

STATEMENT
BY
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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

VIRTUAL HIGH-LEVEL FORUM OF SMALL STATES (FOSS) TO
COMMEMORATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS
“The UN Charter at 75: Multilateralism in a Fragmented World”

10th June 2020

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I thank my colleague Foreign Minister of Singapore and Chair of the Forum of Small States, for spearheading this initiative under a theme which is particularly fitting during this time of unprecedented global challenge. Clearly what the world needs least is fragmentation, and what it needs most is unity, peace and stability.
- I welcome The Elders’ ‘*Hope for a Great Sea Change*’, expressed and presented by the Chair, Mrs Mary Robinson. We too believe that a further shore is reachable from here. The Elders’ Report rightly concludes “it is only through effective multilateralism, that the world will be able to meet the immense challenges that will confront us over the course of the 21st Century”.
- Over its 75 years, the UN has been in the vanguard of efforts to improve lives worldwide. In spite of some scepticism, it has provided food to countless millions, authorized 72 international missions to foster peace and security, worked with 140 nations to address climate change, provided vaccinations for 58 percent of children globally, promoted international law, and protected human rights with the force of 80 treaties and declarations.
- Notwithstanding the UN's many successes, a lot remains to be done. Undoubtedly, the most pressing challenge is recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic from health, economic and socio-economic perspectives. Indeed, recovery must be aligned with our agreed development goals.
- The pandemic has laid bare the fragility of our human existence, our interconnectivity, our vulnerabilities and resilience, but has also highlighted the fact that no country can succeed without the cooperation of others. If one member of the international family of nations remains vulnerable, then all are at risk.

- This crisis has also highlighted the world's vast domestic and global social inequalities and the urgent need for financial resources to support our economic recovery. This will require active participation from multilateral institutions including those responsible for major economic sectors, such as trade, transportation and tourism which have been significantly impacted.
- As small states, collaboration will be key to ensuring best results for us all. Indeed, the reasons multilateralism has always been particularly important to us have been deepened by the pandemic. As has been said earlier, Together we are stronger. We therefore, must fully support the UN as well as international and regional organizations, as they develop effective responses to the needs of member states. As stated by DPM Coveney earlier, not only do we need the UN, but the UN also needs us.
- Let us all stand together in re-invigorating the spirit of the United Nations Charter, in the journey to 'build back better' from the current crisis and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.