



UN75 Dialogue: The United Nations at 75 Years - Prospects and Potentials: The Future We Want

Date: 3rd September 2020

Recording of event: [Watch it here](#)



The discussion about 'The Future We Want and The UN We Need' made one thing very clear: in order to survive, whether we are talking about the UN as an institution or humanity as a whole, there has to be a fundamental change in the way the UN functions and is structured. The conversation between panelists made it clear that we ought to make an honest assessment of the UN system and build on the lessons learned while looking forward to what kind of a change we need to benefit all of us on this planet.

To quote Professor Alanna O'Malley, who opened the discussion; when discussing the potential future of the UN we need to remember that the UN is not and has not been a static entity over time but rather a dynamic one that has changed a lot during the time of its existence. She explained that the focus of discussions has mainly been on issues of security, peace, and justice between states when in reality the organization has a much wider array of functions. To broaden our discussion about UN reform beyond issues of peace and security Professor O'Malley suggested that we work to demonstrate and explain how the UN directly affects individuals' lives. To achieve this Professor O'Malley explained that we need to develop new approaches that build on the outcomes of the UN75 dialogues, especially the idea of individual responsibility towards the UN. To close her opening remarks Professor O'Malley reminded the audience that the discussion about UN reforms and development must include a wide variety of state and non-state actors, especially young people and those who are often marginalized.

At the event, the speakers agreed that the challenges we face require global solutions and that in the past few years there has been a growing anti-multilateralism sentiment. To combat this trend the speakers outlined various ways to help state and non-state actors find common ground on many pressing issues like climate change that need multilateral responses and global solidarity.

For example, if we want a more inclusive UN, Dr. Denison Jayasooria, suggested that we should give more ground to states in the developing world. He explained this is an important and necessary step because middle- and lower income countries have an important role to play in discussions about development and efforts to address the [climate emergency](#).



For the future we want, Ms. Simone Filipini stressed the need to build trust between the member states at the UN and the UN and the citizens of member states. She explained that it is important for UN representatives to engage with the local population as well as local and national governing structures. The idea behind this form of community engagement and outreach is to ensure that institutions trying to implement UN policies or the SDG's have the support and resources they need. Furthermore, it is hoped that engaging with various actors across a society promotes national ownership of local and national efforts working towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

To improve relations between the citizens of member states and the UN, it was suggested that the UN establish the 'UN parliamentary assembly'. An assembly that is made up of and elected by the people of UN member states. The idea is to bring non-state actors into the decision-making process that lies behind our global governance instruments. Dr. Arthur Dahl explained that the idea of a UN parliamentary assembly is important as it could bring the UN closer to the public and improve the way we develop responses to global issues such as climate change, migration flows, and rising inequality. What was clear and emphasized by all speakers is that [global issues require global solutions](#) and that to successfully address global issues civil society needs to be better heard on these matters and that is where (at least a part of) the solution lies.

To end the event, the audience was reminded that to build the UN we want and need requires state and non-state actors need to work together to figure out the changes we need in UN and the way it operates on an international as well as national and local level.

More Information:

Thinking differently about the UN at 75 by Alanna O'Malley

<https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/thinking-differently-about-un-75>

Closing remarks

UN Youth Impact would like to thank the event organizers for inviting us to follow this interesting discussion. Not only did the discussion give an insight to the changes that are bound to happen on a big scale but also emphasized the importance of the efforts among citizens who live and work in member states. We would also like to extend a thank you to all the speakers who shared their thoughts and expertise. Furthermore, we recommend that you keep an eye on the [Chair's event page](#) for more information about upcoming events and UN75 dialogues.