

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



Context

The 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly will be held in an unprecedented context which is testing the limits of institutions from many countries as well as of the multilateral system itself. The global health, economic and social crisis triggered by Covid-19 is affecting almost all of the 193 UN Member States.

How best to manage the crisis is added to other pre-existing problems requiring international responses: armed conflicts, regional tensions, terrorism, transnational organized crime networks, human rights violations, the persistence of gender inequality, serious crimes, and cybersecurity. But managing the crisis also entails paying attention to other international challenges such as climate change, disparities between and within countries in human development indices, management of migration flows and the unprecedented increase in people requiring humanitarian assistance in order to survive.

In this complex context, there is growing criticism of the real or alleged incapacity of the United Nations system to lead consensus-based international action; however, at the same time, we are seeing global initiatives aimed at strengthening the multilateral system and countering these trends.

Spain situates itself decisively among that large number of countries which, while aware of the need to reform and strengthen the global governance system, have the utmost trust in the will and capacity of the United Nations, and of other multilateral organizations, to provide a joint response to global challenges, and that is convinced that the time to act is now. Spain's commitment to multilateralism is not self-serving, nor does it stem from a lack of awareness of the need to reform the system.

This is why Spain's action during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly will be based on the following five fundamental strategic aims:

1. Act to be part of the global response to the pandemic.
2. Act to promote inclusive multilateralism and UN reform.
3. Act to protect human rights and human dignity.
4. Act to promote peace and security.
5. Act to achieve a just, sustainable, climate neutral and digital world.

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



01

Act to be part of the global response to the pandemic

Multilateral cooperation and the unity of the international community are key elements to overcoming the current crisis.

Spain decisively supports the leadership of the United Nations and its essential role in collaboration with other multilateral institutions, and in particular the World Health Organization (WHO) as coordinator of the global health response and leader of the Crisis Management Team (UNCMT). We will work to improve the global health system, which must continue to have the WHO at its centre, following a rigorous evaluation which must focus on how to make it a more effective instrument.

We will step up international cooperation to guarantee equitable access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tests for Covid-19 and their consideration as global public goods. Spain will work particularly in the framework of the ACT Accelerator initiative, to whose Facilitation Council it belongs as a founding member of ACT.

We will advocate reorganizing and strengthening each and every health system of all the countries in the world with the goals of tackling the health emergency caused by Covid-19 and of achieving universal health coverage (SDG 3.8).

We will promote a new Global Compact on Health—a Health New Deal—based on the One Health approach which helps to strengthen national capacities for tackling new pandemics, for example, promoting access to water and sanitation and workplace health; combating climate change and advocating for renewable energy; protecting the most vulnerable collectives such as minors, refugees and older people, and taking the gender dimension into account; as well as championing a post-Covid-19 green recovery model.

We will ensure that other humanitarian or health crises are not forgotten, safeguarding the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

We will promote the full involvement of international financial institutions, under the leadership of the United Nations, in the response to the socio-economic impact of the crisis. Spain is fully committed to the renewed validity of the 2030 Agenda and of the Paris Agreement as providing a roadmap for post-Covid-19 socio-economic recovery. For this reason, we will encourage the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, which is to meet in July 2021 under the auspices of the General Assembly, to address questions

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



02

concerning the post-Covid-19 recovery, relaunching the 2030 Agenda Decade of Action and adopting a new style of governance guaranteeing global public goods.

Act to promote inclusive multilateralism, UN system reform and the revitalization of UN bodies

Spain defends active and inclusive multilateralism that is close to the people, in which governments and international bodies pool resources with civil society, the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations. We advocate urgent, decisive, consensus-based and global actions by all the actors involved, implementing specific action plans that demonstrate the effectiveness of multilateralism. The United Nations must be a platform for promoting changes and actions to tackle global problems, a forum for dialogue and meetings that must be preserved.

The 75th anniversary of the United Nations is an opportunity for action. Spain is ready to lead specific actions to ensure the materialization of the good intentions contained in the Commemorative Declaration adopted by the General Assembly on 21 September aimed at generating trust in the multilateral system.

Spain supports the necessary reform of the United Nations system promoted by the Secretary-General, to build an organization capable of acting comprehensively and coherently, both on the ground and from its headquarters in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and the rest of the world. The aim of the reform must be to clearly integrate the three pillars of peace, development and human rights; prioritize the preventive work of the UN; and put an end to the duplications and disputes regarding areas of competence between Secretariat departments, as well as between the bodies and agencies of the development system.

