

SPAIN'S PRIORITIES

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 76TH SESSION



CONTEXT

During the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly we must address a new global scenario, greatly impacted by the political, economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an unprecedented and uncertain context, which is seriously affecting all of the Organization's Member States, and which has put the effectiveness and coherence of our current global governance system to the test.

Coordinated crisis management and fair and equitable vaccination are now, more than ever, crucial instruments for overcoming the pandemic in the short and medium term. In the long term it is also essential that we promote socio-economic recovery that leaves no one behind, and that we build back better.

The complexities of crisis management are compounded by other, pre-existing challenges which the pandemic has aggravated, and which we must address jointly: the socio-economic divide and rising inequality; armed conflicts, regional tensions, terrorism, organized crime, and human rights violations; the ecological, climate and demographic divide, which has a particular impact on the development and well-being of the most vulnerable; technological and cybersecurity challenges, which are gaining momentum in an increasingly digitalized world; and the difficulties involved in implementing the [2030 Agenda](#). In addition, there is growing uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of the United Nations system in playing a central role in the multilateral efforts of the 21st century.

Aware of the need to reform and reinforce global governance, Spain is firmly committed to strengthened multilateralism and to the United Nations as a forum for consultation, coordination, dialogue and action.

Therefore, during the Assembly's 76th session, Spain will focus its efforts on the following priorities:

1. Promoting vaccination and institutional measures against Covid-19
2. Supporting a post-pandemic socio-economic recovery that is inclusive, just, sustainable, resilient and leaves no one behind
3. Consolidating inclusive and strengthened multilateralism
4. Protecting people's human rights and dignity
5. Promoting peace and security
6. Protecting the most vulnerable
7. Achieving a more sustainable and egalitarian world
8. Advancing the ecological and digital transition

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01

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Promoting vaccination and institutional measures against Covid-19

To win the battle against the pandemic, we firmly believe in the need to accelerate vaccination at the global level. As a priority, we will promote safe and equitable access worldwide to vaccination, immunization, supplies, diagnosis and treatments against Covid-19. To this end, Spain launched the “[Vacunas para todos](#)” [Vaccines for all] initiative; we will continue to support the “[ACT Accelerator](#)”, as one of its founding members, and member of its Facilitation Council; and we will also support the COVAX facility for making vaccines available and accessible to all, and the C-TAP (Covid-19 technology access pool) initiative for sharing information and knowledge.

The WHO must remain at the heart of the global health system. Spain will promote a reform to give the Organization greater independence and research capacity in the event of health emergencies. Moreover, we will promote programmes involving other diseases that also require attention in the current health crisis context¹.

We will support the initiative presented by the WHO Director-General regarding an international treaty on pandemic preparedness, to make the implementation of the International Health Regulations more effective, and to guarantee that legal instruments are appropriate for situations such as the current health crisis.

02

Supporting a post-pandemic socio-economic recovery that is inclusive, just, sustainable, resilient and leaves no one behind

Spain is fully committed to the renewed validity of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement as a roadmap for achieving post-pandemic socio-economic recovery. We will encourage the full involvement of international financial institutions in the response to the socio-economic impact of the crisis. We will take the opportunity

¹ Such as programmes to combat malaria and polio, and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH).

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provided by the 2030 Agenda's Decade of Action to promote fulfilment of the SDGs and a new governance that guarantees global public goods and solidarity.

We will support the conclusions of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of July 2021, in which Spain presented, moreover, a second Voluntary National Review. Our principal line of action here is the design of a new Sustainable Development Strategy. We have also supported the creation of a new IMF trust fund for countries especially affected by the health crisis and the extension of initiatives already underway on debt moratorium and relief for vulnerable middle-income economies.

We will promote a Health New Deal based on the One Health approach, to help strengthen national capacities while leaving no one behind: e.g., promoting access to water and sanitation, and protecting health at work²; guaranteeing justice, universal social protection, and decent work. combating climate change and advocating for renewable energy; protecting the most vulnerable groups, such as minors, refugees, and older people, and taking the gender dimension into account; and advocating for a "green recovery" model.

