



The UN & You

BY TERESA KOTTURAN SCN – JUNE 2020

United Nations marks 75 years

One could rightfully say, the United Nations rose out of the ashes of the Second World War. The UN Charter was signed by 50 of the 51 world leaders gathered in San Francisco on June 26, 1945. The Preamble of the UN Charter proclaims:

We the Peoples of the United Nations determined to save

succeeding generations from the scourge of war... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small... to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims...

Today, the UN at 75 is facing profound challenges: a global health crisis with severe economic and social impacts, a crisis of democracy and multilateralism, rise of populist nationalism and protests against systemic racism. Over the past 75 years, the UN has played a crucial role in developing a body of international law—conventions, treaties and standards—central to the promotion of social, economic, and environmen-

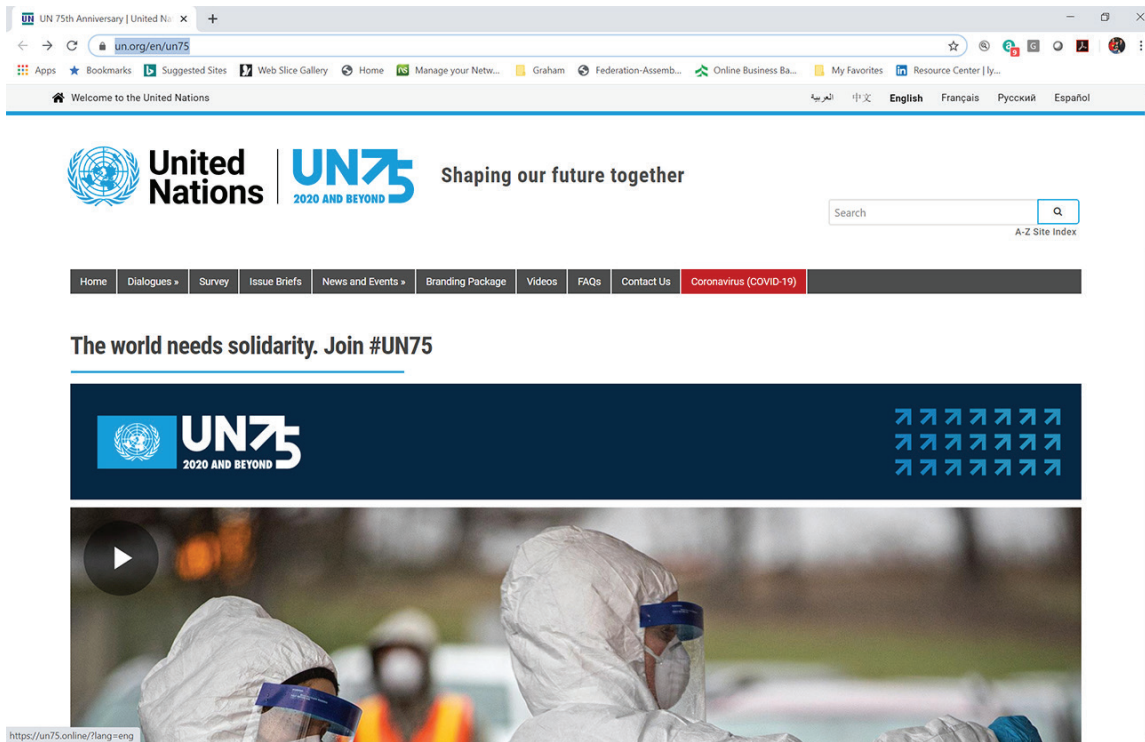


tal development as well as to advancing international peace and security. It provided a platform for the voices of small nations to be heard. It has succeeded in preventing the outbreak of a third world war, limiting the arms race, and reducing hunger, disease, and illiteracy.

There is reason to celebrate the achievements of the UN, but we need to ask: Is the UN equipped to deal with the global challenges, to put the agenda of people and planet in the forefront to “leave no one behind” while upholding the dignity and human rights of all people? The voices of “we the peoples” are being silenced and space for their engagements limited by Member States. The 75th anniversary is an opportunity for charting transformative next steps, for critical reform to make the UN a platform for cooperation and a people-centered multilateralism.

