

OCA Discussion Series 1 Summary - Summit of the Future: Aspirations and possibilities
Thursday, 5 May 2022 8:30 – 10:00 a.m
866 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 and Virtual via Zoom

Welcome and Opening Remarks - María Fernanda Espinosa, Co-Chair of the Coalition for the UN We Need

- This moment of intersecting and cascading crises can drive us to redouble our efforts toward building a multilateral system built on justice and trust.
- Market incentives, tribalisms, gender and other forms of inequality, exaggerated notions of sovereignty in an interconnected world are all forces working against solidarity. What signs beyond a pandemic, climate crisis, or state-sponsored conflict are needed to drive us to overcome these forces?
- We have an opportunity to make the Summit of the Future (SoF) the next milestone moment in the history of the UN. Such moments do not happen in a vacuum. They require open deliberation, consensus, and a whole-of-society approach.

Lead-Off Speakers

H.E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Spain

- Global problems need global approaches; we need a strong and effective multilateral system.
- Central to *Our Common Agenda* (OCA) are digitalization and a new social contract. Justice is also central, including an equitable distribution of financial and other resources.
- Four preconditions to establishing a truly common agenda: 1. Accelerate vaccinations; 2. Tackle the debt crisis; 3. Finance the Global South; 4. Tackle the impending food crisis.
- Moving forward, we need 1. An objective description of our situation; 2. A clear-eyed view of the scenarios we have to cope with; 3. To define what future we want.
 - We need a modality resolution on how Civil Society will participate in the SoF.
 - We need a system of co-facilitation for the SoF based on building consensus.
- Needed at the UN: 1. Strong flows of information about local conditions, including through the resident coordinator system; 2. Sufficient and predictable budget; 3. Digitalization and revitalization of the GA; 4. Reform of the Security Council.
- Conclusion: A call for action: 1. Claim and defend the role of civil society; 2. Support the Secretary-General's role in the OCA process; 3. Defend Multilateralism

Dr. Azza Karam, Member of the High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism

- Civil society actors need to reexamine the nature of relationships between themselves, if they are to hold governments accountable or reform the multilateral system.
- Civil Society actors must lead by example and be inclusive of the diversity of paradigms and perspectives that are found in Civil Society.
- Need to integrate the views of religious communities and institutions, which are some of the largest social security providers and first responders.

- Religious communities and organizations have much room for growth in continuing to learn how to work together constructively and function as sources of cooperation and collaboration.

Points from Plenary Discussion

- Multilateralism and OCA
 - Global problems need global solutions. To be effective, solutions have to be enforced. For institutions to be legitimate, the people elected to them have to have to be held accountable.
 - National sovereignty is the wrong tool for tackling global problems; more expansive approaches are needed today.
 - In the "United Nations", emphasis is often placed on the "nations", but more priority needs to be placed on Member States being increasingly "united" in their understanding of the facts of global challenges and their assessment of action to be taken in response.
 - In addition to other elements, OCA should be an environmental and economic agenda.
- Summit of the Future
 - We need to say *how* to attain the world we want (including the process), not just describe it.
 - Advancing Agenda 2030 will need to be central to the SoF.
 - SoF needs to have robust space for and participation of Civil Society.
- Experience and role of Civil Society
 - Civil Society actors are facing repression, reduced funding, reduced representation at the UN, etc, which makes it difficult to play its proper role. Civil Society needs safeguards and freedom to carry out its work, regardless of context, including in relation to authoritarian governments.
 - Perhaps the focus should not be on Civil Society working internally, but on calling on institutions to empower Civil Society, which is often marginalized, suppressed, and under pressure.
 - Civil society actors have a range of views on the desirability and potential impact of a CS focal point.
- Inclusivity
 - Importance of engaging women at every level.
 - Accessibility for persons with disabilities is important in all systems and at all levels.
 - Need young people at the decision-making table. The world we want should be the world youth want.
 - Many organizations work in networks. How to ensure structures of participation don't discriminate against organizations from the global South?
 - Importance of focusing on increasing the role of values in discussions, whether religious, social, or both.
- Digitalization
 - Digitalization should be a source for global governance innovation. It can and should also serve to increase participation in decision-making processes, particularly among historically marginalized groups.
- High-level Advisory Board
 - Visit highleveladvisoryboard.org to view statements from co-chairs delineating the issues the board is focusing on.

