

# The Office for Outer Space Affairs

The Future of Global Space Governance: Proactive Multilateralism at the UN Level

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**United  
Nations**



**Common  
Agenda**



UNITED NATIONS  
Office for Outer Space Affairs

13 October 2021

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# Our Common Agenda

## Report of the Secretary-General

- ✓ On the 75th anniversary of the UN, Member States pledged to strengthen global governance for the sake of present and coming generations.
- ✓ The Secretary-General was requested to report back with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.
- ✓ The result 'Our Common Agenda' was launched on 10 Sept.
- ✓ The report looks ahead to the next 25 years and represents the Secretary-General's vision on the future of global cooperation and reinvigorating inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism.
- ✓ The Secretary-General presented his report to the General Assembly in September 2021 before the end of the 75th session of the General Assembly.



# Our Common Agenda

## Report of the Secretary-General





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UNITED NATIONS  
Office for Outer Space Affairs



**LEAVE NO ONE  
BEHIND**



**PROTECT OUR  
PLANET**



**PROMOTE PEACE  
& PREVENT  
CONFLICTS**



**ABIDE BY  
INTERNATIONAL  
LAW & ENSURE  
JUSTICE**



**PLACE WOMEN &  
GIRLS AT THE  
CENTER**



**BUILD TRUST**



**IMPROVE DIGITAL  
COOPERATION**



**UPGRADE THE  
UNITED NATIONS**



**ENSURE  
SUSTAINABLE  
FINANCING**



**BOOST  
PARTNERSHIPS**



**LISTEN TO &  
WORK WITH  
YOUTH**



**BE PREPARED**

# Our Common Agenda

## Report of the Secretary-General



1. **We will leave no one behind.** The next ten years, which have been designated as the Decade of Action, will be the most critical of our generation. The peoples have to be at the center of all our efforts. Particular attention must be given to people in vulnerable situations.
2. **We will protect our planet.** The time to act is now. Many countries, not least small island developing states, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, are already among the most affected. We have a historic opportunity to build back better and greener.
3. **We will promote peace and prevent conflicts.** The ongoing armed conflicts and threats against international peace and security must be urgently resolved through peaceful means.
4. **We will abide by international law and ensure justice.** The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law remain timeless, universal and an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. We will abide by the international agreements we have entered into and the commitments we have made.
5. **We will place women and girls at the center.** Conflicts will not be resolved, and sustainable development not occur, without the equal and active participation of women at all levels
6. **We will build trust.** 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.



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7. **We will improve digital cooperation.** Shaping a shared vision on digital cooperation and a digital future that show the full potential for beneficial technology usage, and addressing digital trust and security, must continue to be a priority as our world is now more than ever relying on digital tools for connectivity and social-economic prosperity.
8. **We will upgrade the United Nations.** The ongoing UN reform will be creating a more agile, effective, and accountable organization that can deliver better in the field and adapt to global challenges.
9. **We will ensure sustainable financing.** Realizing these aspirations will require sustainable and predictable funding of the Organization. The full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development is key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Joint public-private financing plays a central role in our efforts to make the United Nations deliver better on its purposes.
10. **We will boost partnerships.** Today's challenges require cooperation not only across borders but also across the whole of society. We have to make the United Nations more inclusive and engage with all relevant stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, and parliamentarians to ensure an effective response to our common challenges.
11. **We will listen to and work with youth.** For too long, the voices of youth have been sidelined in discussions about their future. This has to change now through meaningful engagement with youth
12. **We will be prepared.** We need to strengthen international cooperation, coordination, and solidarity. It is important to learn, share experiences and information to reduce risks and make our systems more resilient.

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### Consultation process on the Common Agenda

In response to GA Resolution 75/1, in addition to involving the United Nations system as a whole, the SG embarked upon a process of reflection, consisting of four tracks engaging a broad array of stakeholders, including Member States, prominent thought leaders, young people and civil society.

