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CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE UN ON THE FUTURE OF MULTILATERALISM

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Abstract

2020 marked the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The UN have marked its 75th anniversary at a time of great disruption for the world, compounded by an unprecedented global health crisis with severe economic and social impacts. The article aims to give a theoretical descriptive overview of the available data about the 75th anniversary of its founding and on the importance of the United Nations for the world. Also, the paper underlines that new issues are increasingly gaining attention in the multilateralism system, such as the pandemic, digital technologies, environmental challenges, a melting arctic region and geopolitical shifts, for which in the near future the global community must find answers at a multilateral level. The article will conclude that the United Nations system is facing provocations and defiance from some States, and its functioning sometimes reveals a lack of efficiency. Emerging powers are rising in different regions of the world, aiming at counterbalancing the existing global order.

Key words: *UN, multilateralism, international system, world politics, cooperation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The genesis of modern multilateralism dates back to the 19th century. The "Concert of Europe" that emerged from the Vienna Congress in 1815 is considered as a major step in its development. After the upheavals caused by the Napoleonic wars, the major European powers established an informal system of consultation to maintain order in Europe. However, the "Concert of Europe" was a form of limited cooperation. It was not institutionalized and was based on the voluntary collaboration of major international actors. Meetings were convened only if they were deemed necessary. Small powers were sometimes consulted, but they rarely, if ever, participated in deliberations. Despite these limitations, the concert of Europe allowed the major powers to get used to a meeting before their discrepancies lead to conflicts, rather than at the negotiating table after the end of hostilities. It thus paved the way for the major international congresses of the second half of the 19th century.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Hague peace conferences of 1899 and 1907 marked a new milestone in the development of multilateralism. On the one hand, this was the

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first attempt to establish mechanisms to prevent war, but on the other hand, the 1907 Conference brought together representatives of 42 governments, that is to say, a large proportion of the States that existed at the time.

On the technical level, the increase in interactions and exchanges between States generated by the industrial revolution pushed governments to cooperate. It was mainly in the fields of transport and communications that this technical multilateralism was taking shape. This led to the formation of the first international organizations, often called "bureaus" or "international unions". Among the organizations that emerged in the second half of the 19th century were the International Telegraph Union (1865) and the Universal Postal Union (1874). The activities of these technical organizations help demonstrate that governments can cooperate to develop rules in the common interest.

The creation of the League of Nations in the aftermath of the First World War marked a major turning point in the process of institutionalizing multilateralism. It was the first international organization created to maintain peace and foster cooperation among States. Its constitutive document, the Covenant of the League of Nations, established the rights and obligations of the League's members and outlined the functioning of the organization whose headquarters were located in Geneva. Above all, it contained the principles on which the international order must be based: solidarity among members, respect for sovereignty, equal rights, the collegiality of decision-making, transparency of international relations, peaceful settlement of disputes and the rule of international law.

The League marked a significant evolution in the development of multilateralism from several points of view. It provided a permanent multilateral framework where representatives of all Member States had the opportunity to meet periodically and discuss all major international issues on an equal footing. While this may seem normal today, it was one of the many revolutionaries and often underestimated, aspects introduced by the League.

The League officially had up to 60 Member States in 1934, that is to say, most of the existing States at the time. However, the Geneva-based organization never succeeded in establishing a global multilateral system, largely because of the absence of the United States, which never joined the League.

The League proved to be unable to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War. It was powerless in the face of the succession of crises that marked the collapse of the international system in the 1930s. After the conflict, Winston Churchill said: "The League did not fail because of its principles or conceptions. It failed because those principles were deserted by those states which brought it into being"¹.

The United Nations (UN) was gradually established during the Second World War. Its founding treaty, the Charter of the United Nations, was signed in San Francisco in June 1945. In 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference on International Organization to draw up the United Nations Charter². The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States. The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other signatories.

¹ About Multilateralism, The League of Nations: the rise of modern multilateralism. Available at: <https://multilateralism100.unog.ch/about>, last accessed 10 May 2021.

