

Media Update-2

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United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL PRESS STAKEOUT

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

PRESS STAKEOUT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO A SECOND TERM OF OFFICE New York, 18 June 2021

Ladies and gentlemen of the media, Thank you very much for your presence.

It is an enormous pleasure to be with all of you today.

I am humbled but also energized by today's decision of the General Assembly.

I take on the responsibility of serving a second term as Secretary-General with profound gratitude and a deep commitment to work together to advance the UN Charter at a time of great peril and promise.

We are at a crossroads, with consequential choices before us.

It can go either way: breakdown or breakthrough.

Breakdown and perpetual crisis — or breakthrough leading to a greener, safer and better future for all.

I will do everything in my power to push for breakthroughs.

I believe there are reasons to be hopeful.

The pandemic has revealed our shared vulnerability, our interconnectedness and the absolute need for collective action.

Our biggest challenge — and at the same time our greatest opportunity — is to use this crisis as a chance to turn things around, to pivot to a world that learns its lessons, recovers fairer, greener and more sustainably, and forges ahead with much more effective global cooperation to address global concerns.

The Vision Statement I presented lays out the details for my second term.

The driving theme is prevention — prevention in all its aspects — from conflict, climate change, pandemics to poverty and inequality.

Indeed, our success in finding solutions to interlinked problems depends on our ability to anticipate, prevent and prepare for major risks to come.

That means more innovation, more inclusion and more foresight.

It means more investment in the global public goods that sustain us all.

All of this requires a reinvigorated multilateralism for the new era, based on principles of equity and solidarity.

Drilling down, I see ten inter-related imperatives for action.

It starts with mounting a massive and enduring response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences.

Our single most immediate test will be effectively overcoming COVID-19 and equipping the world to prevent and be better prepared for future pandemics and other existential threats.

Yet again, we see developing and many middle-income countries being left behind. They require massive support.

The virus is spreading faster than vaccines.

We need an all-out effort to ensure vaccines for everyone everywhere — and we need it now.

Second, we must leave no stone unturned in the search for peace and security.

This is fundamental in an increasingly fragmented peace and security context, impacted by geopolitical divides and the constantly changing nature of conflicts.

Third, we need to make peace with nature and press for climate action.

Our world faces a triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution. This triple crisis is our number one existential threat. We need an urgent, all-out effort to turn things around.

Fourth, we must turbocharge the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and a more equitable world.

The struggle against inequality is at the core of a new globalization that is fairer, more inclusive, sustainable and human-centric. We will advance our efforts to integrate work within the UN system that straddles across peace and security, sustainable development and humanitarian action, firmly underpinned by human rights.

Fifth, human rights must be central.

My Call to Action for Human Rights lays out a pathway for mainstreaming a human rights culture and prism within the UN.

Sixth, we must take gender equality to the next level.

Gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls are the most prevalent injustice across the globe. The world needs a new push for women's leadership and equal participation.

I will build on our progress in promoting gender equality in all areas of our work.

Seventh, we must rise to the challenge of digital transformation.

Advances in technology and science have left no aspect of life untouched. We are all faced with a digital divide that is turning into a digital Grand Canyon. The aim must be an open, free and secure digital future. Our digital roadmap launched last year points the way.

Eighth, we will advance multilateralism and our common agenda.

A future of peace and problem solving requires an embrace of international cooperation and solidarity.

In September, responding to the UN75 Declaration, I will present a report on how to advance "our common agenda" to address present and future challenges.

Ninth, we will embark on a United Nations 2.0 — building on our reform efforts to date, we will strive for a more integrated, cohesive and joined up UN that also actively brings in outside networks.

Tenth, and underpinning all our efforts, is the focus on people — bettering the lives of individuals, families and communities. Reaffirming the dignity and worth of the human person. Rekindling a strong commitment to shared and enduring values.

The Charter lights the way.

I pledge to honour it every day to restore trust and to inspire hope.

Thank you very much.

**Questions and Answers

Spokesman: Thank you. Edie Lederer, Associated Press.

Question: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary-General, and congratulations on your re-election for a second term.

You said in your speech that you were going to try to make the impossible possible. How are you planning to go and try and do that? How can that be achieved?

Secretary-General: We are facing a number of dramatic fragilities - the pandemic but also climate change and biodiversity loss, lawlessness in cyberspace, the geopolitical divides. And it is clear that these challenges must be addressed, bringing together our capacity to work at a global level.

This is a time to strengthen multilateralism. This is a time to understand that each country alone can do nothing, that independently of the divisions that exist, countries must come together. And this was a central message that I conveyed today. To rebuild trust is the way to make the impossible possible.

If we remain divided, the impossible will remain impossible, and the fragilities of this world will translate themselves into bigger suffering for the people, especially the most vulnerable of the vulnerable.

Spokesman: Sherwin Bryce-Pease, South African.

Question: Secretary-General, congratulations.

Secretary-General: Thank you.

Question: Two questions for you, one probably more complicated than the other. Vaccine inequity has been broadly acknowledged here. What can the world do now to ensure that the 1 billion that was pledged by the G7 becomes the 11 billion that the World Health Organization (WHO) seeks?

And secondly, who's going to be your Deputy Secretary-General in your second term?

Secretary-General: Well, it's very simple. [Laughter]

First of all, in relation to the first question, we have many initiatives, but what we need is to bring those initiatives together and to scale up. So, that is the reason why I've been saying that we need - and I told it to the G7 summit just a few days ago - we need a global vaccination plan. And to have a global vaccination plan, my suggestion is to create an emergency task force at G20 level with the governments of all countries that produce vaccines or can produce vaccines, if technology is made available, supported by WHO, by

Gavi, by international financial institutions, WTO (World Trade Organization), and being able to deal with the pharma, in order to make sure that this plan is designed to make vaccines available to everybody everywhere sooner rather than later, which means doubling the production capacity, having an equitable distribution, and supporting states to administer the vaccines when they get them and, third, that this plan is not only designed but is effectively implemented.

