WE WILL BUILD TRUST

"Growing inequality within and among countries is jeopardizing our efforts to ensure the future we want. Inequality leads to mistrust between countries and to people's mistrust in institutions of governance. It contributes to acts of xenophobia, racism, intolerance, hate speech and disinformation. We condemn all such acts. We will address the root causes of inequalities, including violence, human rights abuses, corruption, marginalization, discrimination in all its forms, poverty and exclusion, as well as lack of education and employment. It is our responsibility."

United Nations General Assembly, "UN75 Declaration", September 2020, A/RES/75/1.

"Regain the trust of the people, address misinformation, hold drives, conferences, fundraisers to provide funds for solutions that will be introduced to address these problems. Create a better picture of the UN in the eyes of the world."

India's International Movement to UN, ages 16-30, mixed professions and genders.

UN75 DATA ON THIS COMMITMENT

UN75 dialogues

UN75 survey

Research snapshot

We organize the relevant UN75 data gathered across 2020 according to the UN75 Declaration's 12 commitments. For the full methodology, see the UN75 report "Shaping Our Future Together".

FROM THE UN75 DIALOGUES[1]

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Participants from around the world discussed the cumulative challenges they are experiencing that are leading to deep pessimism about our ability to address climate change and conflicts, and intensifying frustration at rising disparities in wealth and inequality, exacerbated during the pandemic. They talked about a crisis of trust in both governing institutions and among people within society. Trust was viewed as crucial to maintain social cohesion and advance development, as well as to secure the willingness of citizens to contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participants around the world **identified a growing breakdown of trust between individuals and governments and international institutions.** The failure of both national and international actors to deliver fast and positive change, the rise of corruption, widespread tax evasion, the diffusion of authoritarianism and extremism, and lack of accountability of government actors were identified as key factors undermining trust in governing bodies. Young people emphasized that insufficient accountability triggers the

loss of interest and engagement by young people in politics, which is consequently seen as either boring and not relevant to their present lives, or, at best, not something over which they have influence.

Participants in all regions discussed **the fast spread of fake news, attacks on cyber-security, and other threats to the privacy of governments and individuals.** They raised particular concerns about disinformation during election cycles.

Numerous dialogues held with young students in China, South Korea, and Norway raised the issue of technological advancements and mechanization. They expressed concern that new machines and artificial intelligence will replace the workforce of the future, in particular the jobs of low-wage workers. They expressed uncertainty about the future of the job market and workers' adaptability to the newly required skills. Many students saw technology as a major threat for future job markets, while others were confident that the younger generation would innovate to overcome future challenges.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Dialogue participants advocated for a world where they can trust their governing institutions, leaders, and media channels. They want governments to be held

accountable for their actions, to receive safe and clear communication from the media, and to have a stronger UN in the eyes of world citizens.

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1. This report contains a summary of the analysis of 1,141 UN75 dialogue summaries received from 94 countries between 2 January and 7 November 2020. The dialogue summaries were analyzed in partnership with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. For the full methodology, see the UN75 report "Shaping Our Future Together".

Participants in numerous dialogues, particularly young people from higher human development countries, called for a world in which their **governments stop operating solely in their national interest and start acting in the interests of international development.** They stressed that strengthening government institutions, transparency, democratic processes and accountability of leaders will be key for building sustainable solutions at the national and international levels.

Participants called for **a world with job creation, social protection, and worker rights, and where the wealthy are unable to exploit those creating value on their behalf.**

Workers and others demanded a world in which taxation is enforced, is fair, and from which equality is fostered.

Dialogues across regions emphasized **the need to fight misinformation and fake news, as well as to prevent violations against national, institutional, and individual security and privacy.** They underlined the importance of freedom of national media as a critical pillar of building trust.

"Today, we are living in a period of rapid changes, these changes will directly affect the future world of work. Innovation is one of the core driving forces of change. These changes will bring opportunities and challenges at the same time."

Dialogue organized by UN, China, ages 16-30, students, mixed genders.

HOW WE CAN GET THERE

In addition to the proposals relating to building trust identified in other Commitment summaries, participants proposed the following specific solutions for rebuilding trust at country levels and international levels.

Build accountability for the SDGs

Participants called on the UN and Member States to address international tensions driven by national economic, financial, and military interests, and to hold their leaders accountable in acting for global interests. In South Korea, participants advocated for the end of the US-China trade war, which was seen as exacerbating other international tensions in East Asia.

Participants asked governments to **tackle corruption and tax evasion:**

- The fight against tax-avoidance was underlined in relation to major actors in technology. Participants in Egypt proposed modernizing anti-trust policies to fight monopolies in e-commerce, IT and artificial intelligence.

- In the United States, participants advocated for a "new fiscal compact" to fight inequitable tax regimes and illicit financial flows from corruption and tax evasion.

- Other proposals included the introduction of wealth taxes, surtaxes on sectors making disproportionate profits, taxation of digital enterprises, and the promotion of fair corporate taxation that avoids profit shifting and tax avoidance.