² United Nations, United Nations Charter, линк: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>, accessed: 28.09.2020

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Downs, G., Roche, D., & Barsoom, P³, “one of the most prominent characteristics of multilateral organizations is that they do not “spring forth full-blown”; they grow. Although this is well known, relatively few attempts have been made to explain it at a general level or to explore its implications”. Although the term "multilateralism" is relatively recent, multilateral diplomacy is probably very old. Some authors trace its origin back to antiquity. Others consider that it developed from the Westphalia treaties, which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648. The peace agreements signed in Osnabrück and Münster are now generally considered to be the birth certificate of the modern international system of sovereign States. Peace negotiations are also a major diplomatic effort to rebuild order in Europe and involve more than 190 delegations. In addition to diplomatic developments, the reflection on how to organize the international system to avoid conflicts is part of a long intellectual tradition. Among the authors of the most illustrious perpetual peace plans are Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Penn and Jeremy Bentham. In some cases, the projects developed call for the establishment of international forums to enable States to collaborate and resolve their disputes in a peaceful manner.

1. Multilateralism –Challenges and perspectives

The United Nations Charter does not simply define the structure, mission and functioning of the Organization. It is one of the pillars of the international system in which we live today. In his report on the work of the United Nations to the General Assembly in 2018, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recalled that the Charter remains the "moral compass to promote peace, advance human dignity, prosperity and uphold human rights and the rule of law"⁴.

Multilateralism is part of the United Nations' DNA. The UN is at the service of Member States to reach agreements and take collective decisions. The Charter clearly establishes that the Organization is a “centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends” to “take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace”, to “develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” and to “achieve international cooperation”. To this end, the United Nations must, in particular, work to solve “international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character” and develop “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all”.

The Charter also contains the main principles on which the functioning of the international system is based, such as the recognition of the sovereign equality of States, respect for international commitments, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the rejection of the use of force in violation of the provisions of the Charter. Membership of the United Nations also implies the recognition of a bond of solidarity between the Member States. It is on the basis of these universal values and collective rules that the UN allows States to collaborate and coordinate their actions.

While the United Nations has been the multilateral framework par excellence for nearly 76 years, multilateral processes have diversified. One of the most visible developments in multilateral diplomacy is undoubtedly represented by the increase in the number of Member States: from 51 in 1945 to 193 today. In addition to this horizontal expansion, the multilateral

³ Downs, G., Roche, D., & Barsoom, P. (1998). Managing the Evolution of Multilateralism. *International Organization*, 52(2), 397-419. doi:10.1162/002081898753162866

⁴ About Multilateralism, The United Nations, the multilateral framework par excellence. Available at: <https://multilateralism100.unog.ch/about>, last accessed 10 May 2021.

framework has also expanded vertically, including new actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private actors and other international organizations. Today, more than 1,000 NGOs and international organizations have observer status at the United Nations.

The United Nations has had to adapt to changing geopolitical, social and economic realities by assuming new responsibilities. From bipolar confrontation to the decolonization process, from the issue of sustainable economic development to humanitarian assistance and the consequences of globalization and climate change, the United Nations has faced (and continues to face) many challenges. Despite crises and criticism, in an increasingly interconnected world, the United Nations remains a unique framework for communication and cooperation among all international actors. Every day, representatives of the international community interact, dialogue and cooperate within the various bodies that make up the United Nations system to find collective solutions to global issues.

Multilateralism has achieved tangible results that have led to major advances, such as for example the eradication of smallpox in the health sector. Important international agreements have also been concluded to limit arms control and to promote and strengthen human rights. The international cooperation within the multilateral framework of the United Nations is saving lives every day.

