We stand at a critical moment in history. The great hopes raised by the UN Charter 75 years ago are clouded today by the evidence of pervasive growing inequalities, political polarization, inaction in the face of the existential challenges for humankind, and by the growth of a scepticism with regards to the value of multilateralism and international cooperation.

This is very concerning because now, more than ever before, there is an urgent need for global responses in order to address the consequences of a hugely disruptive global pandemic.

The pandemic has brought to the surface the deeply rooted fragilities of the systems upon which our development is grounded. Basic infrastructures, service delivery systems (particularly in the health and education sectors), social protection platforms, job creation mechanisms, emergency preparedness: in all these policy areas the pandemic has shaken the very foundations of our societies. It has affected trust in public institutions and their effectiveness in responding to unprecedented global challenges.

For all the regional and country differences that we can find in attitudes towards multilateralism, the truth is that the international system of norms and institutions created over the past decades is under tremendous stress and at the risk of becoming irrelevant. We cannot let that happen.

We are convinced that the UN will grow stronger out of the challenges posed by this pandemic. But it will do so only if it looks towards the future, and if it rekindles its will to change in the direction of more inclusion, more transparency and more democracy in the global arena. The way out of the crisis is not bouncing back to the pre-COVID-19 status quo. The challenge for the UN and for us all will be to exit the crisis by bouncing forward, by strengthening a more effective and more democratic multilateral space.

At this critical juncture, when the UN turns 75, and International IDEA celebrates its own 25th anniversary, we can only hope that a renewed international commitment to multilateralism will allow us to build a better world over the next few decades, that will allow us to build a world in which no one will be left behind, in which every human being will have the opportunity to live in
peaceful, just and inclusive societies, in which every person will fully enjoy the fundamental freedoms and rights that are the core of our common human heritage.

Happy 75th anniversary, United Nations, we proudly stand with you.

I thank you.