



General Assembly

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Note by the Secretariat

1. On 28 May 2020, the Secretary-General transmitted a note verbale (see annex I) to the Permanent Representative of each Member State to inform them of a proposal by Azerbaijan, on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, to convene a special session of the General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), by videoconference, at the level of Heads of State and Government. The Secretary-General also requested the Permanent Representatives to inform him, within 30 days from the date of the communication, whether their Governments concurred with the proposal.
2. On 30 June, the Secretary-General transmitted a note verbale (see annex II) to all Member States to inform them that a majority of Member States had concurred with the proposal.



Annex I

Note verbale dated 28 May 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Permanent Representative of each Member State

The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representative of ...(NAME OF MEMBER STATE)... to the United Nations and has the honour to inform him/her that the enclosed note verbale dated 13 May 2020 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, transmits a letter of the same date from His Excellency Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, addressed to the Secretary-General, containing a proposal, on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, to convene a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), by videoconference, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

In accordance with rule 9 (a) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General hereby requests the Permanent Representative to inform him, within thirty (30) days from the date of the present communication, whether her/his Government concurs with the request for the convening of a special session.

In this connection, the Secretary-General wishes to bring the following to the attention of the Permanent Representative:

- There is currently no agreed format or modalities on the holding of formal meetings of the General Assembly on a virtual platform and there would need to be an agreement among Member States in this regard, taking into consideration the technical limitations of the technology currently available to the United Nations; and
- As with other special sessions, there would also be a need for Member States to agree upon the modalities for the session in advance, as seen, for example, in General Assembly resolutions [70/181](#) of 17 December 2015 for the thirtieth special session and [67/250](#) of 21 February 2013 for the twenty-ninth special session.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Representative of ...(NAME OF MEMBER STATE)... to the United Nations the assurances of his highest consideration.

Enclosure**Note verbale dated 13 May 2020 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith a letter from H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, addressed to the Secretary-General, containing a proposal, on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, to convene a special session of the General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, by videoconference, at the level of Heads of State and Government, pursuant to Article 20 of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (see attachment).

Attachment

Letter dated 13 May from the President of Azerbaijan addressed to the Secretary-General

I thank you for your video message addressed to the summit-level meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement contact group established in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) held successfully on 4 May 2020. I commend your leadership in the fight against the pandemic, the importance that you attach to multilateral cooperation and the efforts that you make to that end. It is no coincidence that the declaration adopted at the summit fully supports your plans and initiatives in the fight against COVID-19.

As the pandemic continues to spread, there is a great need for boosting international cooperation and global solidarity, with the United Nations at its core. It is only through concerted efforts that this global problem that has affected negatively all countries can be overcome.

In view of this, in my statement at the summit, I proposed to initiate, on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by videoconference, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

The proposal was discussed by the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and received unanimous support. This demonstrates once again the commitment of the Non-Aligned Movement to its values and multilateral diplomacy, and the significance that it attaches to cooperation with the United Nations.

Given the aforementioned, I propose, on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and pursuant to Article 20 of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by videoconference, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

I am of the view that the special session, being conducive to gaining first-hand information on the needs and requirements of the countries waging a fight against the coronavirus and ensuring the mobilization of the international community in the face of the pandemic, will be a triumph of multilateralism, the importance of which we always stress.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, on the basis of its experience in holding the summit-level meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement contact group, stands ready to contribute to the convening of the special session of the General Assembly with its own technical capabilities.

(Signed) Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Annex II

Note verbale dated 30 June 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Permanent Representative of each Member State*

The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representative of ...(NAME OF MEMBER STATE)... to the United Nations and has the honour to inform the Permanent Representative that, further to the former's note verbale dated 28 May 2020, a majority of Member States have concurred with the request to convene a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

In accordance with rules 8 (a) and 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General hereby informs the Permanent Representative that the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly shall be convened on Friday, 10 July 2020.

The Secretary-General wishes to recall that the request from the Republic of Azerbaijan was to hold a special session of the General Assembly by video teleconference. In this connection, the Secretary-General also wishes to recall the following, as mentioned in his note verbale of 28 May 2020:

- There is currently no agreed format or modalities on the holding of formal meetings of the General Assembly on a virtual platform and there would need to be an agreement among Member States in this regard, taking into consideration the technical limitations of the technology currently available to the United Nations; and
- As with other special sessions, there would also be a need for Member States to agree upon the modalities for the session.

The Secretary-General is informed by the Chair of the delegation of the President of the seventy-fourth regular session of the General Assembly (Nigeria), in his capacity as Temporary President pursuant to rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure, that it is his intention to circulate a letter to all Member States on 10 July 2020 to indicate the next steps.

The provisional agenda, drawn up in accordance with rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure, will be issued as document [A/S-31/1](#) at least ten (10) days before the opening of the session, in accordance with rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure.

The Secretary-General wishes to remind the Permanent Representative that the credentials of its Government should be issued for all representatives to the special session, in accordance with rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, except for those Permanent Representatives who are already authorized to represent their Governments at all sessions of the Assembly.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Representative of ...(NAME OF MEMBER STATE)... to the United Nations the assurances of his highest consideration.

* A similar communication was sent to the observers of the General Assembly, the principal organs other than the General Assembly and the specialized agencies.