For example, in 2018, the United Nations provided humanitarian assistance to nearly 100 million people in 40 countries. The number of undernourished people has decreased from 815 million in 2015 to 777 million in 2016. Globally, the under-five mortality rate declined by 47% between 2000 and 2016. The 14 peacekeeping operations are a concrete collective contribution to ensuring peace. The UN also provides a platform for conflict resolution. Mediation efforts within the United Nations framework are often the only way to achieve political solutions to crises. In the field of human rights, in 2018, the human rights treaty bodies considered 165 reports of States parties and received 138 additional reports from States parties on measures taken to implement their international obligations in this area. The United Nations has a unique ability to bring actors together, propose ideas, stimulate action and find solutions. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is designed as an integrated and universal framework. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to reduce poverty and build peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies through coordinated action by the Member States and civil society. The adoption of global strategies requires partnerships between State actors, regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, private actors and the academic world. In addition to facilitating the exchange of ideas, these collective initiatives ensure the implementation of solutions to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030. United Nations partnerships allow for a better sharing of responsibilities among States so that no one State finds itself having to assume everything on its own.

The world today witnesses a rising number of long-known global challenges, which are mostly well understood but still unresolved; they range from climate change, cyber-insecurity, and pandemic disease outbreaks to international financial instability, terrorism, and war, to name a few⁵. These multiplying challenges raise a critical question: has the system of global governance kept pace with the changes in global policy-making realities? It appears that the answer is likely to be “no,” considering the insistent calls by analysts urging policymakers to foster faster and scaled-up progress toward the agreed (in some cases long-agreed) global policy goals such as those outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (referred to hereafter as Agenda 2030).

⁵ Inge Kaul; Multilateralism 2.0: It Is Here—Are We Ready for It?. *Global Perspectives* 11 May 2020; 1 (1): 17639. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2020.17639>

2. Future UN multilateral possibilities for human prosperity

Today's globalized world has generated a variety of globalized problems – from climate change to financial crises to cybersecurity – that can be effectively addressed only through multilateral agreements. Multilateralism is fundamental to the liberal world order created at the end of World War II. It has been crucial in maintaining peace and prosperity. It has also been central to the past successes of the G20 in addressing the global financial crisis and promoting international financial stability⁶.

We must recognize that globalization and multilateralism are means to an end (i.e., social and economic prosperity) rather than ends in themselves. To that end, multilateralism can be, and ought to be, used as an instrument to promote strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth within all nation-states and thereby strengthen the world economy. We also must recognize that despite all the convergence achieved in the last half-century, there remain substantial differences in views across the world on desirable institutional frameworks to promote sustainable development⁷.

The new multilateralism must recognize that there is no one way to satisfy human needs and aspirations, and that diverse policy approaches are desirable to address diverse cultural challenges. There are, however, universal values, such as those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which all nations have subscribed. The new realities of the digital economy and rapid technological development necessitate resolute and concerted action to address crucial challenges⁸.

According to UN Peacekeeping⁹ Covid-19 is a stark reminder of the need for cooperation across borders, sectors and generations. UN response will determine how fast the world recovers, whether we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and how well they handle pressing challenges: from the climate crisis to pandemics, inequalities, new forms of violence, and rapid changes in technology and in our demographics.

2.1. Environmental Governance and Climate Change

According to estimates by the International Energy Agency, a pandemic is a cataclysmic event so big and disruptive that it can be measured in the planetary metrics of climate change. Also, some authors point out that, no war, no recession, no previous pandemic has had such a dramatic impact on emissions of CO₂ over the past century as Covid-19 has in a few short months. Many climate researchers are optimistic that this deadly pandemic has taught governments some critical lessons that they can apply to the problem of rising temperatures. Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and it is happening even more quickly than we feared. But we are far from powerless in the face of this global threat. As Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out in September, “the climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win”¹⁰. The World Bank estimates that, in the absence of action,

⁶ Homi Kharas and Dennis J. Snower, (2020), *The future of multilateralism Toward responsible globalization that empowers citizens and leaves no one behind*, In: Global Solutions Journal, Issue 5, link: https://www.global-solutions-initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/GSJ5_Kharas_Snower.pdf, last accessed 21.03.2021

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ UN Peacekeeping, *UN 75 and Covid-19*, Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/un75-and-covid-19> last accessed 21.03.2021

¹⁰ United Nations, *The Climate Crisis – A Race We Can Win*, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/un75/climate-crisis-race-we-can-win>, accessed 29.09.2020

more than 140 million people¹¹ in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia will be forced to migrate within their regions by 2050.

