

An Open Letter to the Prime Minister

From the Partners of the Intergenerational Fairness Coalition • 16 April 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the Intergenerational Fairness Coalition, are writing to express our collective aspirations regarding the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future, 22-23 September, and urge you to dedicate the necessary attention to this significant opportunity for global change. This includes supporting proactive participation from young people in the Summit's consultative process, ensuring high-level representation from the Australian Government and committing adequate resources to align Australia's efforts toward long-term policy development with the rising global standards. The imperative for this investment of ambition, focus and resources from the Australian government is underpinned by the stark reality that only 15% of the Sustainable Development Goals are on track with recent global events only further side-tracking progress. Transformational action must be taken if we hope to correct this pathway and safeguard the interests of young people and future generations, who hold the greatest stake in our future but often the least weight in decision-making.

We commend the existing efforts that have been made into the development of the Intergenerational Report, the launch of Australia's First National Wellbeing Framework and the ongoing investment into negotiation processes for the Summit of the Future's outcome document, the Pact for the Future. These efforts highlight Australia's leadership in fostering international cooperation and acknowledgement that the speed and impact of the multiple global challenges we face as an international community requires governance that is 'fit for the future'.

Regarding the upcoming Summit of the Future, we have five core recommendations consolidated from the rich expertise and research of the Partners of the Intergenerational Fairness Coalition.

1. Send a high-level representative to the Summit.

We call on the Prime Minister's office to send a high-level representative to the Summit of the Future. The participation of the office, or a Ministerial-level representative, in this crucial event, is paramount in signalling Australia's commitment to driving positive change on the international stage.

2. Engage actively in the Pact for the Future.

We implore your office to actively engage in the negotiation process of the Pact for the Future, focusing on concrete proposals across all five chapters and the enclosed Declaration for Future Generations to address pressing global challenges.

3. Clarify the mandate for future generations.

We suggest that Australia advocates for a clarified mandate for the UN Envoy for Future Generations, ensuring its intended function and complementary position with other proposals is evident within the text. We also strongly support advocacy for a clear definition of 'future generations' and a review of the Declaration's guiding principles to better align with today's needs, making the international system is adequately prepared for future challenges and can make decisions that benefit generations to come.

4. Commit to a Commissioner for Future Generations.

We implore the Australian Government to wholeheartedly commit to the principles outlined in the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations through attentive engagement with the growing civil society movement in support of intergenerational fairness, the wellbeing economy and future generations policy. This approach should bring focus to the uniquely strong position of Australia to act as a leader in this space, being home to the oldest living culture in the world whose practices inherently emulate the values of intergenerational leadership. To aid these ambitions, we urge the allocation of sufficient resources and support towards the establishment of a Commissioner for Future Generations within Australia, drawing inspiration from the successful model of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

5. Coordinate a preparatory meeting ahead of Nairobi.

Moreover, we seek the government's endorsement to coordinate a preparatory meeting ahead of the UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi, or in the interim between this meeting and the Summit of the Future in September, bringing specific focus to the contents of Chapter 4 of the Pact for the Future, focused on young people and future generations, and the Declaration on Future Generations. This pre-meeting would aim to align Australian ambitions and strategies with the broader global agenda, with a particular emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) high-level review.

We trust that the recommendations and requests put forth in this letter will receive the thoughtful consideration and prompt action they deserve. The coalition is eager to discuss these recommendations further.

Thank you for your attention to these critical matters.

Yours faithfully,

The Partners of the Intergenerational Fairness Coalition