



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER PENNY ABEYWARDENA
ON THE RECENT STATEMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE 75TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

We are surprised and saddened by the statement released today by His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, the newly-appointed president of the 75th Session of *the United Nations* General Assembly. Mayor Bill de Blasio has an excellent relationship with UN Secretary General António Guterres. And over the course of the de Blasio Administration, the City of New York has had a deeply collaborative relationship with Mr. Bozkir's predecessors, His Excellencies Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, Mr. Peter Thomson, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Her Excellency Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés and, most recently, His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.

The Mayor's Office for International Affairs has spent the last seven years strengthening the partnership between the diplomatic community, the City of New York and local New Yorkers. NYC has led cities to adopt and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through the NYC Declaration on the Voluntary Local Review, which now has more than 210 cities and local government signatories from around the world.

The City has also collaborated in annual United Nations commemorations including Mandela Day, International Mother Language Day, International Women's Day, International Youth Day, International Day of the Girl Child, World Mental Health Day, UN Day and World Cities Day, to name a few.

Since 2015, our NYC Junior Ambassadors program enables youth throughout the five boroughs to be global citizens and take action in their own communities using the SDGs as a framework for community engagement. Through this program, thousands of young New Yorkers have toured the UN, and discussed the Global Goals with UN Ambassadors and senior UN officials.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the International Affairs office has worked closely with senior UN leadership to communicate the City's ongoing response and policies, briefed virtual gatherings of the General Assembly and held several virtual meetings to keep the diplomatic community informed about the services and resources available to them and their constituents. In fact it is a

testament to our deep and enduring bond that the UN gave a historic donation of 250,000 surgical masks from their own stockpile to help first responders during the height of the pandemic in this city.

It has indeed been a fruitful partnership for the last nearly seven years. And we look forward to continuing our partnership with the United Nations in order to further the Global Goals for the good of all New Yorkers.