



OFFICE OF  
THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF FINLAND

## Statement by the President of the Republic of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, at the high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UN, 21 September 2020

Mr Secretary General, Mr President, your Excellencies,

Today, we are celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. We are rightfully honoring its achievements and efforts for peace and security, development and human rights.

But we have to be honest: this anniversary comes at a difficult moment for the UN. Not only is our humankind confronted with common enemies – from the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change.

At the same time, our ability to form common responses has been weakening. The norms and institutions, built together over decades, are under increasing pressure. International agreements are challenged and interpreted in ways which weaken both their potential and their legitimacy.

This tide must turn. Global challenges that threaten the very existence of humanity require effective multilateral cooperation. We now need the United Nations more than ever.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finland joined the United Nations in 1955. In the ceremony celebrating our membership, the Finnish representative stated, and I quote:

*“One of the greatest tasks facing our community of nations is to build up and strengthen a system of law based on universal respect for mutual rights among all*

*nations. In this constructive work for the good of humanity, Finland, true to its own ideas and aspirations wishes wholeheartedly to participate.”*

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These words still ring true today. Finland remains fully committed to this goal.

In the anniversary declaration we approved today, we recommitted ourselves to the principles of the UN. The seventy-five year old Charter has stood the test of time well.

It is up to all of us – the Peoples of the United Nations – to uphold the Charter and its values. And it is our responsibility to achieve the future we want – to create a more peaceful, a more sustainable, and a more just world for future generations.