- ✓ The consultation process built on the year-long anniversary global listening exercise, when over 1.5 million people from all 193 Member States took part in an online survey. Polling firms also conducted surveys in 70 countries.
- ✓ Engagement with Member States began with a letter to all permanent representatives and observers on 8 October 2020 laying out the process and inviting them to share their views. From December 2020 onwards several consultations, facilitated also by the UN Foundation, on the 12 themes began.
- ✓ Thought leaders, several high-level groups of experts as well as young thinkers and groups were invited to contribute ideas around the 12 themes
- ✓ Consultation with civil society, parliamentarians, think tanks, the private sector, subnational leaders and city networks, underrepresented groups and other non-government partners
- ✓ Every effort was made to ensure that the reflection process included a wide range of voices from all regions, including through an experimental digital consultation exercise overseen



## KEY PROPOSALS ACROSS THE 12 COMMITMENTS

From the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations

All proposed actions are in line with and designed to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



### 1. Leave no one behind

- Renewed social contract anchored in human rights
- New era for universal social protection, including health care and basic income security, reaching the 4 billion unprotected
- Reinforce adequate housing, education and lifelong learning and decent work
- Digital inclusivity
- World Social Summit in 2025
- Identify complementary measures to GDP



### 2. Protect our planet

- Leaders meeting ahead of the global stocktaking in 2023
- Commit to the 1.5-degree Celsius goal and net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner
- Declarations of climate emergency and right to a healthy environment
- Package of support to developing countries
- Measures for adaptation and resilience
- No new coal after 2021 and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies
- Account for the environment in economic models, carbon pricing mechanisms and credible commitments by financial actors
- Post-2020 biodiversity framework
- Transforming food systems for sustainability, nutrition and fairness
- Action by the General Assembly on territorial threats of climate change and to prevent, protect and resolve situations of environmental displacement



### 3. Promote peace and prevent conflicts

- New agenda for peace to:
  - Reduce strategic risks (nuclear weapons, cyberwarfare, autonomous weapons)
  - Strengthen international foresight
  - Reshape responses to all forms of violence
  - Invest in prevention and peacebuilding, including Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Commission
  - Support regional prevention
  - Put women and girls at the centre of security policy



### 4. Abide by international law and ensure justice

- Peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space, including through a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space
- Human rights as a problem-solving measure, including by comprehensive anti-discrimination laws and promoting participation
- Application of human rights online and to frontier issues and new technologies
- Universal access to the Internet as a human right
- Human rights mechanisms on a more sustainable financial footing
- Legal identity for all, end to statelessness and protection of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants
- New vision for the rule of law
- Global road map for the development and effective implementation of international law



### 5. Place women and girls at the centre

- Repeal of gender-discriminatory laws
- Promote gender parity, including through quotas and special measures
- Facilitate women's economic inclusion, including investment in the care economy and support for women entrepreneurs
- Include voices of younger women
- Eradication of violence against women and girls, including through an emergency response plan



### 6. Build trust

- Global code of conduct that promotes integrity in public information
- Improve people's experiences with public institutions and basic services
- Inclusive national listening and "envisioning the future" exercises
- Action to tackle corruption in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption
- Reformed international tax system
- Joint structure on financial integrity and tackling illicit financial flows

## PROPOSED KEY MOMENTS



### 7. Improve digital cooperation

- Global Digital Compact to:
  - Connect all people to the Internet, including all schools
  - Avoid Internet fragmentation
  - Protect data
  - Apply human rights online
  - Introduce accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content
  - Promote regulation of artificial intelligence
  - Digital commons as a global public good



### 8. Upgrade the United Nations

- High-level Advisory Board led by former Heads of State and Government on improved governance of global public goods
- System-wide policy that puts people at the centre, taking into account age, gender and diversity
- More listening, participation and consultation (including digitally), building on the seventy-fifth anniversary declaration and Our Common Agenda
- Gender parity within the United Nations system by 2028
- Re-establish the Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board
- "Quintet of change" for United Nations 2.0, including innovation, data, strategic foresight, results orientation and behavioural science



