



Keynote Speech of the University, Professor AAA. **Atayero** at the 2nd Covenant International Model United Nations (CIMUN) Conference on July 6, 2020, at Covenant University Vice-Chancellor, Covenant

Protocols:

It is my pleasure to give a keynote address at this 2nd Covenant International Model United Nations (CIMUN) with the theme,

*“The Future We Want; the UN We Need:
Reaffirming Our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism”.*

The future we want is one that has been clearly articulated in the 17 SDGs (and the attendant 169 Targets) with a framework to tackle prevailing threats to global prosperity, social wellbeing and the environment.

That is one in which:

1. Poverty is eliminated
2. Hunger – eradicated
3. Good Health and Well-Being – established
4. Quality Education – provided
5. Gender Equality – enforced
6. Clean Water and Sanitation – improved
7. Affordable and Clean Energy – provisioned
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth – created
9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure – Increased
10. Reduce Inequality
11. Mobilise Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Influence Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Organise Climate Action
14. Develop Life Below Water
15. Advance Life On Land
16. Guarantee Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
17. Build Partnerships for the Goals

The United Nations we need is one that can help initiate, instigate, facilitate, nurture, and bring to actualisation these well-articulated goals through the instrumentality of the corresponding targets. Secretary-General and distinguished delegate, it is heartwarming to note that such a UN is already in existence and well represented here and now.

The United Nations has come a long way in pursuing her mission to maintain international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development, and uphold international law.

The UN has been at the forefront of mobilising international cooperation aimed at improving the wellbeing of the global community. This effort has helped to foster a sustainable development mindset among people everywhere, thus shaping the future of life on the planet.

Over the years, the UN has presented the world with a platform for international cooperation to address global issues such as COVID-19, poverty and inequality, the climate crisis, migration and displacement, prolonged conflicts, among others. It is, however, disturbing that in recent time, multilateralism is being shoved aside in some regions of the world. Unilateralism is on the rise as the world becomes more multipolar and polarised.

The future we want to require global cooperation to materialise, hence there is an urgent need to reaffirm the global commitment to multilateralism. The evolving political, economic, technological and social realities of the 21st century require an all-inclusive conversation which must be future-oriented to be effective. Young people constitute the future, and they are the parents, professionals, workers, and leaders of tomorrow. Their genuine participation in development dialogues gives them the clout necessary to shape both the process and outcome. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities. Young people possess the potential to carry the light of sustainable development to future generations.

It is in recognition of this that Covenant is organising this international conference as a platform to provide delegates with an opportunity to develop soft skills in critical thinking, build life-changing networks and create solutions to the problems threatening the world.

Covenant is committed to operating a holistic, human development and integrated learning curriculum, aimed at raising men and women who will bring lasting changes to our world. The University is built on a sound philosophical foundation that demonstrates a shift from form to skill; knowledge to empowerment; figures to the future building; legalism to realism; points to facts and from mathematics to life-matics. Covenant's dogged commitment to her founding philosophy has distinguished her as a Centre of academic excellence.

It is important that young people understand their roles in national and global development and consciously take up their place to participate in the future we want by rising to the occasion, taking up the responsibility for shaping the desired future. They must work to discover their hidden talents, imbibe enduring values like spirituality, possibility mentality, capacity building, integrity, responsibility, diligence and sacrifice. As we look to the future, it is clear that the youth will be responsible for nearly all aspects of society.

Consequently, conscious efforts must be made to develop our youth for a leadership role in society. This should aim at preparing them to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood, equipping them with life-applicable skills to achieve the full potential of life.

Through programmes like CUMIN, our youth are able to develop social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies. Also, they are able to develop the capacity to analyse their strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and abilities to participate in community life, effect positive social change and serve as role models.

Indeed, the active participation of young people is required as we confront global challenges such as global warming, agriculture, and food security, insecurity, extreme poverty, gender parity, environment, and natural resource security. The development of global partnerships that seek to galvanise the talents and ingenuity of young people become imperative towards addressing these challenges. That is why Covenant University is very much pleased to be associated with the United Nations through the CIMUN Conference.

Covenant is committed to youth empowerment and their leadership development and has evolved a pedagogy that imbues our graduates with professional dexterity and resilient character to take responsibility for the development of their world.

It is on this note I declare the 2nd Covenant International Model United Nations (CIMUN) open.