



The UN75 dialogue conducted by the International Public Relations Association 25 June – 9 July 2020

The IPRA contribution¹

1) What should the international community prioritize to recover from Covid19?

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)² are ambitious for the UN community and should remain in place for the future, with SDG1 (end poverty) and SDG3 (good health and wellbeing) given short-term priority to help the world recover from Covid19. Comment from Ghana: Focus needed on intensifying public health education, promotion of correct behaviours, and international cooperation on vaccine development.

2) Will people in 2045 be better off than, worse off than, or about the same as today?

Two long-term overarching problems are critical to the survival of humanity: the rise in average global temperatures, a scarcity of potable water and the digital divide between developed and underdeveloped countries. Without a solution to these problems, people will be worse off in 2045. Solve these issues, in part by the harnessing of technology, and world could be better off in 2045

3) What did your group most want to see in the year 2045, when the UN will turn 100?

It is optimistic to think the 17 SDGs can be achieved by 2030, thus the UN should reset the date to 2045, with priority on SDG13 (climate action) and SDG6 (clean water and sanitation). Comment from Austria: SDG9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) is essential to achieving SDG6 and 13. From Japan: Greater collaboration among global leaders required to reach goals. From Bulgaria: UN communications must be more relevant to civil society. From Spain: Better coordination of educational structures needed. From Serbia: More focus on trust-enhancing mechanisms.

4) What are the main challenges that your group thought will most affect this vision?

Fake news is a main and under-recognized challenge³ and inhibits achieving the UN goals. Decline of traditional journalism with editorial oversight, combined with the rise of social media, has changed how the world sends and receives information. Now opinion is portrayed as fact, propaganda is mistaken for democratic decision. Lies go untested. Comment from England: one result is proliferation of fake science⁴. From Saudi Arabia and Iraq; Major challenge in the Middle East. From Ghana: Likewise in Africa. Australia: Emergence of new types of social media overwhelming. From Bulgaria: The Digital divide cuts off people from

¹ responses follow the UN75 template of six questions and the 750 character limit for answers

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

³ <https://www.ipra.org/news/itl/itl-361-coronavirus-tackling-misinformation-in-a-time-of-panic/>

⁴ <https://www.ipra.org/news/itl/itl-374-science-communications-the-importance-of-facts-in-an-increasingly-faux-science-world/>

communication. From Ireland: Danger of disenfranchising significant populations from the democratic process.

5) How can global cooperation – and the UN –help manage the challenges?

UN, governments, civil society and the private sector must cooperate on stronger and imaginative communications programs⁵ that are global in nature to support the SDGs. From Belgium and Russia: NGO participation in regional competitions that best showcase the SDGs. From USA: Other events, conference and workshops⁶, also effective. From Portugal: UN emphasis for global communications cooperation important as it now seems under attack. From Australia: UN should listen more to civil society on communications. From Ireland: Use of cartoon characters and animation helpful in places of low literacy or many languages. From Ghana, Portugal, Austria: Reaching youth is key. Austria: UN youth ambassadors needed for communicate on SDGs.

6) What would you advise the UN Secretary General to do to address the challenges?

The Secretary General should emphasize the importance of global cooperation to counteract misinformation by declaring Verified Information Year (or Day) in the UN calendar, thereby bringing worldwide attention to the Verified initiative announced on May 21. Individuals around the world should be encouraged to be informed volunteers; NGOs to join the *Verified* initiative⁷; corporations to support *Verified* efforts, including monitoring of misinformation about covid-19 and other issues. He should also strongly support or initiate programs to supply mobile phone capability, computers and other communications devices to populations underserved in these areas in addition to education to enable them to participate in international dialogue.

For the added comments. Many of the international participants were concerned about the lack of digital communications tools and unfettered access to the internet. Comments from Africa often centered on the need for greater SDG awareness and more specific guidance on best programmatic practices elsewhere.

Background to IPRA

IPRA, the International Public Relations Association, was established in 1955, and is the leading global network for PR professionals in their personal capacity. IPRA aims to advance trusted communication and the ethical practice of public relations. We do this through networking, our code of conduct and intellectual leadership of the profession. IPRA has various categories of global membership and total outreach from these categories is some 13,000. Since 1984 IPRA has been an NGO associated with the New York based Department of Global Communications and has been granted consultative status by ECOSOC, UNESCO, and UNEP.

IPRA is the organiser of the annual Golden World Awards for Excellence (GWA). The GWA competition, established in 1990, recognizes excellence in public relations practice worldwide. Also in 1990 IPRA established an award to recognize PR programmes that address UN issues. This prize is now known as the IPRA Global Contribution Award in support of UN sustainable development goals.

IPRA – leading trust and ethics in global communication

⁵ <https://www.ipra.org/golden-world-awards/faq/>

⁶ <https://www.ipra.org/news/ipra-and-the-un/>

⁷ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064622>