### 9. Ensure sustainable financing

- Biennial Summit between the Group of 20, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General and the heads of international financial institutions for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy including to:
  - Support a Sustainable Development Goal investment boost, including through a last-mile alliance to reach those furthest behind
  - Provide more flexible research and development incentives
  - Resolve weaknesses in the debt architecture
- Fairer and more resilient multilateral trading system, including a reinvigorated WTO
- New business models
- Improve the United Nations budget process



### 10. Boost partnerships

- Annual meetings between the United Nations and all heads of regional organizations
- Stronger engagement between the United Nations system, international financial institutions and regional development banks
- More systematic engagement with parliaments, subnational authorities and the private sector
- Civil society focal points in all United Nations entities
- United Nations Office for Partnerships to consolidate access and inclusion, including accessibility online



### 11. Listen to and work with youth

- Youth
  - Remove barriers to political participation and measure progress through a "youth in politics" index
  - United Nations Youth Office
  - Transforming Education Summit in 2022
  - Recovery barometer to track career paths and labour market outcomes for youth
  - High-ambition coalition to promote green and digital-economy job creation
- Future generations
  - Summit of the Future in 2023
  - Ensure long-term thinking, including through a United Nations Futures Lab
  - Represent succeeding generations, including through a repurposed Trusteeship Council, a Declaration on Future Generations, and a United Nations Special Envoy for Future Generations



### 12. Be prepared

- Emergency Platform to be convened in response to complex global crises
- Strategic Foresight and Global Risk Report by the United Nations every five years
- On global public health:
  - Global vaccination plan
  - Empowered WHO
  - Stronger global health security and preparedness
  - Accelerate product development and access to health technologies in low- and middle-income countries
  - Universal health coverage and addressing determinants of health

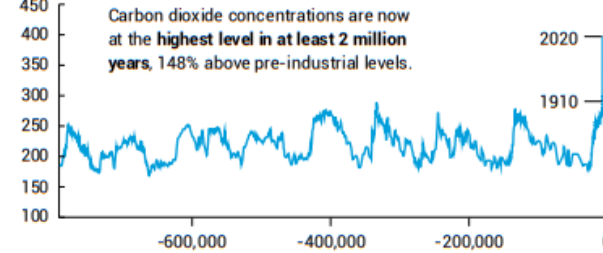


# PROJECTED DEGRADATION OF THE GLOBAL COMMONS

## ATMOSPHERE

### Trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration over 800,000 years

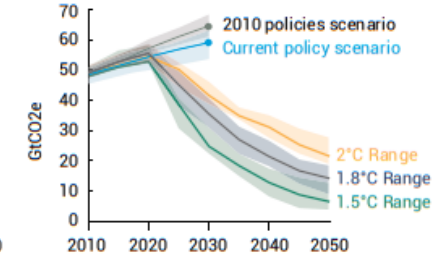
Mean carbon dioxide concentrations globally  
ppm



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2020.

### Projections for global GHG emissions under different scenarios

Note: Projections do not take into account commitments announced in early 2021.



Source: UNEP, 2020.

## OUTER SPACE

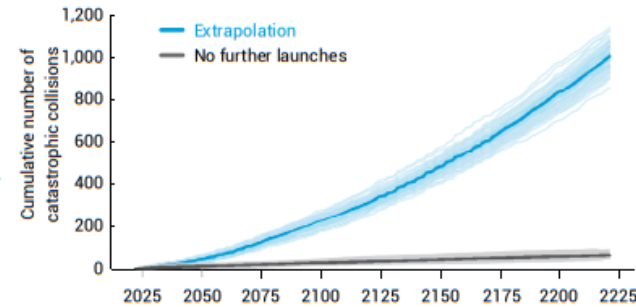
As the density of objects in orbit increases, so does the likelihood of collisions, where each collision will create further debris in a chain reaction **potentially rendering space unusable for generations.**



Lower orbit (2,000 km)

### Outer space debris

Source: European Space Agency, 2021.

