



General Assembly

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Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 128

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 5 November 2020

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/75/L.8)]

75/4. Special session of the General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020, entitled “Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, 74/274 of 20 April 2020, entitled “International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19”, 74/306 of 11 September 2020, entitled “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”, and 74/307 of 11 September 2020, entitled “United response against global health threats: combating COVID-19”,

Noting with concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has spread all around the globe, as well as the unprecedented and multifaceted effects of the pandemic, including the severe disruption to societies, economies, global trade and travel and the devastating impact on the livelihoods of people,

Recognizing that the COVID-19 global pandemic requires a global response that is people-centred, gender-responsive, with full respect for human rights, multidimensional, coordinated, inclusive and innovative, based on unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation,

Reaffirming its commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism and noting the fundamental role of the United Nations system in the comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the crucial role played by the World Health Organization, and the crucial efforts of Member States therein,

Noting that a majority of States Members of the United Nations have concurred with the request, submitted on behalf of the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to convene a special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the level of Heads of State and Government,



Recalling its decisions S-31/1, S-31/2 and S-31/3 of 15 July 2020, S-31/4, S-31/5 and S-31/6 of 21 July 2020, and S-31/7 and S-31/8 of 14 September 2020,

1. *Decides* that the special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the level of Heads of State and Government will be held for two days, on 3 and 4 December 2020, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters in New York;

2. *Also decides* that the proceedings of the special session shall be governed by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

3. *Further decides* that the organizational arrangements for the special session shall be as follows:

(a) The special session shall consist of:

(i) An opening segment;

(ii) A general debate;

(iii) A presentation by and an interactive dialogue led by the Head of the World Health Organization and other relevant United Nations entities¹ and, if time permits, with relevant stakeholders, on their inter-agency coordination efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts;

(iv) A closing segment;

(b) The opening of the special session shall include statements by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, including in his role as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Security Council and the Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries;

(c) The general debate shall take place on the first day of the special session and shall include statements by Member and Observer States, the European Union, and, time permitting, a limited number of representatives from relevant organizations attending the special session, in line with subparagraphs (d) and (e) below, selected by the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, with due regard for geographical balance and gender equity; the list of speakers shall be established in accordance with the established practices of the Assembly, and the time limit for the statements will be five minutes for individual delegations and seven minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States;

¹ Including the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, other entities and bodies, and other departments of the Secretariat, as follows: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labour Organization, International Maritime Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Telecommunication Union, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations System Staff College, United Nations University, Universal Postal Union, World Bank, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Meteorological Organization and World Trade Organization.

(d) Representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council are invited to participate in the special session in accordance with the rules of procedure and established practice of the General Assembly;

(e) Recalling the established practice of the General Assembly, the President of the General Assembly shall draw up a list of other relevant representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector who may participate in the special session, taking into account the principles of transparency and equitable geographical representation, with due regard for the meaningful participation of women, and submit the list to Member States for their consideration on a non-objection basis;²

4. *Decides*, without setting a precedent for future special sessions, that, in connection with the limitations recommended for meetings held on United Nations premises as precautionary measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19:

(a) Without setting a precedent for future special sessions of the General Assembly, each Member State, Observer State, and the European Union, as well as representatives from relevant organizations attending the special session, in line with subparagraphs (a), (d) and (e) of paragraph 3 above, can submit a pre-recorded statement by their Head of State or Government, head of delegation or other dignitary, which will be played in the General Assembly Hall during the opening and general debate of the special session, after introduction by their representative who is physically present in the Assembly Hall;

(b) In addition to the verbatim records of the special session, the President of the General Assembly will circulate as a document of the Assembly a compilation document of the statements delivered by Heads of State and Government or other dignitaries by means of pre-recorded statements during the special session and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall;

(c) These procedures shall apply only to the meetings of the special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

5. *Also decides* that the proceedings of the special session shall be webcast, and encourages the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to give the highest visibility to the special session, through all relevant media platforms and information and communications technologies;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his statement, as appropriate, information about the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to, access to vaccines and medical equipment to face the COVID-19 pandemic;

7. *Invites* all relevant United Nations system entities, including United Nations funds, programmes, and specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as relevant intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, to participate in the special session;

8. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to prepare an informal factual summary to reflect information presented during the special session;

² The list will include proposed as well as final names. The general basis of any objections, if requested by one or more States Members of the United Nations or States members of the specialized agencies, will be made known to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the requester.

9. *Also requests* the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to finalize the other organizational arrangements for the special session;

10. *Decides* that the special session shall be conducted within existing resources.

*21st plenary meeting
5 November 2020*
