



24–25 October 2020 Virtual Conference  
Summary Report

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The World Federalist Movement, founded in 1947, is an independent, international, non-governmental, non-profit organization committed to the realization of global peace and justice through the development of democratic institutions and the application of international law. We have members around the world that are dedicated to spreading world federalism. Our members work on diverse issues to promote global governance, such as creating a UN Parliamentary Assembly, raising support for the International Criminal Court, strengthening the European Constitution, and reducing small arms trafficking.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.wfm-igp.org/>

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## Introduction

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The World Federalist Movement (WFM) convened its first virtual conference on 24–25 October 2020 in light of the need to postpone the WFM Congress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This two-day conference explored both longstanding and emerging issues, threats, opportunities, and solutions within the struggle to achieve world federalism. The following report summarizes the key messages and takeaways from each session.



## The Future of the World Federalist Movement

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Fernando Iglesias, President, WFM  
Keith Best and Bente Nielsen, Executive Chairs, WFM  
Anjali Manivannan, Director of Programs, WFM/IGP

The leadership of the WFM and WFM/IGP outlined the history, achievements, and challenges facing the movement since WFM's foundation in 1947. The COVID-19 pandemic was raised as not only a threat, but also an opportunity to advocate for better global governance systems. The panelists noted key successes, such as those undertaken by the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), 1 for 7 Billion campaign, the UN Parliamentary Assembly campaign, and UN2020. However, they stressed that the movement needed to expand its focus issues and target audiences to engage more youths, women, people of color, and geographic diversity. While all these hurdles are compounded by fundraising challenges, the WFM will continue to hold solutions-seeking conferences to determine a sustainable way forward.



## Working Together to Grow Our Movement

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Daniel Blewitt, Executive Director, Young World Federalists  
John Vlasto, Associate, Democracy Without Borders  
Martin Chibanda, Young World Federalists

The Young World Federalists (YWF) global movement was established to be a prototype to advance the digital presence and branding transformation of the WFM. The goal of YWF is to provide an online educational resource for young people who are interested in learning about world federalism. Through technology, they are looking to create ways to harness the enthusiasm of young people in their fight for change and accountability within international and regional institutions.



## The Need for a Post-COVID World Order

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Dr. Saskia Sassen, Professor of Sociology, Columbia University

Dr. Steven Pinker, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University

Dr. Garrett Wallace Brown, Chair in Political Theory and Global Health Policy, University of Leeds

Dr. Saskia Sassen asked: How do complex global systems transform, and can we recognize that change as it is occurring? Sassen proposed the possibility that humanity is currently undergoing a critical transformation toward a fundamentally new social paradigm. She called for an updated philosophical approach that will help societies understand and respond to these multifarious currents of change in order to address the challenges of this nascent societal paradigm.

Dr. Steven Pinker presented what he believes was a previous historical paradigm shift after World War II: a decrease in wars between states — most prominently, the decrease in wars between great powers, but also some recent decreases in civil wars as well. He highlighted that avoiding war is one prime example of an issue calling for global cooperation; others include climate change, migration, illicit financial flows, terrorism, and global health threats.

Prof. Garrett W. Brown focused his remarks on this last challenge, offering his views on the need for a systems-based, global approach to COVID-19 and other global health threats. He pointed out that previous global health initiatives have proven inadequate, culminating in the current failed response to COVID-19. He posited that these failures stem from the world's current operational paradigms that treat threats to health narrowly, ignoring the greater health, environmental, and systemic contexts that contribute to the severity of individual risks. He highlighted the need to correct outdated, insufficient, and underfunded global health governance mechanisms and to take a nuanced approach to addressing health risks across very different countries in an interdependent world. While he is aiding the World Health Organization (WHO) in developing its approach to global health systems, he believes the success of future health responses may hinge on whether the COVID-19 pandemic can create a watershed moment for meaningful change.



## Opportunities and Challenges in AI and Global Governance

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Robert Whitfield, Chair of Trustees, One World Trust

Marcelo Lemos, Member, Transnational Working Group on AI

Didier Coeurnelle, Co-Chair, Healthy Life Extension Society (Heales)

Marcelo Lemos introduced WFM's Transnational Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and Disruptive Technologies (TWG on AI), which has the goal of establishing governance of AI that is effective, timely, global, and supportive of human rights and democracy. Lemos spoke about the group's more immediate objectives, which include learning and raising awareness of the need for governance of AI, establishing a coalition of like-minded organizations, and making the World Federalism Movement a recognized voice in discussions around international regulatory mechanisms of AI.

