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## Engaging “Our Common Agenda”

February 25, 2022  
Meeting Summary:

Civil Society Experts Dialogue #4, linked to UN General Assembly informal consultation:

***“Protecting our planet and being prepared for the future”***

### Introduction

From February 10 to March 8 2022, the UN General Assembly will hold five two-day informal consultations, to allow Member States and others to further consider the recommendations from the Secretary-General’s Our Common Agenda (OCA) report, and the means for their implementation.

To support the OCA process, the Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN) is hosting a series of civil society Experts Dialogues linked to these five General Assembly meetings. On February 25 some 40 civil society participants discussed the 18 OCA recommendations grouped in **Thematic Cluster #4, “Protecting our planet and being prepared for the future.”** (A breakdown of all the OCA recommendations as they have been grouped into five thematic clusters is [here](#).)

Participants at the meeting were asked to identify those OCA recommendations that should be prioritized, what's missing in the report, and next steps. Discussion focused particularly on (1) recommendations addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies; as well as (2) recommendations regarding a re-purposed Trusteeship Council and a more future-oriented UN system. Ahead of the General Assembly meeting taking place March 3-4, this summary presents a condensed not-for-attribution overview of the comments and recommendations made at the February 25 meeting.

## **General observations**

We are meeting at a historic and somber moment when we are witnessing the unilateral invasion of a sovereign country by another country. Its impact on the OCA process could either make us give up or it could reinforce our resolve to adopt ambitious proposals that would strengthen multilateralism for a more inclusive, effective and resilient UN system.

The OCA is an impressive selection of ideas that creates a framework for rethinking multilateralism on the way to the proposed Summit of the Future in 2023. It covers many areas with numerous proposals but also raises some concerns regarding its emphasis on 'networked' multilateralism that assigns many of the challenges on the global agenda to voluntary multistakeholder processes that are placed outside standard multilateral decision-making processes that hold governments accountable to their commitments.

Another concern is that some countries are increasingly creating parallel international systems of development as is the case with at least some of the BRICS.

Climate action is a central part of a fundamental reset in our relationship with nature which requires a systemic approach. Stockholm+50 offers a unique opportunity to make a critical paradigm shift and redefine a healthy planet for the prosperity for all based upon the right to a healthy environment. The outcome declaration can be a laboratory of new proposals that offers a pathway to relaunch the Global Pact for the Environment process and strengthen norms around "common heritage" and "global commons," leading to the Summit of the Future in 2023.

Participants noted the profound contribution that the Secretary-General made by making the focus on Future Generations as one of the central themes of the Our Common Agenda report. As Member States fight for competing visions of the future on the world stage at the UN, we as civil society and world citizens have a nuanced, innovative, bold and catalytic role to play at this critical juncture in the future of global governance and humanity.

## **Recommendations regarding the OCA paragraphs included in thematic cluster #4:**

### **Future Generations/UN Reform**

- Advocates supported the appointment of an Envoy for Future Generations that could work in tandem with the Secretary-General's proposed Scientific Advisory Board.
- Advocates also supported the publication of a Global Risk Report with the stipulation that it should be published every year rather than every five years. The report could be featured as a part of the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization.
- Advocates were concerned that the Emergency Platform is too little, too ad hoc and too late. While such a mechanism could be convened by the Secretary-General as an intermediary step, several proposed the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental decision-making body like the proposed Global Resilience Council that would deal with non-military human security threats as a complement to the Security Council.
- Concerns were raised about repurposing the Trusteeship Council, particularly if it requires an amendment to the UN Charter. It has a very loaded past with developing countries, is now dead and would require new support if it is to be repurposed.

### **Climate/Environment**

- The Stockholm+50 moment and 2022 Declaration will open a new phase of discussion for the plan of action around the OCA. The soon-to-be-released "Safeguarding Our Common Home: Declaration for Stockholm+50" civil society declaration proposes a four-way pathway to achieve the needed paradigm shift by implementing the right to a healthy environment, safeguarding the global commons, establishing a regenerative economy, and prioritizing governance and institutional solutions.
- The IPCC has concluded that we must dramatically increase CO2 reductions by 2050 to meet the climate challenge. The Earth System that naturally provides a stable global climate within planetary boundaries should also be recognized as a global common good. A legal framework should be adopted that will enable us to organize a system of governance that would protect the global climate as a global common good.