We will also prevent other humanitarian or health crises from being neglected, ensuring the humanitarian-development-peace and security nexus—also known as the triple nexus—and the participation of local communities and civil society in actions and in decision-making.

03

Consolidating inclusive and strengthened multilateralism

This new session should be an opportunity to reform and revitalize the United Nations as a platform for consultation, dialogue and action.

Spain is committed to inclusive and strengthened multilateralism, a vision that we reaffirmed at the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. It must be underpinned by greater dialogue and interaction between stakeholders: governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Spain will promote coordination with the European Union as a special priority.

² Spain and the EU support the worldwide implementation of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

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We will continue to be ready to participate in specific actions to fulfil the commitments set forth in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, of 21 September 2020. Proof of this readiness is Spain's participation in the "Alliance for Multilateralism" and the "[Together for stronger multilateralism](#)" initiatives.

We will support the United Nations reform promoted by the Secretary General, and his report "[Our Common Agenda](#)"³, to achieve a comprehensive and coherent organization, both at headquarters and on the ground. The aim of the reform should be an Organization that is "united in action", prioritizing: coherence between the three pillars, namely peace and security, development, and human rights; elimination of overlaps between the Secretariat's units; the much-needed reform of the development system—especially in the current situation—as its funding is backed by Spain, as one of its leading contributors; improving management and financing; and institutional reform.

The transformation of the management and financing system is key to adapting the Organization to the 21st century. We will endeavour to make it a system with greater transparency, accountability, and sustainability, and in which each State contributes in accordance with its capacity. We will advocate, moreover, for continuing to promote gender parity among staff, the rejuvenation of the Organization, and measures regarding mobility and training.

Spain will also promote the revitalization of the General Assembly, by improving its working methods.

We will continue to support the necessary reform of the Security Council, through an agreement that includes a broad majority of States and resolves the five key issues of the reform.⁴ The aim will be to strengthen its legitimacy to make it more representative, accountable, transparent and democratic.

04

Protecting people's human rights and dignity

The difficult circumstances of the pandemic have rekindled the debate on the effectiveness and improvement of the system for recognizing and protecting human rights. Safeguarding these rights and protecting vulnerable people are a cornerstone of Spain's foreign action, a position that we supported in 2018-2020 as a member of the Human Rights Council.

³ Scheduled for publication in September 2021.

⁴ Categories of membership; veto; regional representation; size and working methods; and the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA.

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We will continue to take firm action on behalf of the work of human rights defenders, especially promoting: the abolition of the death penalty; the rights of women and girls; sexual and reproductive health and the fight against gender violence and trafficking in human beings; the fight against racism; non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity; the protection of the rights of people with disabilities; social, economic and cultural rights; and the right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

We will also make efforts to improve the effectiveness, independence, professionalism, impartiality and credibility of the United Nations bodies responsible for protecting human rights, paying particular attention to the proper functioning of the Human Rights Council's special procedures, and to improve their funding.

05

Promoting peace and security

As fundamental pillars of United Nations action, new security concepts such as shared security, human security, food security and cybersecurity will come to the fore over the next few years when it comes to planning UN activity.

This is why Spain will continue to promote the implementation of initiatives aimed at ensuring the protection of people against global threats and to foster the Secretary-General's [Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping](#) (A4P) and the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians in conflicts.

Prevention and mediation will also be maintained as priority instruments. We will continue to be involved in the [United Nations Alliance of Civilizations](#), whose creation was co-sponsored by Spain and Turkey. To strengthen this line of action, the Government of Spain has appointed an Ambassador-at-Large for Mediation and Intercultural Dialogue. We will also support the Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITPax).