Government responses vary significantly from one country to another and from state to state, and like any policy interventions, their effect is highly contingent on local political and social context¹². Climate change is a global challenge that demands a global response. Therefore, at the Paris summit in December 2015, 196 countries will meet to sign a new climate change agreement. This Climate Change Summit in Paris (to be held after the coordinated terrorist attacks occurred in Paris and its northern suburb, Saint-Denis, on the night of 13 November 2015) is meaningful and will make a real difference to climate action on the ground. With the right political leadership, it can lead to ambitious outcomes that will have a real impact on tackling climate change¹³. The Coronavirus outbreak has also prompted a wide range of responses from governments around the world.

In this context, UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres said¹⁴:” To combat the Covid-19 pandemic and the looming existential threat of climate disruption, the only credible response is brave, visionary and collaborative leadership anchored in multilateralism”. Scientists have been ringing the alarm on climate change and its inevitable impacts on our future for equally as long. The vast majority of climate scientists 97% agree that humans are causing climate change, with the data explicitly backing up their beliefs.

2.2. *International Development and Humanitarian Crises*

One of the purposes of the United Nations, as stated in its Charter, is "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character." The UN first did this in the aftermath of the Second World War on the devastated continent of Europe, which it helped to rebuild. The Organization is now relied upon by the international community to coordinate humanitarian relief operations due to natural and man-made disasters in areas beyond the relief capacity of national authorities alone¹⁵.

2.3. *Fighting Inequality and Gender-based Violence*

Gender equality is the process of being fair to women and men. It is a goal in its own right but also a key factor for sustainable social development, economic growth and environmental sustainability. A sustainable path of development can be achieved to ensure that women's and men's interests are both taken into account in the allocation of resources through providing the same opportunities to men and women. Basically, equality between women and men should be promoted in ways that are appropriate to each particular context. Both men and

¹¹ Rigaud, Kanta Kumari; de Sherbinin, Alex; Jones, Bryan; Bergmann, Jonas; Clement, Viviane; Ober, Kayly; Schewe, Jacob; Adamo, Susana; McCusker, Brent; Heuser, Silke; Midgley, Amelia. 2018. *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank, available: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO, accessed 29.09.2020

¹² Stojanovska-Stefanova A., Runcheva-Tasev H., (2020), “*The impact of the coronavirus crisis on climate action: Lessons learned for the governments*”, In: Proceedings from Annual International Conference “Political Consequences of the Pandemic”, organized by The Serbian Political Science Association (SPSA), University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Science-Belgrade, Serbia, 26-27 September, 2020;

¹³ Stojanovska-Stefanova, Aneta and Vckova, Nadica (2016) *International Strategy For Climate Change And The Countries Commitment For Developing Policies*. In: International Scientific Conference: Crisis Management: Challenges and Perspective, 18 Nov 2015, Skopje, Macedonia, pg.204.

¹⁴ United Nations, link: <https://news.un.org/feed/view/en/story/2020/04/1062752>, last accessed July 28, 2020

¹⁵ United Nations, *Deliver Humanitarian Aid*, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/deliver-humanitarian-aid/index.html>, accessed: 28.09.2020

women have a stake building a more just society where all people are equally valued for their contributions. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environmental Development (UNCED) made important provisions for the recognition of women's contribution and their full participation in sustainable development. The United Nations has accepted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with specific targets to achieve within the stipulated time. The common goal of SDGs that no one will be left behind is a move towards an equitable and inclusive society for all. It is only for to end poverty and ensure that people enjoy with fruitful peace and prosper¹⁶.

World Bank (2016) found "overall, since the 1990s total global inequality (inequality across all individuals in the world) declined for the first time since the 1820s. Reinforcing this trend, we have mostly seen income inequality between countries decline. Yet income inequality within countries has risen, this is the form of inequality people feel on a daily basis"¹⁷.