Spain will continue to back the trust funds for the reform of the development system (the Joint SDG Fund and the Special Purpose Trust Fund for the new Resident Coordinator system), to which it was one of the first contributors.

The reform of the management system will remain a priority. Spain will strive to ensure the implementation of an ambitious reform guaranteeing effectiveness and transparency, accountability, the achievement of synergies and the sustainability of the system, to which each Member State must contribute based on their capacity.

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



Spain also supports the revitalization of the main UN bodies to improve their effectiveness and guarantee the continuity of their work, even during a health emergency.

In this conviction, we will support the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly by improving its working methods, including the definition of a suitable selection procedure for the position of UN Secretary-General.

Spain is committed to the necessary reform of the Security Council. Our objective is to reach an agreement backed by a large majority of States, thus strengthening the Council's legitimacy. We are aiming for a comprehensive reform that resolves all five of the key issues identified (categories of membership; veto; regional representation; size and working methods; and the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA), resulting in a Security Council that is truly representative, effective, transparent, responsible and democratic.

By committing to inclusive multilateralism, during this session Spain will seek greater dialogue and interaction with civil society, taking advantage of existing instruments, and will also seek to improve coordination with regional organizations, especially the European Union and the African Union.

03

Act to protect human rights and human dignity

The promotion and protection of human rights and gender equality constitute a fundamental line of our foreign action. During the 2018-2020 period, in which Spain has been a member of the Human Rights Council, we have encouraged the Council to address the most serious situations involving human rights violations, through country-specific resolutions. Moreover, we have contributed our knowledge and experience in those thematic areas in which we have an accredited track record. We will continue to back the work of human rights defenders, promoting the abolition of the death penalty, the full exercise and enjoyment of the rights of women and girls under equal conditions, paying particular attention to sexual and reproductive health rights and the fight against all forms of gender violence, including the trafficking of women and girls, non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, and the business and human rights dossier; we will continue working to realize social, economic and cultural rights, paying particular attention to the human right to drinking water and sanitation, which we have been intensely involved in promoting.

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



We will strive to improve the effectiveness and credibility of the UN bodies entrusted with protecting human rights. We will pay particular attention to the adequate performance of the special procedures of the HRC and of the treaty bodies, to guarantee, in addition to their effectiveness, that they act with independence, professionalism and impartiality.

We will step up our work on gender equality, through, among other initiatives, the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform and Spain's leadership of the Economic Justice and Rights Coalition of the Generation Equality Forum, and through our continued leadership of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda¹.

Humanitarian diplomacy is another of our lines of action, focusing our attention on forgotten, protracted or less visible crises and on civilian protection agendas, in particular the protection of medical operations in conflict situations²; the protection of minors, schools, students and teachers in armed conflicts³; the fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings⁴, including trafficking in human organs; and the efforts to respond to the humanitarian crisis provoked by mass displacements of people.

We will ensure the application of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, seeking solutions and shared responsibility and solidarity in tackling forced displacement. As holders of the pro-tempore Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform (Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework) we will mobilize the international community to address this phenomenon in Central America. In demonstration of our commitment to finding solutions to the tragedy of forced displacement, Spain will prepare a national Action Plan for the application of the Global Compact on Refugees.

In the sphere of migration, we will champion greater responsibility, solidarity and humanity at the global level.

All of this is supplemented by humanitarian actions undertaken by Spain, chair of the ODSG for 2019-2020⁵, drawing on our experience in forgotten crises and calling for greater coordination in the response to these crises by the international community, as well as expressing our commitment to the challenges posed by gender, disability and diversity.

- 1 Spain promoted the creation of a Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, and adopted the second Action Plan in 2018.
- 2 Spain promoted resolution 2286 (2016) of the UNSC and is working towards its development through a UNGA resolution to address aspects not covered by the Security Council.
- 3 In the current session, Spain will implement the conclusions reached at the International Conference on Safe Schools held in Palma de Mallorca in May 2019.
- 4 Spain promoted resolution 2331 (2016) on this issue.
- 5 OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) Donor Support Group

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



On the 15th anniversary of its affirmation at the 2005 World Summit, Spain is stepping up its commitment to promoting the Responsibility to Protect, and will argue for it to remain on the Assembly's agenda. Spain will also remain committed to defending the rule of law and will maintain an active and combative position in the fight against impunity, through the staunch defence of the work of the International Criminal Court against attacks seeking to undermine its legitimacy, advocating its cooperation with the Security Council, the principle of complementarity and the necessary collaboration with the Court by all countries. Moreover, Spain will continue to support the efforts aimed at limiting the use of veto in the Council in situations of atrocity crimes and the establishment of rigorous and impartial mechanisms for compiling and reporting information on the most serious crimes and their perpetrators.

