

## **Firmly Uphold Multilateralism and Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind**

Statement by  
H.E. State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi  
to the ECOSOC high-level conversation  
“Multilateralism after COVID-19: what kind of UN do we need  
at the 75th anniversary?”

17 July 2020

Secretary-General António Guterres,  
Madam President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Seventy-five years ago, our fathers' generation won the epic victory of the World anti-Fascist War following a heroic struggle. The ensuing decades witnessed the founding of the United Nations, countries working together to promote peace, development and human rights, and an inexorable trend toward multilateralism.

Over the past three quarters of a century, the UN has traversed a momentous journey. It has evolved into the most representative, authoritative and full-fledged cooperation platform, and the centerpiece of global governance and the international system. It has played an irreplaceable role and made indelible contributions to maintaining world peace and promoting sustainable development.

Seventy-five years on, our world has seen profound shifts, accentuated by the enormous impact of COVID-19. The myriad challenges before us have driven home the fact that this is an era of intertwined traditional and non-traditional security threats as well as inter-connected interests of all countries, and our world is increasingly an indivisible community with a shared future.

What kind of UN do we need amid the once-in-a-century changes? This is a question requiring deep reflection by all. From China's perspective, our times calls for:

— **A United Nations that safeguards world peace and security, and fairness and justice.** Peace is humanity's eternal quest, and one of

the core founding purposes of the UN. However, the dream of peace is yet to become reality. In 2019, ten conflicts left more than 20,000 civilians killed or injured in military attacks, and millions were displaced. The specter of the Cold War continues to haunt us, and the road to peace remains tortuous.

To live up to its mission of “saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and untold sorrow”, the UN must speak and act impartially and hold high the banner of fairness and justice. The Security Council needs to deliver on its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

The UN must stick to the three principles of peacekeeping, facilitate peaceful settlement of conflicts through dialogue, mediation, negotiation and other peaceful means, maintain strategic balance and stability, and push forward the international arms control and non-proliferation processes.

It must prioritize development as a route to peace, break the vicious circle of poverty, conflict and lack of development, and tackle root causes while addressing the symptoms. This is conducive to long-lasting peace, stability and security at the regional and international levels.

— **A United Nations that advocates harmonious co-existence across different races, systems and cultures.** With 193 member states, the UN is a family of more than seven billion people of over 2,000 ethnicities. No race, system or culture is superior to others. We do not subscribe to the idea of superiority of certain civilizations, even less the “clash of civilizations”.

The UN should be a voice for mutual respect, equality and harmonious co-existence, and for a world where diversity is appreciated, differences are respected, and the people of all countries can choose their social systems and development paths in light of their national realities.

It should reject the export of ideologies and interference in others’ internal affairs, and encourage exchanges and mutual learning. Good-faith dialogue will help bring down the wall of estrangement and misunderstanding, and enable common progress of all with openness and inclusiveness.

— **A United Nations that champions common development by addressing the North-South gap.** The right to subsistence and

development are basic human rights. Peace and development would remain elusive if a billion people suffer persistent, abject poverty and hunger.

With the launch of the SDG Decade of Action, the UN needs to advocate a people-centered, pro-development agenda, strengthen its coordinating role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It needs to make development front and center of the global macro policy framework.

It needs to steer the course of reform of international financial and trading systems, and foster an enabling global environment conducive to open, inclusive and balanced development beneficial for all.

It should be sober-minded about the difficulties and challenges COVID-19 brings to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and take concrete measures to help developing countries eliminate poverty and address the humanitarian crises caused by COVID-19. This will open up a bright prospect for a world free from want, and a world of development and dignity for all.

— **A United Nations that keeps abreast of the times and effectively responds to global challenges.** Our world faces a host of complex challenges, from peace and development to climate change and infectious diseases, and from terrorism and strategic security to new frontiers such as digital economy and artificial intelligence. None of them can be addressed without global efforts.

COVID-19 has accelerated the once-in-a-century shifts and exposed the deficit in global governance. Crises have renewed the de-globalization clamor, further fragmented the international trading system, and given rise to populist ideologies. There are growing attempts to stoke major country confrontation and decouple economies and systems. Such acts of regression must be stopped with united efforts.

The UN needs to stay committed to mutually beneficial cooperation, and take concrete actions to bring its member states together to improve global governance and tackle emerging challenges.

It needs to remain a member states led organization that abides by the principles of respecting countries' national realities and common but differentiated responsibilities, and advance reforms in various areas as appropriate to better reflect and safeguard the common interests of

member states as much as possible and increase their resilience against risks and challenges.