Gender equality is a right. Fulfilling this right is the best chance we have in meeting some of the most pressing challenges of our time - from an economic crisis and lack of health care, to climate change, violence against women and escalating conflicts.

2.4. *The International Multilateral Trade System*

As the United Nations is looking for ways to increase the efficiency and optimization of regular procedures, while respecting established protocols and developing blended mechanisms in a sort of *hybrid diplomacy*¹⁸, we shouldn't forget that inclusiveness, transparency, and a broader participation of all states must be guaranteed. Moreover, the multilateral system is debating over the identification of situations in which virtual diplomacy mechanisms are feasible, without losing sight of conferences and meetings where physical presence and human interaction remain irreplaceable. In this regard, the meetings of groups of governmental experts come to mind, as they usually demand a higher degree of technical expertise and interactive discussions.

In terms of participation, the inclusion of all multistakeholders must be addressed. Effective access of all interested parties to multilateral decision-making processes, in face-to-face and virtual settings, will certainly amplify the opportunities for results and outcomes to produce a greater impact¹⁹.

2.5. *Demographic Growth and International Migration*

According to UN, the world's population is expected to increase by two billion people, from 7.7 billion at present to 9.7 billion in 2050, before reaching a peak of nearly 11 billion by the end of the century as fertility rates continue to decline. During this period, the global population is projected to become more and more urban, while children below age 5 will be outnumbered by persons aged 65 or above. Half of global population growth between now and 2050 is expected to

¹⁶ Satyajit Saha, *Gender Equality and women empowerment to achieve sustainable development goal.*, see more at: <http://southasiajournal.net/gender-equality-and-women-empowerment-to-achieve-sustainable-development-goal/>, (August 25, 2020)

¹⁷ World Bank, (2026), *Poverty and Shared Prosperity, Taking on inequality*, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25078/9781464809583.pdf?sequence=24&isAlloved=y>, accessed 28.09.2020

¹⁸ For "Hybrid Diplomacy", see more at: <https://hybridspacelab.net/project/hybrid-diplomacy/>

¹⁹ DiploFoundation. "Diplomacy in times of Covid-19", link: <https://www.diplomacy.edu/blog/diplomacy-times-covid-19> Last accessed 27.07.2020

come from just nine countries²⁰: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Indonesia, Egypt and the United States of America (in descending order of increase). The population of sub-Saharan Africa is likely to double, while the population of Europe is likely to shrink²¹.

Meanwhile, people are on the move. While the percentage of international migrants has remained around 3 per cent of the global population over the past two decades, their number has increased by more than half since 2000. At the same time, the number of people forced to flee their homes has risen sharply due to protracted conflicts and could increase further due to climate change and environmental degradation. The vast majority of refugee and migrant flow are to countries in the global South.

According to H.E. Fabrizio Hochschild, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the Commemoration of the United Nations' 75th Anniversary (2020), "after the devastation of World War II in the preamble of the UN Charter world leaders stated that the use of "international machinery for the promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples" was an essential means of securing peace, upholding human rights and ensuring social progress. They demonstrated exemplary foresight and thanks to their commitment to solidarity succeeding generations grew up in periods of unprecedented peace"²².

H.E. Mohammad Al Gergawi (2020), UAE Minister of Cabinet Affairs found "Human ingenuity is the single most vital resource in the world, and in the age of global interdependence the need for solutions that drive economic growth while contributing to human prosperity and wellbeing have never been as pressing. As we look to the future, we as humanity have a unique opportunity to reset the way we produce, consume, socialize and interact"²³.

While the end of the crisis caused by the COVID19 pandemic is not yet in sight, there is growing focus on the ways and means to build back better, by resetting the way we produce, consume, socialise and interact. The inaugural "2020 Future Possibilities Report" provides some of the first guidelines and benchmarks on how governments can prepare for such rapid change and will contribute to the important debate around the shape and form of the future economy²⁴.