Commitment to human dignity requires ongoing action, and that is why we are working to be one of the first countries to design a National Strategy on Humanitarian Diplomacy, reflecting the level of domestic compliance with the commitments assumed internationally and ensuring the coherence of our foreign policy.

04

Act to promote peace and security

All of the above will only be possible with the implementation of initiatives aimed at protecting people from global threats, such as armed conflicts, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and new threats such as cyberattacks. In addition, we will continue to support efforts against transnational organized crime and against maritime insecurity.

Spain has been participating in peacekeeping operations since 1989: over 170,000 Spanish troops have been deployed worldwide. Spain is the twelfth largest financial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations and the twenty-seventh largest contributor in terms of the number of troops deployed. Spain intends to maintain these positions and will continue contributing to the work of the United Nations in international peacekeeping and security, stepping up its presence in those contexts where Spain's added value is greatest.

At the same time, we are aware of the need for an exhaustive review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture so as to increase its effectiveness, guaranteeing that the protection of civilians and, when necessary, the protection of human rights, forms an inherent part of UN mandates. For this reason, in 2018 Spain contributed to preparing the High-Level Meeting on Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) promoted by Secretary-General Guterres in the framework of his efforts to reform the peace and security pillar. Moreover, Spain was one of the first ten States to sign the Political Declaration of Shared Commitments resulting from this initiative, representing a renewal of the political

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



commitment of the Member States to peacekeeping operations as well as an instrument with the potential to define future mandates. Among the priority areas of commitment this Declaration encompasses, of particular note—due to their connection to the SDGs—are the mainstreaming of the gender perspective throughout all stages of peace processes, in line with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and the contribution of peacekeeping operations to international efforts to protect civilians, especially women and children, and to promote human rights.

Spain will continue to promote the application of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Spain has spearheaded a number of initiatives to introduce and strengthen the gender perspective in peacekeeping operations and was one of the first ten countries to approve a National Plan for implementing the Agenda. The Second National Plan, approved in 2017, is already in force. Spain, together with Finland, launched Commitment 2025 aimed at guaranteeing the full and effective participation of women in all peace processes, with 10 specific commitments for States and five petitions to the UN. In addition, the President of the Spanish Government forms part of the Circle of Leadership to end sexual abuse and exploitation in peacekeeping operations, a purpose to which Spain is fully committed.

As regards the fight against terrorism, Spain will, throughout this session, facilitate the renewal of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Spain will continue focusing especially on victims, supporting, through the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism (co-chaired by Spain and Afghanistan), the holding of an International Congress for Victims when health conditions so allow. We have also been supporting and financing the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, as well as its portal for victims of terrorism. We are particularly interested in the initiatives of this Office, such as those relating to judicial evidence and the protection of infrastructure.

As regards non-proliferation, we will contribute substantively to the global review of resolution 1540 (2004), a process that must be completed by 2021. As chair of the Group of Friends of Resolution 1540, we will mobilize efforts to reform the mechanisms to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and non-State actors.

During the 75th session, we will continue working actively in the Conference on Disarmament, recognized by the United Nations as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. Spain remains committed to the full application of the JCPOA and the monitoring of agreements with Iran.

In accordance with the line established by the Secretary-General to promote prevention as a guiding principle of UN action in all spheres, and because mediation is an instrument par excellence, Spain will continue to promote and participate in different initiatives, including the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. To strengthen this line of action,

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



05

in August 2020 the Government appointed a new Ambassador-at-large for Mediation and Intercultural Dialogue with the aim of promoting Spain's foreign action in conflict resolution and prevention.

Act to achieve a just, sustainable, climate neutral and digital world

Defending human dignity also requires paying attention to people's needs and aspirations as regards sustainable development. Spain is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda, designed for the global achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is why it submitted a Voluntary National Review in July 2018, and will present another during the 75th session of the General Assembly.

This domestic commitment also entails international action to support countries in achieving the SDGs and defending global public goods. Spanish Cooperation, in its 2018-2021 Master Plan, has adopted the SDGs as its own strategic objectives, focusing its efforts on eradicating poverty, building the resilience of individuals and communities, reducing inequalities, defending human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promoting inclusive economic growth, the conservation of the planet and the fight against climate change. We will continue promoting the application of the results of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the relevant spheres, including the Agenda for Humanity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the New Urban Agenda.