Lemos, together with Didier Coeurnelle and the Chair of the TWG on AI, Robert Whitfield, discussed the nature of AI and its expected impact on humanity. They made the case that it is critical we strike a balance between “Good AI” and “Bad AI” with new global regulatory mechanisms. Whitfield concluded the discussion by sharing the group’s work, which has thus far carried out a mapping exercise of the key issues in AI regulation and produced a report [Effective, Timely and Global: The Urgent Need for Good Global Governance of AI](#). The report was distributed among civil society and experts in the field. They will now proceed to seek partners and develop the ideas from the report to produce further papers.



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## Key Campaigns of the World Federalist Movement

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WFM/IGP works in coalitions to protect and strengthen multilateralism. Our most important campaigns are the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC); the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP); and the Coalition for the Latin American and Caribbean Criminal Court against Transnational Organized Crime (*Corte Penal Latinoamericana y del Caribe contra el Crimen Transnacional Organizado* – COPLA).

### Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)

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Anjali Manivannan, Director of Programs, WFM/IGP

The CICC achieved many successes over the years, and 2020 was this coalition’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The CICC works for the universality of the Rome Statute of the ICC; a more fair, effective, and independent ICC; increased State cooperation with the Court; and a better understanding of the ICC. The CICC successfully pushed for the creation of the ICC and was an integral part of it. In fact, the Rome Statute of the ICC includes progressive provisions related to international crimes and victims as a result of the input by civil society (2,500 members in 150 countries).

### International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP)

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Anjali Manivannan, Director of Programs, WFM/IGP

The Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) is a legal doctrine and emerging norm, first endorsed in 2005. ICRtoP members increase awareness of RtoP and develop actions to mobilize civil society around preventing and stopping mass atrocities.

### Coalition for the COPLA

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Camila Badra, Executive Director, Democracia Global

Against the background of transnational organized crime in Latin America, Democracia Global developed the project to create the COPLA. The mobilization strategy involves government and international legal professionals to support the creation of the Court.

Unfortunately, for all the key campaigns, it has become harder to continue working due to the hostile geopolitical environment as well as shrinking space and funds.



## UN Reform Campaigns

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### UN2020

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Fergus Watt, Executive Director, WFM Canada

Since 2017, the UN2020 Campaign has sought to use the opportunity of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN for much-needed stocktaking, recognition of achievements, and consideration of measures to strengthen the intergovernmental organization. Recent achievements include the May 2020 [People's Declaration and Plan for Global Action](#), endorsed by over 400 NGOs around the world; an [open letter](#) signed in September 2020 by 49 former Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Affairs Ministers, and UN officials calling for “a dedicated intergovernmental process” to pursue a strengthened UN; and a series of advocacy meetings and events in the first part of 2020 to influence the outcome of the *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (UN75 political declaration)* that was adopted by governments at the UN's commemorative General Assembly meeting on 21 September 2020.

The [UN75 political declaration](#) outlines 12 commitments relating to the UN's main spheres of activity. And importantly, it mandates the UN Secretary-General to report before September 2021 “with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.” UN Secretary-General António Guterres told UN Member States that the preparation of this report “will be an important and inclusive process of profound reflection.” He described this as “a 1945 moment” and called for “a new, networked multilateralism ... an inclusive multilateralism.” Importantly, and relevant for our movement, his office has now initiated plans for consultations with UN Member States, academics, think tanks, and civil society.



## United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA)

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Andreas Bummel, Executive Director, Democracy Without Borders

Andreas Bummel recalled that, according to resolutions adopted by WFM bodies in previous years, advocating for a UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) was a priority for the movement as it would put the UN “on a path of transformation.”

He regretted that WFM/IGP had to terminate its operational support of this campaign for the time being, noting that the political support remains steadfast. He highlighted [a study](#) on a UNPA that

was published by DWB on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the UN in September 2020. Among other things, he reported that the endorsement of a UNPA was included in the [Outcome Document of the UN75 People's Forum for the UN We Need](#), held virtually in May 2020, and that, in 2019, an informal briefing on the subject was hosted by the UN Missions of Canada, Malaysia, and Switzerland in New York. Although broad outreach to governments was undertaken in April 2020, due to the pandemic, further follow-up was difficult. However, new efforts will be resumed soon, such as exploring the possibility of a UN Parliamentary Network as a step toward a UNPA.

## UN Charter Review

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Prof. Fritz Pointer, Vice President, Democratic World Federalists

Vernita Pearl Fort, Member, DWF and Center for UN Constitutional Research

Representatives of the Democratic World Federalists (DWF) (San Francisco) and the Center for United Nations Constitutional Research (CUNCR) (Brussels) stressed the need for a review of the UN Charter, which has not occurred since the establishment of the UN in 1945 despite the UN Charter's promise to have such a review within 10 years (by 1955). In addition, there remains a need for compliance with a subsequent UN General Assembly resolution and UN Security Council resolution in 1955, which resolved to proceed to the review in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter, Article 109(3). The panelists further noted the need to fulfill the San Francisco Promise and to advocate for UN Member States to join this pledge to review the now obsolete UN Charter.