must align with needs. Recruitment and retention must be guided by this need for alignment.

Rallying

The United Nations remains the premier multilateral forum for meaningful diplomatic engagement, consensus building, international cooperation, and global action. Member States have repeatedly reaffirmed their belief in and commitment to upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Despite challenges, multilateralism remains vibrant. Across the UN's organs, funds, programmes, and specialized agencies, Member States continue to negotiate for the betterment of the world and its people. The Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the Convention against Cybercrime are two recent examples of multilateralism at work.

No country is seeking to leave the UN, and the lineup for the non-permanent seats on the Security Council spans decades to come. This is a tangible demonstration of the belief in the UN and its ability to deliver for the world's people.

A people-centered approach must guide all UN actions in strengthening trust and inspiring hope. In this regard, engagement with the world's youth is crucial for imbuing current and future generations with belief in the UN's purposes and principles, pride in its achievements, and conviction about their role in realizing its full potential.

The Secretary General must also be the spokesperson for the world's most vulnerable. Persons in conflict settings, disasters, humanitarian emergencies, and other vulnerable situations must have confidence that their Secretary General is rallying support and relief for them.

The Secretary General must continue to advocate for respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as the foundation for global order, peace and stability.

The UN Secretary General must work with Member States and all stakeholders, to promote the vital work of the UN and leverage joint capacities. In this context, a more effective United Nations also depends on stronger and deeper cooperation with regional organizations to advance peace, security and development.

My Pledge

As Minister of Amerindian Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, I have worked in partnership with the United Nations to deliver to the Guyanese people in several areas. My tenure at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization afforded me the opportunity to serve the wider international community and expanded my appreciation for the work of the dedicated staff of FAO, and the wider UN, especially those serving in the field under difficult circumstances. As Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, working together with representatives of Member States and the Secretariat across processes in the General Assembly and in the Security Council, I have seen firsthand the deep commitment to multilateralism.

The value of the UN and its impact on people's lives globally are unparalleled, and multilateralism is undoubtedly the cornerstone for advancing peace, security and sustainable development.

It is with this conviction that I offer myself as a candidate to be the next Secretary General of the United Nations who will:

- strictly adhere to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.
- operate on the basis of impartiality, integrity and independence,
- be accessible to Member States and ready to engage with all,
- build a competent UN team that is geographically representative, gender balanced, inclusive and equipped with the requisite experience and skills,

- guide the UN in adapting to the digitally evolving environment, ready to innovate and utilize technology in the UN's work as appropriate, and
- work in partnership with Member States, regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and all other stakeholders in the pursuit of development, peace and security and the promotion of human rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. R. Birkett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett