



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Embargoed until 1030 CET / 0430 EST, 8 January 2021

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# SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER: KEY FINDINGS OF UN75 SURVEY AND DIALOGUES

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## **More than 1.5 million people in 195 countries shared their short- and long-term priorities, their ideas for action and their calls for a more inclusive, transparent UN to lead the response to pressing global challenges**

In January 2020, Secretary-General António Guterres launched the yearlong UN75 initiative as an opportunity for the United Nations to listen to the people it serves. Through surveys and dialogues, more than 1.5 million people from all 193 United Nations Member States shared their hopes and fears for the future, and discussed how all actors, including the UN, can work together better to address the global challenges we face.

Through the UN75 initiative, the UN has sought to understand what are the issues citizens around the world perceive as most pressing. Key findings from the UN75 survey and dialogues include:

## **As COVID-19 reversed progress in human development and widened inequalities, many prioritized access to basic services and support to the hardest hit places and communities in the short-term**

- Amid a striking shortfall in healthcare to meet the needs generated by the pandemic, respondents' top immediate, short-term priority globally was 'Universal access to healthcare'.
- As COVID-19 forced children out of schools around the world, 'More investment in education and youth programmes' ranked high among respondents, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia.
- Reflecting the stark reality that three billion people lack a basic hand-washing facility with soap and water at home, 'Access to safe water and sanitation' was another critical immediate priority for respondents during the pandemic, across all human development levels.
- Many respondents, especially in low and middle income countries, prioritized 'Global solidarity and the need to provide 'Support to the hardest hit people and communities', and to 'Address inequalities that have deepened as a result of COVID-19.'
- Less respondents in Very High Human Development countries viewed 'Support to the hardest hit places' as a high priority.

## **Respondents living in lower human development countries and those living in conflict situations tended to express greater optimism about the future**

- Globally, many more respondents believed people will be better off (49%) in 2045 than today, compared with those who believe people will be worse off (32%).
- Respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa were the most optimistic about the future (59%), followed by Central and Southern Asia (52%), and Eastern and South-eastern Asia (51%). Respondents in Northern America (49%), Europe (48%), Latin America and the Caribbean (48%) and Oceania and Antarctica (47%) were most pessimistic about the future.
- Respondents in regions with lower human development countries were far more optimistic about the future than respondents in regions with higher human development countries. Respondents living in conflict situations were more optimistic about the future.



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### **While they expect access to health services to improve over the next 25 years, respondents in all regions identified climate change and environmental issues as the number one long-term global challenge**

- ‘More environmental protection’ is the number one long-term priority for respondents, globally, ranking in the top three priorities across all regions.
- The highest percentages of respondents who chose ‘Climate change and the environment’ as a top threat were in Latin America and the Caribbean (73%), while the lowest was in Sub-Saharan Africa (37%).

### **Other longer-term priorities vary according to income levels, but include rising concern with employment opportunities, respect for human rights and reducing conflict**

- While respondents in UNDP’s category of higher human development countries tended to give the highest priority to the environment and human rights, those in lower human development countries tended to accord the highest priority to less conflict and meeting basic needs, such as employment, healthcare and education.
- ‘More respect for human rights’ ranked number three globally as a long-term priority. It ranked number one in Northern Africa and Western Asia and number two in Northern America and Europe.
- ‘More employment opportunities’ rose from the tenth long-term priority identified by respondents in April 2020 to the sixth priority in December 2020. This may reflect the dramatic COVID-19 related workplace closures, working-hour and labour income losses.
- Reducing conflict is a high priority among respondents in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, Northern Africa and Western Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- While respondents in countries that are not in conflict are more concerned about tensions between countries, those in conflict situations are more concerned about violence within their borders.

### **97% of respondents believe that international cooperation is important for addressing global challenges, with variation in the degree of importance across regions**

- The majority of respondents believe that international cooperation is essential (52%) for addressing global challenges, while 34% believe it is very important, and 11% believe it is fairly important. Only 3% of respondents believe international cooperation is not important or not important at all.
- The degree of importance of international cooperation varies across regions, with the highest percentage of respondents who viewed it favorably from Northern America.
- Respondents in higher human development countries tend to perceive the need for international cooperation as greater than those in lower human development countries.
- A majority of respondents globally say that COVID-19 has increased their view of the importance for greater cooperation between countries.

### **Many respondents look to the United Nations to lead in international cooperation to address immediate and longer-term global challenges, and many also want the Organization to innovate – to be more inclusive, engaged, accountable and effective.**

In surveys and UN75 dialogues held around the world, participants called on the United Nations for:



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- Moral leadership.
- A reformed, more representative and more agile UN Security Council.
- A revised Charter that includes today's most pressing global challenges, like climate change.
- Continued management and leadership reforms, including more inclusive hiring practices, more accountability and more transparency.
- An inclusive and participatory UN system, with improved understanding of the work of the UN among citizens around the world, and which shows more care for the needs of ordinary people.
- Improved implementation, monitoring and evaluation of UN programmes globally, to more effectively solve international problems.