Address misinformation and protect media freedom

Participants urged national governments, the media and UN organizations to **design laws to fight misinformation and disinformation in social media, especially during elections.** They also proposed introducing training on internet navigation and how to distinguish accurate internet sources, and exploring international standards and mechanisms for fact-checking online information. Young people in China suggested tech-driven innovations using big data to fight against fake news.

"Misinformation must be addressed at all levels and in all nations, and cyber-security precautions adopted, in order to maintain trust and to reduce the potential for belief in misinformation."

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland, ages 16-30, mixed professions, mostly women.

In Tajikistan, participants called on the **UN and non-governmental organizations to enforce laws that protect freedom of information**, including the protection of journalists from censorship and limitations applied by some governments. In one online dialogue, participants from around the world discussed the unbalanced media coverage of post-conflict settings, affirming that:

"the media does not cover post-conflict phases very well, which makes it hard to convey what peacekeeping missions are trying to do and the success they bring."

Online dialogue organized by UN Academic Impact, mixed ages and professions.

Apart from addressing structural governance issues threatening freedom of information, research that shows best practice for journalists can inform policy-making to ensure freedom of information. Participants also called for increased investments in education of journalism, including scholarships to support studies in critical journalism.

Build trust in the UN through increased outreach and communication about its work

Participants from around the world, and especially in Europe, stressed the need for the Secretary-General and the entire UN system to **improve the United Nations' communications by expanding public media outreach and ensuring impartial reporting across countries.**

Participants in numerous dialogues, including young participants, **encouraged the UN to improve its self-representation in traditional and new media.** Beyond serving only as a public relations exercise, this will serve to educate communities around the world about the importance of being responsible global citizens, and to keep youth and local actors updated on the UN's activities, and the impact of its work across sectors and regions. In Georgia, one participant suggested that:

"the UN Secretary-General should be more present in the media and more often talk directly to the press."

NGO Youth Initiative for Democracy, Georgia, ages 16-30, mixed professions.

One participant in Mongolia affirmed:

"The UN needs to increase and expand its public relation work by communicating and delivering its well-recognized and respected achievements."

Dialogue organized by UN Mongolia, ages 46-60, managers and professionals.

Young people stressed the need to increase the UN's presence on social media, where young social media users engage, and encourage them to participate in international policy processes and to do what they can in their communities to achieve common global goals and to address common global challenges.

Participants called on people working on diverse projects throughout the **United Nations system to collaborate more with local media to increase local engagement on global issues.** In Mongolia, participants proposed developing partnerships with specialized journalists and correspondents working on important global challenges, investing in scientific documentaries on sustainable development, and encouraging journalists to participate in the United Nation Volunteer programme to visit fragile areas to learn about and report on local aid efforts. In the United States, participants encouraged the UN Association to create a stronger base of online support through a website or database with easily accessible and digestible information about its activities.

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT[2]

Academic publications

- Boon & Mégret, eds (Europe) 2019 "Special Issue: The Accountability of International Organizations" International Organizations Law Review.

- Dellmuth, Scholte & Tallberg (Europe) 2019 "Institutional sources of legitimacy for international organisations: Beyond procedure versus performance" Review of International Studies.

- Hooghe, Lenz and Marks (Europe) 2018 "Contested world order: The deligitimation of international governance" The Review of International Organizations.

- Omrani (Northern Africa and Western Asia) 2016 "The Responsibility of the UN for the Actions of its Employees" al-Haqīqah Journal [Arabic].

- Tallberg, Bäckstrand & Scholte, eds (Europe) 2018 Legitimacy in Global Governance: Sources, Processes, and Consequences.

- Von Billerbeck (Europe) 2019 "'Mirror, Mirror On the Wall:' Self-Legitimation by International Organizations" International Studies Quarterly.

Policy research & reports

- Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Europe) 2020 The Art of Leadership in the UN: Framing What's Blue.

- Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Europe) 2020 The UN: A Champion for Youth?

- Security Council Report (Northern America) 2019 The Rule of Law: Retreat from Accountability.

- Chicago Council on Global Affairs (Northern America) 2019 Leading Change in UN Organizations.

- T20 Argentina (Latin America & Caribbean) 2020 Innovating Global Governance: bottom-up, the inductive approach.

Commentaries & opinion pieces

- The Hill 2020 "UN peacekeeping has a sexual abuse problem".

- OpinioJuris 2019 "International Organizations Accountability Symposium: Reputation and Accountability".

- Pew Research Center 2019 "UN gets mostly positive marks from people around the world".

Data resources & tools

- Affolder 2017 An Accountable UN Development System for the 21st Century (Study commissioned by the UN Economic and Social Council).

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020 World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World.

- UN Joint Inspection Unit 2020 Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the UN system organizations in strengthening the investigation function.

- UN Secretary-General 2020 "Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: A New Social Contract for a New Era" (Mandela Lecture).

2. This research snapshot includes a selection of top cited publications identified in the broader UN75 research mapping of academic and policy research focused on multilateralism, the United Nations, and the UN's areas of work, covering the six official UN languages. The research mapping was conducted in collaboration with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. For the full methodology, see the UN75 report "Shaping Our Future Together".