One of our priorities is to reduce inequality and discrimination between and within countries, which unquestionably constitutes one of the greatest challenges of the 2030 Agenda. Spain focuses part of its cooperation efforts on working with groups that suffer multiple forms of discrimination, regardless of the country where they are located, and adopting a multidimensional approach. This is why we will pay particular attention to the challenges facing the least developed countries, middle-income countries and small island developing states.

We will work to promote climate action, so that we can achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and just and prosperous societies, with resource-efficient economies.

Moreover, we will promote climate diplomacy, to ensure that the COP-26 produces tangible results and so as not to lose ambition in the new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term climate action plans and strategies that countries must submit this year. We will also attach importance to the human security dimension of climate change and to environmental degradation, supporting more active participation of the United Nations in this sphere.

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION



We will collaborate actively in the United Nations within the Advisory Group of Member States on Climate Change for the materialization of the commitments adopted by the international community in 2019 at the Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit. We will pay particular attention to the initiatives of the coalition for social and political drivers that we lead with Peru on the just transition, on health and on gender, in close cooperation, respectively, with the ILO, WHO and UN Women. Furthermore, we will pay particular attention to the efforts to achieve post-Covid-19 recovery that is green, inclusive and digital.

As part of our efforts to preserve the environment, we will participate actively in initiatives to protect biodiversity and the oceans (in particular, the Summit on Biodiversity and CBD COP-15; and the United Nations Ocean Conference) and to combat desertification, as well as in the process for the adoption of a Global Compact for the Environment and to strengthen environmental governance.

We will promote water diplomacy and the second United Nations Water Action Decade (2018-2028), for which we will prepare a foreign action initiative.

We will seek to ensure food and nutrition security and we will collaborate actively in the Food Systems Summit called by the Secretary-General for 2021.

Within the United Nations and also as a member of the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) Council for 2019-2022, we will champion connectivity and digital inclusion to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, reducing the gap between countries. We will also collaborate in the strengthening of cybersecurity initiatives.

In coordination with our European partners, we will continue to play an active role in negotiations in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and of the future treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine Biodiversity of areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), defending Spain's interests—as a Mediterranean and Atlantic country with a worldwide fishing tradition—paying attention to any international regulatory developments concerning marine biodiversity

Other issues

We will defend the principle of multilingualism in the United Nations, as an expression of its universal nature, which favours communication and tolerance between peoples and ensures broader and more effective participation of all in the work of the UN. To this end, we will continue working in the Group of Friends of the Spanish Language, playing

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 75TH SESSION**



a key role in the negotiation of the UNGA resolution on multilingualism, scheduled to be adopted during the current session.

We will continue working to achieve the full and effective application of the unequivocal doctrine of the General Assembly on the question of Gibraltar, which establishes: that the colonial situation of Gibraltar is incompatible with resolution 1514 (1960) which refers to the right of peoples to self-determination; that the principle that must govern the decolonization process of Gibraltar is that of restoration of Spanish territorial integrity; that this question can only be resolved through bilateral negotiations between Spain and the United Kingdom, which must keep in mind the interests of the colony's population; and that only the United Nations can determine when the decolonization process has been completed. Until such a time, Gibraltar shall remain on the UN's list of non-self-governing territories.

We will continue working to ensure that Spain has an adequate presence in the bodies, committees, and executive boards of the UN system, as well as to increase the presence of Spaniards in executive positions of the Secretariat and in the rest of the system.

We will pay attention to communication with Member States and with Spain's citizenry, aimed at publicizing and highlighting the value of the United Nations' work and the role that our country plays in the Organization. Specifically, we will remain decisively committed to digital communication, through our social networks and multimedia campaigns, in such a way that the public in general can obtain first-hand knowledge of the work we are carrying out in the United Nations, building effective multilateralism day by day, with the UN at the heart of the world agenda.

We will increase our presence in forums and debates organized by the United Nations in the sphere of sport, as a contributing factor to peace and to reducing exclusion; of sustainable tourism in collaboration with the UNWTO, for post-Covid-19 recovery; and of corporate social responsibility, as a vehicle for generating profits responsibly through good governance, environmental management and social action for development, areas in which our country and our companies are recognized as world leaders.

In the framework of the Action Plan for Spanish Companies in the United Nations, we will strive to step up the presence of Spanish companies in all UN tenders.