

Have your say as the United Nations Celebrates 75 Years

By Dr Coumba Mar Gadio

The year 2020 marks a major milestone in the existence of the United Nations (UN) as the organisation turns 75 years old. Established within the aftermath of the Second World War while the world was in ruins and nations in need of peace, the UN is this year looking back at the challenges and successes over the last seven and a half decades.

From January this year, to mark the start of the 75th anniversary of the organization, the UN has been working with partners to reach as many people as possible, listen to their hopes and fears, learn from their experiences and empower them to think and act globally through the UN75 campaign.

This global dialogue initiative, called UN75, has involved discussions in classrooms to boardrooms and many other settings globally in addition to an easy to complete one-minute survey. I am pleased to note that Zambia is on the map as among the top eight countries globally and third in Africa with more almost 50,000 Zambians participating in the UN75 one-minute survey. I wish to thank all Zambians who have made their voices heard by the United Nations and the world.

By creating this survey, the UN has understood that cooperation among countries, sectors and generations is essential to fight the COVID-19 pandemic because no one can achieve it alone. Global cooperation in the response to the pandemic is what will enable us all overcome this challenge. Further, working together will enable us build back better and faster than if each country or sector or group of people went it alone.

Overcoming COVID-19 is also critical in view of the need for all nations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 goals that all 193 UN member States committed to in 2015 to bring about sustainable development by the year 2030 leaving no one behind.

The UN in Zambia is supporting attainment of the SDGs through the Zambia UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework which aims to achieve transformational results in support of Zambia's development priorities in the period 2016-2022. This assistance ranges from providing global expertise and policy advice to technical assistance and capacity development in key priority areas. The Government of

the Republic of Zambia is strongly committed to the implementation of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demonstrated by the country's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) made in July this year. VNRs are country-led and country-driven regular and inclusive reviews of progress at national and sub national levels on progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The country's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) underscores this commitment. Integrating the SDGs into the National Planning Framework and putting in place strong coordination and reporting mechanisms, further demonstrate the country's resolve to anchoring its development trajectory on the 2030 Agenda.

With only 10 years left, we all need to use this Decade of Action to mobilise and take action so that rise above challenges that include the climate crisis to pandemics, inequalities, gender inequality, youth empowerment, new forms of violence, and rapid changes in technology and in our population. Now more than ever, we need to dialogue and act together.

It is, therefore, important for everyone to participate in the UN75 dialogue which is still open at <https://www.un75.online> until 31 December 2020.

Through the survey, we have heard Zambians raising various issues such as importance of investing in health, more employment opportunities and more sustainable consumption and production. Do you think there is need to emphasize more on these issues or on other key areas? I encourage you to participate in the UN75 one-minute survey. It is not late, the UN wants to hear from you.

It is my hope that more people from Zambia will take the one-minute survey as each voice counts and should be heard. The UN75 initiative is not just an academic exercise but a real listening opportunity whose findings will be used to develop new programmes and interventions in shaping the future.

As the UN is marking its 75th anniversary in these extraordinary times of the COVID-19 pandemic, let us make extraordinary efforts in working together and build back better. With greater multilateralism, we can emerge stronger and better face other challenges that may

come. We need trust and collaboration with never-ending dialogue. We need to forge ahead as one human family and deliver the future we want and the UN we need.

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