



**CHAIR OF
THE COORDINATING BUREAU
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement
at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session
in response to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic**

3-4 December 2020, New York

Mr. President,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of 120 Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations which remains the central multilateral forum for addressing pressing global issues and challenges, we note with regret the emergence of many new areas of concern. These concerns necessitate the renewal of our collective commitment to the values of multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpin the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A good testament to this was overwhelming support by the UN Member States for the initiative to convene the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement. It constitutes, among others, the remarkable success for the Member States of NAM since this year also marks the 65th anniversary of the adoption of Bandung Declaration which envisaged the promotion of international cooperation for the common prosperity and well-being of all. In this connection, I would like to express on behalf of the Movement our sincere gratitude for the support extended by the UN Member States and the President of the General Assembly.

Throughout 2020 the global community has faced the greatest health crisis in recent history, with almost 60 million reported cases and more than 1 million deaths worldwide as of today, resulting in multifaceted repercussions in health, social, economic and financial spheres, causing disruption to societies and economies, as well as to global commerce and travel, and making a devastating impact on the livelihood of people.



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With the aim to contributing to the global efforts in addressing the unprecedented universal impact of the pandemic and to find out possible ways to provide a prompt, adequate and inclusive assistance to the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan, as the Chair of the Movement convened the online Summit-level Meeting of the NAM Contact Group in response to COVID-19 under the theme “*United against COVID-19*” on 4 May 2020. As a practical outcome of this meeting the Member States of the Movement decided to establish the Task Force in response to COVID-19 and to work out a database on the basic humanitarian and medical needs and requirements of NAM Member States in their fight against COVID-19.

We are pleased to know that WHO uses the NAM database as one of its reference points for identifying the existing needs of NAM Member states in addressing the pandemic.

The Non-Aligned Movement praises the activities of the United Nations system in response to the Covid-19. We commend strong leadership of the Secretary-General, who played a central role in spearheading the United Nations global response to the pandemic, while at the same time ensuring continuity of operations of the UN Secretariat. The Movement fully supports the WHO and its leadership in their critical role in providing guidance, training, equipment and concrete life-saving services, in order to ensure effective response of the international community to the ever-increasing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has exposed and aggravated vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, and also among them, deepening poverty and exclusion and pushing the most vulnerable even further behind. It is the poorest and most vulnerable who were hit the hardest by this pandemic and NAM is gravely concerned that the further impact of the crisis will reverse hard-won development gains and hamper progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We also note with concern that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing fundamental impediments, which most recently were addressed during the 18th NAM Summit in 2019 in Baku, such as impacts of global financial and economic crises, continuing lack of resources and underdevelopment of the majority of the developing world, continuing unequal terms of trade and lack of cooperation from developed countries, the coercive and unilateral measures imposed by some of them, as well as use of force or threats of use of force, in the way towards a just and equitable world order.



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NAM stresses the importance of affordable, unhindered and equitable access by all countries to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment, which should constitute an integral part of a coordinated and effective global response to COVID-19.

As many vaccines against COVID-19 are being currently studied, we are all looking forward to the successful outcome of clinical trials and hope that a safe and effective vaccine will soon be available, and that they will be considered as global public goods ensuring their universal distribution at affordable prices for all. We appreciate the coordination efforts of WHO in this process and stress the importance of this Organization in facilitating equitable access of people throughout the globe to such vaccine, once it is available.

Mr. President,

It is through a coordinated and concerted global response based on unity, multilateral cooperation, solidarity and respect for human rights that the international community can craft strategies to mitigate effects of COVID-19 and recover from the pandemic, which currently continues to spread.

This special session will serve broad objectives, such as reaffirming and strengthening commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism, highlighting best practices, as well as challenges of UN Member States in responding to the pandemic, and reflecting on the central position of the United Nations through providing an opportunity for open and transparent discussions among Member States, Observer States, observers, relevant UN agencies and bodies and other stakeholders. We look forward to fruitful deliberations throughout the session.

Thank you.