



GROUP OF FRIENDS  
IN DEFENSE OF THE  
CHARTER OF THE  
**UNITED NATIONS**

## **CONCEPT NOTE FOR SPECIAL EVENT TO COMMEMORATE AND PROMOTE THE “INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MULTILATERALISM AND DIPLOMACY FOR PEACE”**

### Overview:

On 12 December 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations overwhelmingly adopted, by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 2 against, resolution 73/127, submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and through which 24 April was declared as the “International Day for Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace”.

This International Day was first commemorated on 24 April 2019, within the framework of a High-Level Plenary Meeting, convened by H.E. Mrs. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés (Ecuador), then President of the General Assembly, and which included the participation, among others, of the Heads of the Principal Organs of the UN. Subsequently, on 05 May 2021, the General Assembly also held an Interactive Dialogue as part of efforts to observe this International Day.

As per the provisions of General Assembly resolution 73/127, all States and other relevant stakeholders are invited to observe the “International Day for Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace” and to disseminate, including through public awareness-raising activities, the advantages of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace.

Consequently, and mindful of the challenges currently faced by multilateralism, exacerbated by the polarization that prevails in today’s world, next 24 April 2024 provides a privileged opportunity to discuss, among others, on ways and means to strengthen multilateralism and diplomacy, as well as the prevailing system of international relations, rooted in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, for the achievement of lasting and sustained peace around the world, including as part of the General Assembly’s call to commemorate and promote this important International Day.

### Background:

As the world gathers this coming 24 April 2024 not to only commemorate, but also to celebrate the achievements of multilateralism and diplomacy, which has its best representation in the United Nations, humanity, and particularly the peoples of the Global South, suffers from the consequences of a global crisis with multiple dimensions, including, among others, in the climate, food, energy and finance fields, which, coupled with the negative impacts of ongoing wars and protracted conflicts, such as the one in the

Gaza Strip, is only keeping us off track from honoring our pledge of leaving no one behind and ensuring the attainment, by 2030, of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In many cases, the lack of progress in effectively and comprehensively redressing such challenges and threats, despite being common, although with different levels of intensity, is derived from either of the following ones, which, at its very core, has differing understanding of core values, such as international cooperation and solidarity:

1. Lack of willingness to engage, compromise and/or accommodate divergent views, positions and priorities;
2. Assumption of a zero-sum mentalities and departure from consensus-building approaches;
3. Resort to supremacist, punitive, divisive or confrontational approaches and/or measures;
4. Non-fulfillment of international obligations and commitments, coupled with selective approaches and/or accommodative interpretations of the provisions of the UN Charter, as part of efforts to impose a so-called “rules-based order” that, insofar as unknown and vague, may only serve agendas of a dubious nature; or
5. Resort to group unilateralism, when real and genuine multilateralism – inclusive and consultative – is perceived as not necessarily serving the purpose and/or interests of certain States.

Against this backdrop, and taking into account the persistent polarization and continued geopolitical tensions in international relations, a transformation of current diplomacy seems increasingly imminent. But not just any transformation. The diplomacy of the future – which shall necessarily still be rooted in the UN Charter and the norms of international law collectively developed over the past 79 years – must also be able to support global efforts for overcoming both growing and common challenges and threats that humanity is currently facing in multiple areas, and in which the central role of States is critical.

The United Nations, an intergovernmental Organization established in 1945 from the shatters of World War II, is at the service of its Member States for reaching agreements and taking collective decisions. Its founding Charter clearly establishes that the United Nations is a “centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends”, in order to “take effective collective measures for the prevention



and removal of threats to the peace”, to “develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples”, and to “achieve international cooperation”. To this end, the United Nations must, in particular, work to solve “international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character” and develop “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all”.

Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to resort to policies and methods that seek to suppress developing States and their needs. For instance, there is an increasing recourse to unilateralism, whether in the form of group unilateralism or unilateral, protectionist and/or isolationist measures; to attempts aimed at imposing a so-called “rules-based order” that not only remains vague, but which has never been agreed upon and has the potential to undermine both the rule of law at the international level and the very tenets of the UN Charter; and to efforts aimed at replacing, minimizing or equating the central and leading role of States, in the context of intergovernmental processes and debates, particularly at the United Nations, with that of non-State actors, especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are largely based in and financed by the developed world.

With respect to the latter phenomenon, while acknowledging the contribution that relevant stake-holders may indeed have to specific processes and conversations at the United Nations, we ought to note how striking it is to see that multilateralism is being slowly – yet effectively – replaced by multi-stakeholderism; an approach that ultimately dilutes the role of States, especially those in the Global South, diminishing their voice and their chances of really making meaningful contributions and ultimately having a significant impact on critical debates and decision-making processes on issues that, no doubt, will have an incidence on the lives of their peoples and the future of their nations.

Hence, as things stand, multilateralism, far from being revitalized, strengthened or reinvigorated to better respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is being threatened by growing trends and challenges that detract from the participation of developing States and make it nearly impossible to achieve the goals we have set ourselves, particularly the realization of that other possible world of peace and prosperity a reality for all.

Consequently, at this critical juncture, this year’s commemoration of the “International Day for Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace” provides States, particularly those from the Global South, an opportunity to, among others, reiterate the need to return to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to consider a future of diplomacy that is viable and acceptable for all and that serves the overall purpose of realizing peace worldwide, for both present and future generations, while reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism and our pledge of ensuring that it be truly inclusive.



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Objectives:

This commemorative Special Event aims to gather, among others, the Heads of the Principal Organs of the United Nations, as well as high-level representatives from Member States and Observers to the United Nations to engage in a frank and open discussion on how to strengthen and make truly more inclusive the multilateral system, on how to ensure strict compliance and adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, in both its letter and spirit, and on how to balance the participation of relevant stakeholders in some of the intergovernmental discussions within the framework of the three pillars of the United Nations, while ensuring that the intergovernmental nature of the Organization and the leading and central role of States is preserved.

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