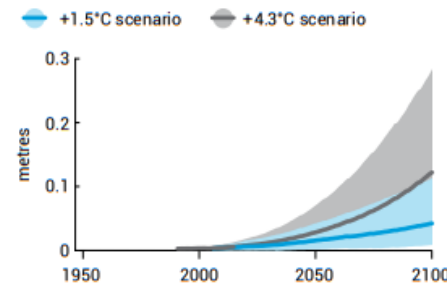


## ANTARCTICA

### Antarctic ice sheet mass loss

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019.

as sea level equivalent, change relative to 1986–2005

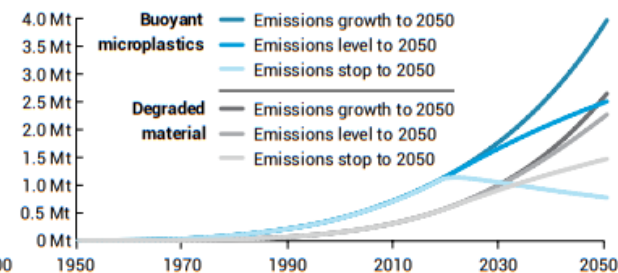


## HIGH SEAS

### Projected pollution of the sea

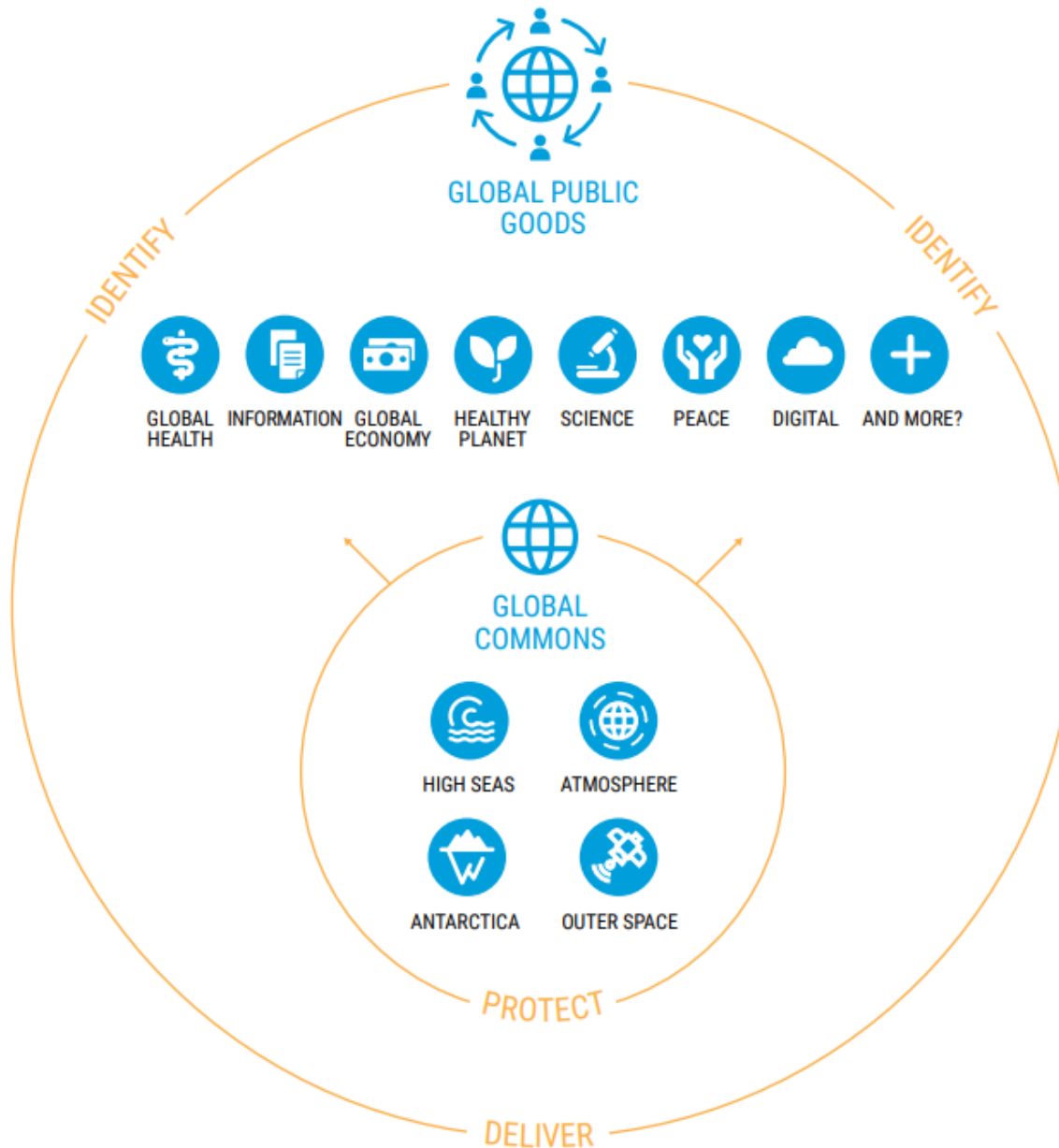
Source: Lebreton and others, 2019.