We need to align power and leadership. Unfortunately, in today's world, many times, those that have power have no leadership, and those that have leadership have no power. To vaccinate everybody everywhere, we need to make sure that the power that is essentially in the governments and the countries that have the capacity to produce vaccines and in the companies that produce them. We need to make sure that this power is aligned with effective leadership for vaccination to be everywhere.

Now, after being elected, I had the pleasure to invite the Deputy Secretary-General to remain in my second mandate, and I hope she'll accept.

Correspondent: Yay! [Laughter]

Deputy Secretary-General: Absolute honour.

Secretary-General: And by the way, the same invitation was addressed to the *Chef de Cabinet*. [Laughter]

Spokesman: Elena, Portuguese News Agency.

Question: [In Portuguese] Boa tarde, muitos parabéns pela re-eleição. Eu queria perguntar, nas suas prioridades tem, de longo prazo, pôr as pessoas no centro da actividade das Nações Unidas? Qual é a sua mensagem de esperança de curto prazo para as pessoas que caíram na pobreza durante a pandemia, aquelas que vivem no Brasil, nas favelas pobres, aquelas que ficaram desalojadas em Moçambique ou em Timor-Leste, ou até os idosos que estão esquecidos em Portugal – qual é a sua mensagem de curto prazo, de esperança, para eles?

Secretary-General: [In Portuguese] A minha mensagem é clara – é absolutamente indispensável que, em toda a parte, os governos que estão a mobilizar enormes recursos para a reconstrução e a recuperação das economias o façam de uma maneira que é inclusiva e sustentável. Isto quer dizer que as desigualdades que dramaticamente foram aumentadas pelo COVID-19 têm que ser enfrentadas de uma vez por todas. Porque um mundo desigual é um mundo que se torna irrespirável, é um mundo em que a paz não pode ser mantida, é um mundo em que o sofrimento se espalha de

uma forma verdadeiramente trágica. Este é o momento de reconhecer que o combate às desigualdades é um prioridade, e essa é a mensagem que eu dirijo aos governos e com essa mensagem aos governos, uma mensagem de esperança em relação aos pobres que são vítimas dessa desigualdade.

Question: [In Portuguese] Os desfavorecidos, o que é que eles podem esperar nas próximas duas semanas, a curto prazo, alguma coisa vai mudar?

Secretary-General: [In Portuguese] Bem, nas próximas duas semanas provavelmente não mudará muita coisa porque é necessário alterar as estratégias que até este momento têm vindo a ser postas em prática em relação à recuperação das economias e fazer com que essas estratégias sejam muito mais justas e que os recursos que têm existido à disposição dos países mais ricos possam ser postos também à disposição dos países mais pobres, que infelizmente não têm a mesma capacidade no presente momento de investir nas respectivas populações e nas suas necessidades.

Spokesman: Kristen Salomey, Al Jazeera.

Question: Congratulations, Secretary-General.

Spokesman: Your mask, please. Thank you.

Question: Congratulations...

Secretary-General: It's not because I can't understand what you say, because I'm deaf... [Cross talk]

Question: No, I know. It's so difficult. This afternoon, the General Assembly is expected to pass a resolution on Myanmar, if all goes according to its sponsors' plans. Given your emphasis on multilateralism and given the Security Council's inability to act on this issue and other issues, do you see a... what do you see as the role for the General Assembly in this new order, in this new call to come together? Thank you.

Secretary-General: [In Portuguese] A minha posição em relação a Myanmar tem sido muito clara. [Cross talk]

Spokesman: In English.

Secretary-General: Sorry. In English. [Laughter] I was going on. [Laughter]

My position, in relation to Myanmar, is very clear. We absolutely must create the conditions for democracy to be reinstated, even if it was not a perfect democracy -- we all know, the military already had a strong presence in the institutions beyond the popular vote -- democracy to be reinstated,

those that were be put in prison to be liberated, and for the horrible violations of human rights and the killings that have taken place to stop.

And I hope that the General Assembly will be able to send a very clear message in this direction, because we cannot live in a world where military coups become a norm. It is totally unacceptable.

Spokesman: Thank you. We're going to squeeze one last one in, Mainichi.

Question: Thank you very much, Secretary-General... [Cross talk]

Spokesman: Your mask, please. Sorry.

Question: Oh. Thank you very much... [Cross talk]

Secretary-General: You can take it off.

Question: ... and congratulations.

Secretary-General: Thank you.

Question: I was wondering, what lesson did you learn in your first term? And what would you like do differently following that in your upcoming term? Thank you.

Secretary-General: Well, there are many lessons that we learned, but the most important lesson is that alone we can do nothing. The most important lesson is that we need to rebuild solidarity and trust, and if there is something I need to do better in the second term, it is to make sure that I do everything I can to rebuild trust, trust among governments, trust between people in the institutions and trust in the United Nations.

Spokesman: Thank you.

Secretary-General: May I just say a final word. You represent the media, and I want to say that, in my second mandate as today, I can see that the freedom of press an absolutely essential basis for fair ... world order and that I'll do everything I can in order to make sure that the rights of journalists everywhere are fully respected and that we end this dramatic situation we are facing today where so many journalists are persecuted just because they speak the truth and where some have, unfortunately, even lost their lives.

So, thank you very much for your work, and please convey to your colleagues a very strong message of solidarity. Thank you.

[Press Conference concludes at 11:04 a.m.]