



16 February 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that, at the request of the Secretary-General, I will convene an informal meeting of the General Assembly to hear a briefing by the Secretary-General on the Call to Action for Human Rights, on Wednesday, 24 February 2021, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., in the General Assembly Hall.

The briefing will focus on the progress made in the implementation of the ‘The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights’ issued by the Secretary-General in February 2020, and how Member States can contribute to it. Further details are provided in the enclosed concept note.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volkan BOZKIR

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

The Highest Aspiration

Informal meeting of the General Assembly on the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights

Wednesday, 24 February 2021 | 10am – 12pm | UN General Assembly | New York

Overview

In February 2020, the Secretary-General issued '[The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights](#).' The initiative reiterates that human rights underpin the work of the entire UN system and are central to addressing humanity's most pressing concerns, such as climate justice, gender equality, digitalisation, public participation and civil society, sustainable development and times of crisis. As the international community looks towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Call to Action (C2A) serves as a roadmap for a more sustainable, just, inclusive and peaceful world in which dignity is a given for all, not a luxury for the few. As the Secretary-General has stressed, "[human rights can and must guide the COVID-19 response and recovery](#)".

Such a future means ensuring that [no one is left behind](#), and that everyone has equal access to healthcare, education and social protection without discrimination. While the virus has proven to be indiscriminate in its transmission, its impacts have exposed profound structural inequalities globally. Only our collective engagement, [anchored strongly in our human rights commitments](#), will genuinely deliver us from this crisis for the long haul.

Cross-regional support of Member States will be essential to achieving the Call to Action's ambitious and crucial endeavour. Since the launch of the Call to Action, the UN System has been working to implement its seven thematic priority areas, namely: (1) rights at the core of sustainable development; (2) rights in times of crisis; (3) gender equality and rights for women; (4) public participation and civic space; (5) rights of future generations; (6) human rights at the heart of collective action; (7) new frontiers of human rights.

In response to the request of the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, has agreed to convene an informal meeting on the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights on 24 February at 10 a.m. The objective of the meeting is to learn about progress made in the implementation of the Call to Action, and how Member States can contribute to it.

Programme

The President of the General Assembly will open the meeting and make remarks, followed by an update on progress of the Call to Action delivered by the Secretary-General. Member States will then be invited to take the floor and make brief statements. There will not be a pre-established list of speakers.

Given COVID-19 restrictions, in-person attendance in the General Assembly Hall will be restricted to one representative per Permanent Mission. The meeting will be livestreamed on [UN Web TV](#).