What are the possibilities of tomorrow, and how can countries leverage them to reset their economies in the post-COVID world? The Future Possibilities 2020 Report sets out to answer that question by identifying six transformational trends that are creating possibilities, and the factors that explain a country's capacity to take advantage of those possibilities for the benefit of society. The COVID crisis of 2020 has made it palpable that it is no longer enough for government policies to aim to boost the productivity of the economy as a whole. The link between productivity and economic growth is weakening and, in many countries, growth is becoming less of a priority relative to issues such as climate change and income inequality. More importantly, the COVID pandemic has highlighted that efficiency can stand in the way of resilience needed for human security.

²⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights* (ST/ESA/SER.A/423), available at: https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf, accessed: 28.09.2020

²¹ United Nations, *Shifting Demographics*, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/un75/shifting-demographics>, accessed: 28.09.2020

²² UN, *Future Possibilities Report*, available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/20200720_un75_uae_futurepossibilitiesreport.pdf, accessed 29.09.2020., p.5.

²³ Ibid, p.4.

²⁴ Ibid.

2.6. The Impact of Digital Technologies on Global Governance

Some of the new approaches Governments are taking in pursuit of digital government transformation include the delivery of e-government as a platform, the integration of online and offline multichannel delivery, the agile development of digital services (supported by whole-of-government and whole-of-society engagement and integration), the expansion of e-participation and partnerships, the adoption of data-centric approaches, the strengthening of digital capacities to deliver people-centric services, and the innovative use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain, especially in the development of smart cities²⁵.

Participation is a key dimension of governance and one of the pillars of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the importance of participatory processes. Through the Survey, e-participation is assessed on the basis of features of national e-government portals and other government websites which relate to the provision of information to citizens; consultation; and decision-making.

The concept of digital government represents a fundamental shift in the way governments around the world are embracing their mission. From setting measurable administrative goals to improving public service delivery, from making data-driven decisions to enacting evidence-based policies, from ensuring greater accountability and transparency within government to building greater public trust, governments are leveraging the power of information technologies in transformative ways²⁶.

Social media connects almost half of the entire global population. It enables people to make their voices heard and to talk to people across the world in real-time²⁷. However, it can also reinforce prejudices and sow discord, by giving hate speech and misinformation a platform, or by amplifying echo chambers.

According to United Nations “technologies can help make our world fairer, more peaceful, and more just. Digital advances can support and accelerate the achievement of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – from ending extreme poverty to reducing maternal and infant mortality, promoting sustainable farming and decent work, and achieving universal literacy.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The multilateralism is part of the United Nations' DNA. The UN is at the service of Member States for nearly 76 years to reach agreements and take collective decisions.

While the United Nations has been the multilateral framework par excellence for nearly 76 years, multilateral processes have diversified. One of the most visible developments in multilateral diplomacy is undoubtedly represented by the increase in the number of Member States: from 51 in 1945, to 193 today. In addition to this horizontal expansion, the multilateral framework has also expanded vertically, including new actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private actors and other international organizations.

The UN Charter clearly establishes that the Organization is a “centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends” in order to “take effective

²⁵ United Nations, (2020), *E-Government Survey 2020*, Available at: [https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20\(Full%20Report\).pdf](https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20(Full%20Report).pdf), [Accessed 20 Sept. 2020].

²⁶ World Bank, *Digital Government for Development*, Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/digitaldevelopment/brief/digital-government-for-development>, [Accessed 20 Sept. 2020].

²⁷ UN, *Impact digital technologies*, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/un75/impact-digital-technologies>, accessed 29.09.2020

collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace”, to “develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” and to “achieve international cooperation”. To this end, the United Nations must, in particular, work to solve “international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character” and develop “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all”.

In times of a global health and economic crisis, it is essential that all nations work together to provide a global, unified and effective response, based on the fundamental pillars of the United Nations. While the world is facing a very difficult present situation, the States and UN have an incredible opportunity to do things differently than they have in the past. This is an opportunity to build a clean, green, safe, healthy, just and more prosperous world for all people.

In the future UN have the challenge for finding the general principles to make multilateralism sustainable, there is an aim to make complementarity between the national and the multilateral, as well as the new multilateralism has to be designed to ensure the systemic coherence of the world order.

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