Spain will, in turn, strengthen its role in peacekeeping operations, in which we have participated since 1989, especially where Spain's added value is highest. We will support the incorporation of the gender perspective into peace missions, as we affirmed together with Finland in [Commitment 2025](#), which is aimed at ensuring the full participation of women in all peace processes. All of these efforts will promote the application of the "[Women, Peace and Security](#)"⁵ Agenda.

At the International Criminal Court, Spain, as a member of the Bureau for 2021-2023, will promote the review and improvement of the Court's work, especially with a view to guaranteeing the integrity of the Rome Statute and its universal support. Spain will also

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continue to lead efforts to limit the use of the veto in the Security Council in the face of atrocity crimes and to establish rigorous and impartial mechanisms for the gathering of information on the most serious crimes and their perpetrators.

The 15th anniversary of the 2005 World Summit at which the principles of the Responsibility to Protect were endorsed was a felicitous occasion on which to reaffirm our commitment to fighting impunity and to defending the rule of law. During this session we will continue to work to promote the R2P principles and will maintain our involvement in the Focal Points Network and the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

In the area of counter-terrorism, Spain will continue to focus on stepping up efforts against hybrid threats, on international judicial cooperation and on protecting victims. In particular, we will back the International Congress of Victims of Terrorism, to be held in the near future. We will continue to participate actively in the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and in the Victims of Terrorism Support Group. We will continue to promote the resolutions on this matter approved by UN institutions, as well as the “Madrid Guiding Principles” on stemming the flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

During this session, we will support the initiative to put disarmament back at the top of our common agenda. We will continue working actively on the Disarmament Conference, on the prevention of illicit arms trafficking and on the quest for more specific regulation of the prohibition against biological weapons. Spain remains committed to the full application of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) regarding Iran’s nuclear programme and the monitoring of agreements with that country.

Spain will also remain committed to the NPT Review Conference and to the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament and its 22 Stepping Stones. We have already contributed actively to long-term measures, such as the Maria Skłodowska-Curie fellowship programme of the IAEA and collaboration with UNIDIR in Geneva.

As regards outer space, Spain will promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and its peaceful use on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. During the last session, Spain co-sponsored resolution A/RES/75 /36 regarding responsible behaviours in outer space at the General Assembly.

⁵ Approved by Resolution 2242 under the Spanish presidency of the Security Council in 2015.

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06

Protecting the most vulnerable

Our commitment to human dignity calls for ongoing humanitarian action, in which Spain has positioned itself as a trailblazer. We support people-centred humanitarian assistance that tackles the underlying causes of humanitarian crises and is based on the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality.

We are developing an innovative National Strategy for Humanitarian Diplomacy, which will be approved in the coming months, having already been unanimously endorsed by the Public Administration and by civil society. This strategy places particular emphasis on the humanitarian-development-peace and security nexus as well as on specific goals, including conflict prevention and the promotion of mediation initiatives; respect for international humanitarian law; and the protection of the most vulnerable groups.

We will therefore continue to focus our attention on forgotten crises and on protecting the vulnerable in armed conflicts, including women and children, medical missions, and schools, students and teachers. In 2016, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Spain promoted Resolution 2286 on the protection of medical missions.

We will place particular emphasis on the [Safe Schools Declaration of 2015](#) and on the promotion of the International Conferences on Safe Schools, the third edition of which was held in 2019 in Palma de Mallorca. Spain will also be co-hosting the 4th International Conference on Safe Schools, which is to be held in Abuja, Nigeria. In addition, Spain will support the mandate of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and their collaboration with UNICEF; as well as the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children.

Spain undertakes to ensure that the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration are applied, and to seek solutions, shared responsibility and solidarity to tackle forced displacement.

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07

Achieving a more sustainable and egalitarian world

Defending the equality and dignity of persons also entails taking account of the needs and aspirations of the global population, especially that of developing countries. Spain is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and to a reform of the United Nations' development system that places people at the heart of its actions. We will continue to reaffirm the principles of the Addis Ababa Agenda and to promote the application of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits, including the Agenda for Humanity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the New Urban Agenda.

