

'Multilateralism must Deliver'

The world is again at a crossroad, confronted with a danger of sliding into a downward spiral of unbridled contest and power politics. But there is an alternative. We must seize this moment to set the world on a new path, a path that will end the assault threatening the foundations of our very existence, particularly that of the most vulnerable amongst us. We have to craft a path that will lead us to an equitable, secure and sustainable system of global cooperation and renewed multilateral institutions, fit for purpose in the 21st century and resilient against future disasters.

COVID-19 is resurging. The pandemic has demonstrated the fragility and fissures in our societies. Many states have reacted in self-centered, sometimes shortsighted manner and our global institutions have been incapable of mustering the coordinated response essential to stem the pandemic and its rising tide.

Despite this stark reality we must turn this situation around. We must not just to build forward better for those devastated by COVID-19. We must salvage our increasingly menaced 75-year investment in global cooperation. As the G20 leaders stated in their Extraordinary Summit of March 2020 we must '...spare no effort, both individually and collectively, to protect lives; safeguard people's jobs and incomes; restore confidence, preserve financial stability, revive growth and recover stronger; minimize disruptions to trade and global supply chains; provide help to all countries in need of assistance; [and] coordinate on public health and financial measures'.

This is not a time for despondency, let alone for despair. This is time for collective leadership and strong willed action. We are not calling for re-tuning. It is time to shake the trees.

To do so, we are united by the following guiding principles:

- Multilateral cooperation is not an option, it is essential to the preservation of our societal values and the resolution of transnational challenges related to peace and security; economic and financial stability and growth; ecological sustainability, digital transformation; trade; pandemics and others.
- Humankind is capable of transcending existing challenges building bridges, re-establishing trust and working actively and responsibly to manage systemic global risks and transnational challenges to protect the Global Commons.
- Multilateral institutions require increased participation, inclusion, local ownership and capacity of all, from those most impacted by global challenges on the ground to civil society, labor unions, the private sector, State and non-State actors, all the way to the Security Council.
- A forward-looking, viable and people-centered strategy of pragmatic dialogue, solidarity and trust is crucial for a reinvigorated, inclusive and effective multilateralism.
- We will advocate for the needed reforms constructively, decisively and persistently until the multilateral system is transformed into a more responsive framework fit for 21st century purpose.

The magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis and its health, economic, social and political consequences make it easy to overlook the fact that this is really just one more example in a daunting catalogue of tests to our resilience. But as UNSG Guterres noted during the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, the upheaval has opened space for new approaches for multilateral cooperation, and ways to rise above the challenges to fulfill shared aims.

If we cannot exercise the resolve and visionary strategy evidenced by our predecessors 75 years ago, when the United Nations was established, we will simply not succeed in tackling the overwhelming challenges we are facing in this 21st century.

With the support of the expert practitioners and scholars who contributed to the preparation of our Policy Dialogue on '**Multilateralism that Delivers**', we, the Members of the Club de Madrid, offer the following actionable recommendations for the restoration of multilateral leadership on global challenges:

Leadership: Visionary and decisive leadership is essential to craft an *equitable, secure and sustainable* system where we can enjoy personal security, equitable opportunities and live within sustainable ecological boundaries. It is also indispensable to develop a coherent narrative that defines this vision and the means to achieve it, capitalising on our ability to rise above the challenges, and construct a world that will be resilient against future disasters. **We encourage the Alliance for Multilateralism, initiated by France and Germany in 2019 to help generate and nurture the leadership needed from major, middle powers and smaller countries alike from around the globe.**

Democracy: Citizens' demands for inclusion, participation and accountable leadership are calls for a renewed and **fully democratic practice within the multilateral system.**

Health: The pandemic has demonstrated there is no social, economic and even political resilience without strong health systems and universal coverage. We look forward to working with the **Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development** and other multilateral efforts to this end. We call for strengthening universal social protections and support the 180 nations that have signed on to the **Peoples' Vaccine** initiative to incentivize production at scale and worldwide distribution at affordable costs once available. **We call for empowerment of the World Health Organization World Health Organization, with strengthened authority, enforcement capabilities, resources and programs to build health resilience at the community level.**

Social Justice and Inclusion: International financial institutions should be repurposed for mission level objectives of equity, inclusion and well-being. In this context, they should support prudent fiscal stimulus to sustain economic activity, tax reform for greater tax fairness, accommodative monetary policies, and debt relief, restructuring and concessional financing to liberate resources to address funding shortfalls and allow for greater social development investments. **We call for a new World Summit for Sustainable Development to reaffirm social, economic and environmental commitments in light of COVID 19 consequences.**

Digitalization: With social norms potentially compromised by the velocity of digitalization, artificial intelligence and social media, and gaps in the rules-based multilateral trading system generating trade and technology tensions between states, a foundational, norm-setting initiative is imperative to ensure we manage digitalization before it manages us. **We call for a globally agreed set of norms and measures to enable improved global connectivity and data flows, inclusive digital platforms and better internet management - a "Bretton Woods for Digitalization".**

Sustainability: As the impacts of ecological damage become increasingly visible, we must accelerate commitments to mitigate climate change and meet the targets of the 2015 Paris Agreement, combining steadily rising carbon prices with a green energy investment push. **We call for an early convening of a global consultation building on the broad-based coalitions between cities, States and civil society organizations to step up and deepen preparations for COP 26 in November 2021 in Glasgow, UK.**

Building a locally rooted global system: Alliances between citizens, cities and regional organizations are critical for responding effectively in a people-centered and driven multilateralism that must solve problems for diverse peoples and communities.

Accountability requires bringing together all stakeholders, from identity groups to the private sector to trade unions to decision-makers to forge a new consensus on policies that have been decided in political deliberations where not all peoples feel represented. Making social impact a clearer metric in the assessment of the IMF and the G-20 and strengthening it in the case of the World Bank and the United Nations system, is critical in terms of their ability to respond effectively and their legitimacy going forward.

We have a once-in-a century opportunity to repurpose global institutions. It is time to put the world's leaders together and 'shake the trees'. Much as at the World Summit for Social Development of 1995, the largest gathering ever of world leaders at that time, and again in 2015, and with the adoption by 193 nations of the Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we need to put people back at the centre of development. This is not just a matter of building forward better. Our multilateral framework must be redefined around goals of equity, inclusion and wellbeing, a clear clamor from peoples around the globe.

Let us seize this moment. Frustrated citizens are calling into question existing social compacts. While democratic accountability is anchored in individual states, whose governments are charged to promote the interests of their citizens, we must move actively and effectively to protect and strengthen the Global Commons in the interest of all humanity, particularly the most vulnerable and future generations. This does not diminish the importance of the national interests of any state. To the contrary, this is the way to serve the national interests of each and all states. Multilateralism and the multilateral system require a renewed focus on democratic governance that is finally participatory, accountable and inclusive.

Effectively addressing these challenges will determine the durability of our global institutions and even the survival of our species. Only global cooperation will succeed in solving transnational problems. This is no time to be shy or incrementalist. We must work together to lead for a renewed multilateral framework which will not let down the peoples of the world who depend on visionary and decisive leadership needed for the survival of humankind and for the well-being of us all.