Even with an extremely ambitious scenario (no further emissions in the ocean by 2020), **the level of microplastics in the ocean could double by mid-century as already accumulated plastic waste slowly degrades into smaller pieces.**



# GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS AND THE GLOBAL COMMONS

DELIVER AND PROTECT



## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- **Protect** the global commons
- **Identify** and **deliver** global public goods



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### Peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space

90. Outer space has traditionally been acknowledged as a global common, beyond the jurisdiction of any one State. The potential for its peaceful, secure and sustainable use would benefit all humanity today and into the future. Governance arrangements for outer space, including the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, were established in an era of exclusively Statebased activity and provide only general guidance on managing traffic in outer space, the permanent settlement of celestial bodies and responsibilities for resource management. We are in an era of renewed exploration and use of outer space, with active programmes to return humans to the Moon and beyond and the planned launch of megaconstellations of thousands of new satellites. Space assets have transformed the way we live and outer space systems are vital for understanding and solving global problems, such as implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. Many of these developments are driven by actors in the private sector. They also pose new risks to security, safety and sustainability. Increasing congestion and competition in outer space could imperil access and use by succeeding

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### Peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space

91. Recently agreed Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities have shown that progress in governance is possible, but many gaps remain. A combination of binding and non-binding norms is needed, building on existing frameworks and drawing in the full range of actors now involved in space exploration and use. Immediate actions could include the development of a global regime to coordinate space traffic and the elaboration of new instruments to prevent weaponization of outer space. To that end, consideration could be given to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space as part of a Summit of the Future (see para. 103 below) bringing together Governments and other leading space actors. The dialogue could seek high-level political agreement on the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space, move towards a global regime to coordinate space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer space activities.



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### Next steps

103. Once the Advisory Board has reported its findings, it will be important to hold a highlevel, multi-stakeholder “Summit of the Future” to advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in this report, and potentially others, where governance arrangements are nascent or require updating. It would be preceded by preparatory events and consultations. The Summit would most appropriately be held in conjunction with the highlevel week of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly and could include high-level tracks on:

- a) Advancing governance for global public goods and other areas, as appropriate, in the light of the findings of the Advisory Board;
- b) Anticipating sustainable development and climate action beyond 2030;
- c) Peace and security, for the new agenda for peace;
- d) Digital technology, for the Global Digital Compact;
- e) **Outer space, to seek agreement on the sustainable and peaceful use of outer space, move towards a global regime to coordinate space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer space activities;**
- f) Major risks and agreement on an Emergency Platform;
- g) Succeeding generations, for possible agreement on a Declaration on Future Generations.



# Bringing the benefits of space to everyone, everywhere

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## Thank you



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