

Welcome to the Conference by the Directors of the Centre for Human Rights

A warm welcome to *In Conversation with the Experts: The Future of the United Nations* from the conference organisers.

This Conference is created through, and reflects the core strategies of, the BCU Centre for Human Rights (CHR). The academic and student members of the CHR formulate and implement engaging programs to help safeguard human rights around the world, and we achieve this through our four workstreams: (1) Consultancy, (2) Clinic; (3) Research; and (4) Education. We have created a successful work-package focusing on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), we are a leading consultant on the Universal Periodic Review (see [The UPR Project at BCU](#)), we inform the work of the UN Special Procedures, and provide advisory services to victims of human rights violations on how to engage the UN safeguarding mechanisms (see [CHR Clinic](#)).

Through the wider lenses of our four workstreams we are eager to engage with and help create the success for the UN Secretary General's vision for [Our Common Agenda](#) (2023) which aims to accelerate the [2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) to be realised in the lives of everyone around the world. [The Pact for the Future](#) (2024) demonstrates the world leader's commitments for an inter-governmentally negotiated and action-oriented pact for achieving:

- * Sustaining development and financing for development
- * International peace and security
- * Science, technology and innovation and global cooperation
- * Youth and future generations
- * Transforming global governance

Emphasising the need for intrinsic thematic consideration the Pact includes the annexes of a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations.

We are aware of the setbacks to the progress of the SDGs, the need to create further effectiveness of the UPR, provide wider support for the work of the Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts, and help maintain meaningful engagement with Member States and Permanent Missions in New York at the General Assembly and the Security Council, and in Geneva at the Human Rights Council. The role of civil society, universities, experts and public intellectuals, businesses and corporate entities, digital, technology and AI developers, necessitates a consciousness and consideration of our future generations. We all play important roles in helping ensure this for the success for the *Pact for the Future*.

It is not a time to allow the growing dangers of the global spread of deception and misrepresentation to thwart the work for holistically sustaining our world. Those old foes of war, famine, pestilence, and death, have a recently emboldened assailant called, misinformation. There are consequences humanity will have to shoulder if we do not heed the warnings. Perhaps it is a time for a new global humility? The Charter of the United Nations (1945), Preamble states that the peoples of the world should be determined 'to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,' and in maintaining peace, human rights, and sustaining our world, Article 1, affirms that the UN is, '[t]o be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.'

This strategy has now been updated in the *Pact for the Future* and we are honoured to host leading experts for this conference to discuss the current and future challenges for the UN and the world. We look forward to our dialogue and the sharing of ideas through which we can all contribute to meeting the challenges of our fast-changing world. The emerging risks to our planet and our humanity required bold new solutions. These can only be recognised, understood, and implemented, if we all participate in this global conversation for our future. The creation of the knowledge for the success of the *Pact for the Future* will emerge from dialogue, transparency, and holistic understanding of facts.

We warmly welcome you to our contribution to this discussion held at Birmingham City University and we will ensure that our cogent outcomes will be used to inform our future submissions to the United Nations.

Please stay in touch and do inform us of your future work in helping sustain our planet and protecting our environment for the co-enjoyment of the earth for all living species.

Professor Jon Yorke, Dr Alice Storey, and Dr Amna Nazir