



## 2021 Open Societies Statement

We, the leaders of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, the United States of America and the European Union, reaffirm our shared belief in open societies, democratic values and multilateralism as foundations for dignity, opportunity and prosperity for all and for the responsible stewardship of our planet. As leaders of over half of the world's population living in democracies, we believe it is imperative that we reaffirm and encourage others to embrace the values that bind us together, including our respect for international rules and norms relating to:

- Human rights for all, both online and offline, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments, and opposition to any form of discrimination, so that everyone can participate fully and equally in society;
- Democracy, including each citizen's right to vote in free and fair elections and everyone's right to assemble, organise and associate peacefully, within a system of accountable and transparent governance;
- Social inclusion, solidarity and equal opportunities for all, including digital inclusion and full enjoyment of civil and political rights in both physical and digital spheres; ● Gender equality and the political, social and economic empowerment of women and girls, including through girls' education, responding to and working to eliminate gender-based violence, promotion of women's and girls' rights, and the protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Freedom of expression, both online and offline, as a freedom that safeguards democracy and helps people live free from fear and oppression;
- The rule of law and effective, independent and impartial judicial systems free from corrupt influence or coercion, so that each person can access justice and benefit from a fair trial;
- An effective multilateral system underpinned by principles of openness, transparency and accountability, including access to free and fair, rules-based trade, as well as collaboration on global challenges, including COVID-19 immunisation, for the good of all;
- The importance of civic space and partnership with diverse, independent and pluralistic civil societies, including human rights defenders, in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

These founding values define our inclusive way of life and benefit our people. Fundamental freedoms empower people and inspire the innovation and ingenuity needed to maximise opportunities, tackle shared challenges and drive progress for the world. Openness encourages collaboration that delivers better outcomes than any nation could achieve alone.

As we build back better from the pandemic, we must continue to deliver a better quality of life for our people, with no one left behind. We are at a critical juncture, facing threats to freedom and democracy from rising authoritarianism, electoral interference, corruption,



economic coercion, manipulation of information, including disinformation, online harms and cyber attacks, politically motivated internet shutdowns, human rights violations and abuses, terrorism and violent extremism. We also face threats to our social fabric from persistent inequalities and discrimination, including racism and resistance to gender equality. In the midst of these threats we will work together to create an open and inclusive rules-based international order for the future that promotes universal human rights and equal opportunities for all. Our democratic systems are strong and resilient, but we cannot be complacent – we address our own vulnerabilities and tackle common threats. In this spirit, we commit to cooperate together and with partners to:

- Strengthen open societies globally by protecting civic space and media freedom, promoting freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief, and by tackling all forms of discrimination, including racism;
- Continue to exchange information and coordinate effective responses to shared threats to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, such as disinformation and arbitrary detention, including through relevant partnerships such as the Rapid Response Mechanism, as appropriate;
- Promote economic openness and resilience and oppose economic coercion by reasserting our shared economic model, which is founded on open markets, fair competition, and the rule of law, and by reforming the World Trade Organization;
- Prevent and tackle corruption and illicit financial flows and promote integrity, transparency and accountability;
- Promote respect for internationally accepted norms that drive inclusivity and protect digital civic-space, including through capacity building, and ensure that the design and application of new technologies reflect our shared values, respect human rights and international law, promote diversity and embed principles of public safety;
- Prioritise gender equality, women’s empowerment and the full enjoyment of human rights for women and girls in the global recovery, as well as disability inclusion and equal opportunities for young people in education and employment;
- Collaborate on science-based responses to global challenges and drive innovation by calling on every nation to increase their research transparency and integrity; ● Reinforce our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 16 to ‘Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies’, and to support developing country achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including by taking concrete actions to address key financing for development challenges.

We look forward to building on these commitments in other multilateral fora, including at the G20 Summit, the UN and US Summit for Democracy. We resolve to collaborate with partners around the world, including in the Indo-Pacific and Africa, to actively promote these shared values for the good of all. We call on all like-minded partners to support this statement.

