



**GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY CONGRESS  
THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD  
12–13 May 2023, Vilnius**

**OPENING SESSION**

**Speech by Mr Guy Bernard RYDER**

Under-Secretary-General for Policy, United Nations

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to address the Global Parliamentary Congress on the Future of the World.

Your ambition - to build inter-parliamentary contacts that give consideration to the future - is very closely aligned with the past, present, and future of the United Nations.

In 1945, through the signing of the founding Charter of the United Nations, your diplomatic and parliamentary predecessors committed to save “succeeding generations” from the scourge of war.

Today, in the wake of a global pandemic, ongoing wars of aggression, climate crisis and rapid technological change, the threats to succeeding generations have widened.

Looking forward, humanity faces a series of long-term challenges that will continue to evolve.

These challenges include the warming and degradation of the planet, growing inequalities, managing frontier technologies, demographic shifts towards an older population, growing inequalities and the evolution of social welfare provision.

In 2020, Member States requested that the UN Secretary-General report back with recommendations to speak precisely to these current and future challenges. He responded with Our Common Agenda, his vision for the future of global cooperation.

Our Common Agenda calls for inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism, better equipped to respond and deliver for people and planet and get the world back on track to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. It also outlines possible solutions to address the gaps and risks that have emerged since 2015, calling for a Summit of the Future in 2024.

We hope this Summit will result in a Pact for the Future that will encompass action towards a fair and just global financial system, a commitment to a safe, peaceful and sustainable planet, putting technology at the service of humanity, and protecting future generations.

Your Congress has rightfully noted that most parliaments lack the structures and procedures for addressing issues that go beyond the remit of existing committees and the horizon of legislative terms. Through the Our Common Agenda report, the Secretary-General has reached a similar conclusion – that future generations are underrepresented in today’s multilateral decision-making bodies and that we must take action to address their rights and interests.

The Summit of the Future will thus be the platform to highlight and address the costs of short-term thinking and create guardrails around the impact of new technologies. It should be the place where Member States take new commitments to protect succeeding and future generations through networked, agile, and inclusive multilateralism that includes the strong voices of parliamentarians.

I want to share with you today three specific actions that the Secretary-General has proposed to address this challenge and seek your support in realizing them.

First, the Secretary-General has recommended that governments agree on a Declaration for Future Generations.

Such a declaration would recognize the needs, interests, and freedom of choice of future generations, our shared duty to protect them from the harms brought by actions today, and an agreement to put in place practical mechanisms that safeguard their interests and preserve their ability to exercise their rights.

It would also acknowledge the unprecedented global catastrophic risks that could deeply impact the future potential and existence of countless generations. From pandemics to nuclear war, to frontier technologies, and climate disaster, we need to be more aware, better prepared, and effectively organized to respond to these generational risks.

As a networked group of parliamentarians, I would encourage you to support the leadership volunteered by the governments of The Netherlands and Jamaica who are facilitating negotiations on the Declaration for Future Generations at the UN General Assembly.

Your voice and institutional support could help realize an ambitious Declaration and a successful Summit in 2024.

Second, the Secretary-General has proposed the appointment of a Special Envoy for Future Generations. The Envoy would raise awareness for the interests of future generations and advise governments and organizations on how best to represent them.

Building on the initiatives of this Congress, the Envoy could also support the growing network of Commissioners and Committees for Future Generations that are emerging at the national and regional level.

This Envoy would work with both policy-advising bodies like the ground-breaking Finnish Committee of the Future, as well as Future Generation advocates like K-pop band BTS, who have been appointed by the President of the Republic of Korea as Special Envoy’s for future generations and culture.

If your country has such a committee or Envoy for the Future, we would be grateful to hear about the practices that have succeeded and the challenges that have been overcome in delivering for the Future Generations of the people that you represent.

Third, we are building a Futures Lab Network across the United Nations system to apply the tools of strategic foresight to our work.

With the generous support of Finland, this network will have a hub in Helsinki with spokes radiating out.

If you are interested in supporting the Future Lab network, whether through policy expertise or financial resources, we would welcome your engagement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I've asked for your support across an ambitious set of initiatives, but I also want to offer our support to your broader efforts.

In Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General called for more inclusive multilateralism, one that more effectively includes the voices of parliaments, city and regional authorities, and local non-state organizations, especially those led by women and young people.

If there are offices, committees or groups in your districts that can benefit from our experience, or whose experience could benefit the United Nations, we would welcome the connection.

I also want to encourage you to accelerate your existing efforts to engage with your parliamentary colleagues across the globe, in particular in developing countries.

We will need a diverse and inclusive set of voices that can connect our present efforts towards sustainable development with the well being of future generations.

We are working in a time of incredible challenge and opportunity. This Congress, with its broad scope of participation and scale of ambition, shows the potential of an innovative 21st century multilateralism.

I look forward to close engagement with you all in the leadup to the Summit of the Future and wish you all the very best for your work in Vilnius.

Thank you.

*A video of the speech:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmQscp-G4zU&list=PLafTseM15bmGXfMyNS2B41zIF24U8cX6h&index=2>