The UN 2020 initiative, a coalition of “Civil Society Partnerships for the UN We Need,” dedicated to strengthen the UN system released a “UN75 People’s Declaration and Plan for Global Action” during the virtual forum on May 14–15, 2020. It was presented to the President of the UN General Assembly, who in turn circulated it to all Member States. (Six hundred civil society participants from 75 countries joined the virtual forum.) The declaration proposes global solutions for global challenges; how to create an enabling environment; a plan for global action for the UN we

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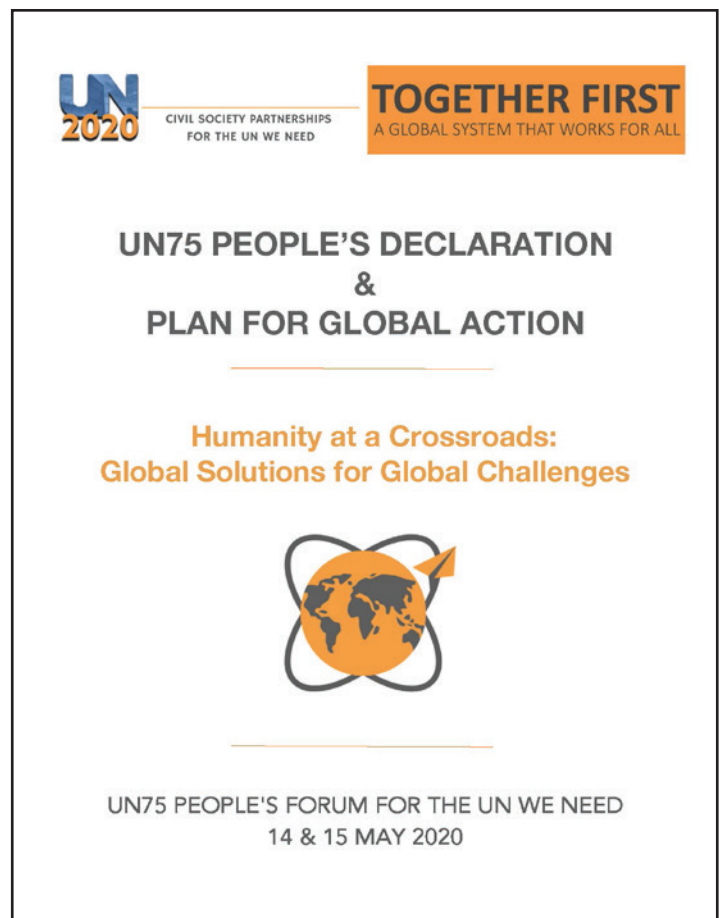


need create; a people's commitment and recommendations for the Member States and the UN.

For an enabling environment, the following are some of the preconditions the civil society members are demanding: Good governance, Peaceful and Inclusive societies, Dignity and human rights, Equal opportunity, Trust, Education, Prosperity, Financing, and Implementation of International agreements made. For the 'UN we need to create the world we want,' "We the Peoples" will recommit themselves for continued and robust engagement to find solutions for the pressing global problems... and to support the UN and Member States to strengthen global governance and encourage governments to meet political commitments they have made. It is time for the UN to launch a coherent strategy to 'realize the vision of the UN Charter and open a new chapter of partnerships for peace, justice, equality, dignity and sustainability.' We all have a role to play in shaping the future of the United Nations

How can you engage in the UN75 celebrations?

- Read the UN75 People's Declaration & Plan for Global Action: [Humanity at a Crossroads: Global Solutions for Global Challenges](#)
- [Endorse the People's Declaration](#), either as an organization or as an individual
- Watch (video): UN75 People's Forum UN75 People's Declaration and Plan for Global Action <https://youtu.be/vF7lZxIB4xk>



- Watch (video): UN75 People's Forum, Day 1: The Future We Want <https://youtu.be/3It2N7jhhlQ>