The pandemic, which has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls and on their physical and mental health, has thrown a fierce spotlight on the full scale and scope of gender inequality. In our pursuit of a more egalitarian world, we will step up our work to promote gender equality through, among other initiatives, the [Beijing Platform](#), the [Istanbul Convention](#), and Spain's leadership in forging a Feminist Diplomacy that mainstreams the gender approach into all facets of foreign action.

Spain's efforts towards gender equality also include our active participation in the work of UN-Women and in the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights, and our ongoing leadership in implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

During this session, we will continue to promote the participation of women in all spheres of international society. We will step up efforts to strengthen economic justice and to combat gender violence and the trafficking of women and girls. We will promote the gender approach as a foundation for building back better.

08

Advancing the ecological and digital transition

Spain will work to advance a just and sustainable ecological transition, establishing multilateral green partnerships to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, and to establish just and prosperous societies with resilient and resource-efficient economies. We will also underscore the importance of the human security dimension of climate change and environmental degradation, supporting more active participation by the United Nations in this sphere

Moreover, we will promote climate diplomacy, and participate actively in COP26, to be held in Glasgow, which will push for progress on the basis of the conclusions

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and commitments entered into during COP25, held in Madrid. We will seek tangible outcomes and long-term strategies.

Within the framework of the United Nations' 2nd Water Action Decade (2018-2028), we will prioritize efforts to preserve the environment and biodiversity (taking full advantage of the upcoming COP15 on biodiversity scheduled for October 2021 in Kunming) and to combat desertification. In coordination with our European partners, we will continue to participate actively in the BBNJ negotiations,⁶ defending Spain's interests as a Mediterranean and Atlantic country with a world-renowned fisheries tradition, with a stake in any international regulatory developments aimed at protecting marine biodiversity.

Spain is committed to safeguarding food and nutritional security and we will collaborate actively in the Food Systems Summit convened by the Secretary-General for 2021.

Digitalization has become an indispensable instrument for sustainable development and growth. Spain will promote a just digital transition that ensures equitable access to digital networks and infrastructure and reduces the digital gap.

Within the United Nations, and also as a member of the Council of the International Telecommunications Union for 2019-2022, we will advocate for digital connectivity and inclusion to achieve the SDGs, thus reducing the gap between countries. Similarly, we will collaborate in stepping up initiatives on cybersecurity and the responsibility of States in cyberspace.

We will also focus on strengthening and broadening the action of the UN Information and Communications Technology Facility in Quart de Poblet, Valencia, which has gradually become the communications campus of the entire UN system and the nerve centre of UN digitalization.

09

Other issues

We will work to ensure that Spain is duly represented within the United Nations system and we will promote our future candidacies for the International Law Commission (2023-2027), the Human Rights Council (2025-2027), and the Security Council (2031-2032). We will increase the number of Spanish nationals holding managerial positions in the Secretariat and throughout the UN system. We will lend our support to United

⁶ International legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

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Nations agencies with bases in Spain⁷ and we will also promote the proposal for the creation of a “Casa de las Naciones Unidas” in Madrid.

Spain will continue to champion multilingualism at the United Nations, favouring communication and tolerance between peoples, and the broader and more effective participation of all in the work of the UN.

We will defend the full and effective application of the General Assembly's unequivocal stance regarding Gibraltar.

We will offer renewed support to the presence of Spanish companies in the United Nations, within the framework of the Action Plan for Spanish Companies, to increase their participation in all tenders.

Spain has experience and renown in the sphere of youth-related initiatives at both the regional and global levels. In 2019 Madrid was the headquarters for the Model United Nations, in which over 2,500 young people participated. We will continue to promote measures to support young people and education, focusing especially on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda⁸, and on the creation of a UN Youth Delegate Programme.

⁷ UNWTO, the UN Information and Communications Technology Facility, the WFP logistics base in las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and the UNITAR training centre in Malaga.

⁸ Security Council Resolution 2250.