Ladies and Gentleman,

To meet the challenges of our time, whether it is to pursue peace and stability, achieve common development, combat COVID-19 or improve post-COVID global governance, the world needs a stronger, not weaker, UN. The UN's authority must be upheld, not undermined. We all have a duty to respond to the call of the times. We need to firmly support the central role of the UN, advance multilateralism and work for a community with a shared future for mankind.

**First, we need to uphold multilateralism and reject unilateralism and protectionism.** Unilateralism is causing serious damage to the order and governance system of our world. It has put the common interests and development space of all countries in jeopardy. Protectionism only leads to self-constraint. Isolation, self-centeredness and beggar-thy-neighbor practices will never make any country great. This is not about differences between particular countries, but rather the choice to be made between win-win cooperation and zero-sum game and between right and wrong.

We must always stand on the side of multilateralism and international justice. We must uphold the international system built around the UN, safeguard the WTO-centered multilateral trading regime and speed up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We need to say no to unilateralism. We need to oppose any act of walking away from international organizations and treaties or replacing them with something out of nowhere. No one should challenge or undermine universally recognized rules out of selfish interests.

**Second, we need to support greater democracy in international relations and reject hegemonism and power politics.** The future of humanity must be decided by people of the world together. Issues that matter internationally must be addressed through consultation between nations and governments. Any country claiming that its own interests should always come first and be placed above the common interests of the global community is morally unjustified and doomed to failure. The basic norms governing international relations, such as respect for national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs, must be observed by all.

Countries, irrespective of their size, strength and wealth, are equal. Consultation, cooperation and benefit for all should be our guiding principle to help make sure that the global governance system is responsive to the concerns and needs of the majority of countries, in particular the developing ones. Dialogue and consultation should be the way forward in addressing differences and disputes, rather than unwarranted unilateral actions such as economic blockade, financial sanctions, acts of bullying and power politics, and still less gross interference in other countries' internal affairs.

**Third, we need to safeguard the international order underpinned by international law and reject unlawful acts and double standards.** We all live in a global village. Development and progress will not be possible without order and the rule of law. Upholding the international rule of law is what our people want and what this globalized world needs. Honoring the spirit of contract and the international rule of law are essential. Commitments must be kept; rules must be followed; agreements must be fulfilled. We must firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and oppose unauthorized use of force, withdrawal from international organizations and agreements and other such behaviors that weaken the authority and sanctity of international law. We need one single set of rules, not double standards or selective application of these rules, when determining the merits of an issue. It is unacceptable to use the rule of law as a pretext to infringe on the legitimate rights and interests of other countries or even undermine peace and stability.

**Fourth, we need to call for solidarity and cooperation and reject self-conceit and beggar-thy-neighbor practices.** Solidarity and cooperation is the most powerful weapon against common challenges. COVID-19 has infected tens of millions of people and claimed over 500,000 lives worldwide. Cooperation against COVID-19 has become an urgent task. In fighting the disease, we must always follow a people-first approach and put saving lives above all else. The world needs to come together and give the World Health Organization (WHO) full support in playing its statutory role. Any politicization, stigmatization or name-calling associated with the virus must be rejected, so should scapegoating and blame-shifting.

We need to keep global industrial and supply chains stable and uninterrupted and seize the important opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution to boost the growth of new business forms and industries. The world calls for healthy competition, rather than

technological hegemony. Decoupling in whatever form must be rejected, so must smears and suppression. National security should not be used as a cover for discriminatory or exclusive policies. If a country shuts its doors, puts its own interests before anyone else's and habitually points fingers at others, these practices may not serve to protect itself, they may only pose risks to the common interests of the international community and even bring disasters on our world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

China is a firm proponent and practitioner of multilateralism. As a founding member of the UN and the first country to put its signature on the UN Charter, China has all along supported the UN in playing an active role, upheld its authority and stature and followed the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

China's response to COVID-19 has been open, transparent and responsible. We have provided timely information of the disease and made all-out efforts to cut off its transmission routes. We have shared our containment experience and fully supported the work of the UN. We have donated US\$50 million to WHO and provided medical supplies in emergency assistance to over 150 countries and international organizations. China will fully deliver on the actions announced by President Xi Jinping at the 73rd World Health Assembly. China will help affected countries, especially developing countries, with their COVID-19 response and economic and social development. As part of China's contributions to the global COVID-19 response, we will set up a global humanitarian response depot and hub in China and implement the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative for the poorest countries.

Let us come together for peace and development in keeping with the trend of our times and guided by multilateralism. Let us build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful post-COVID-19 world that enjoys lasting peace, security and prosperity for all.