Facing the Challenges of a Changing World

The world has changed since the days the representatives of 50 nations came together to sign the UN Charter. Advances have been made, the world has become more prosperous and more populous than ever before, and yet, progress has a shadow too: The economic growth that many nations have enjoyed in the past century came at the expense of our planet, our eco-system and of a stable climate.
New technological developments, most importantly AI and automation processes more generally, have brought up new questions about human labour, safety and the fundamental rights of all human beings.

Can one simply continue down this path without addressing these challenges?

A target was set out by and for the international community in the Paris Agreement, one that is at risk of being missed. How can it be ensured that the foundations of life are preserved for future generations while guaranteeing equitable economic conditions for all people? The United Nations already play a key role in efforts to combat climate change by facilitating cooperation and giving those who are affected the most a platform to speak. But this role can also be further strengthened to truly answer questions such as burden-sharing, sustainable development and climate adaptation.

The development of artificial intelligence has become one of the dominant features of this decade. With it come both risks and opportunities. The world's economic system might find itself at the beginning of another revolution, in which case it should be the responsibility of all member states to ensure that the benefits are available to all and not just the few. The social question is not to be left unanswered and neither is the question of security risks posed by AI. An unregulated, ever-advancing development could prove devastating. Mankind should work together on this crucial issue and not perceive it as a mere 'race'.
In addition, one has to address the concerns regarding the use of artificial intelligence in the military as it provokes an array of questions from morality to responsibility under international law.

Throughout the past decades, the global political structure has changed and is no longer what it was when the UN and other international organisations were founded. Former colonies achieved independence and the global scale shifted towards a truly multi-polar world. It is in the spirit of the UN charter that the question of reforming global institutions to represent those who feel underrepresented must be asked. As made clear by the UN Pact for the Future, these reforms are necessary in order to preserve the accomplishments of the past and work towards "a world that is safe, peaceful, just, equal, inclusive, sustainable and prosperous". The question that remains to be answered is what form these reforms will take.

These great challenges must be faced with unity. Ignorance is not a solution and therefore it is crucial to have an institutional system that works for all nations.

The 21st century is one of many challenges but if the international community faces them together, they can be overcome and mankind can be led into a brighter future.