



*The United States of America's Commitment to the
Future: The Case for Appointing a Special Envoy on
Future Generations*

By Rachel Svetanoff



**GLOBAL FUTURIST
INITIATIVE™**

ABOUT GLOBAL FUTURIST INITIATIVE

Global Futurist Initiative is a youth-led platform working to systematically prioritize youth issues in global agendas. Organized by two American co-founders in 2021, the collective of global young professionals is dedicated to advocating for 'youth equity' and the safeguarding of future generations.

ABOUT RACHEL SVETANOFF

Rachel Svetanoff is Co-founder of Global Futurist Initiative*, serving as the sole author of this document on behalf of the collective. With over 10 years of experience in promoting youth across sectors and industries, Rachel has been able to mobilize a network of over 72 organizations in shaping their business strategies with a youth lens. As a consultant, Rachel worked for institutions such as UNICEF USA*, Johnson & Johnson* (Environmental Sustainability and Global Public Health divisions), Sesame Workshop*, and Friends U.S. of the Global Fund* to foster strategic partnerships for advancing their social impact objectives as measured by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Rachel has held various appointments that have also enabled her promote youth and future generations to including the International Monetary Fund* (only U.S. delegation for 2021), U.S. Global Leadership Coalition*, Foreign Policy for America*, AFS Youth Assembly* (only U.S. lead for 2023), and United Nations Association of the USA*. Rachel currently holds a Visiting Associateship of Policy & Practice at the University of Notre Dame* Pulte Institute for Global Development* where she is conducting U.S. policy research in the context of the SDGs.

**For identification purposes only. Rachel Svetanoff declares that all views and works expressed within this content are solely her own and do not reflect the opinions and beliefs of any organization listed.*

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE: THE CASE FOR APPOINTING A SPECIAL ENVOY ON FUTURE GENERATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world is becoming more cognizant of both the long-term impacts decisions have on future generations as well as the role youth play in serving as stewards of future generations. This is most recently demonstrated by glimpses into the consultation process for the United Nations Zero Draft Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations ahead of the 2024 UN Summit of the Future. While young people are spending their prime years of education and workforce entry during economic downturns, growing social fragmentations, geopolitical crises, and the incessant threat of climate change, they still find hope in changing the future around. Young people today are striving to use their talents for the betterment of a world that future generations will be born into and hold everyone else accountable to also do their part. As world leaders recognize this escalating call to action by responding with commitments to future generations through designated roles and spaces to shape the future of global agendas and foreign policy, **the United States needs to appoint a Special Envoy on Future Generations or put national and economic security at risk as a result of inaction.**

The absence of this appointment threatens the U.S. from participating in critical discussions that will enable the nation to lead effectively at home and globally. Without having a designated role for future generations, the U.S. will be unable to navigate changes in the global landscape in relation to both allies and adversaries as they chart their own futures. Young Americans today will be further at risk of social and economic exclusion which will not only have profound impacts on multiple future generations but on today's economy, democracy, and public safety. This Special Envoy on Future Generations is therefore critical to helping move the country away from these threats and towards a better future for all Americans, today's *and tomorrow's*, underscored by achieving the widely supported Sustainable Development Goals.

Appointing a Special Envoy on Future Generations will signal to the world that the U.S. is ready to look ahead to the future and leave antiquated ways behind. The benefits of this appointment are far reaching, ultimately touching on a sense of temporal justice for the country's youth and future generations. The U.S. will be able to anticipate emerging challenges, identify new opportunities, strengthen international ties, bring consistency to U.S. engagement, save on costs in the long-term and save lives, improve the ways in which the country promotes U.S. values, and improve the overall quality of life through informed decision-making and intergenerational collaboration.

Residing in the Department of State's Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Offices, the Special Envoy on Future Generations would bring a renewed outlook on the future for Americans, especially its youth. This role takes inspiration from other Special Envoys on critical issues as well as successful implementations of similar roles in Canada, Australia, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, among others. It is time for the president, his cabinet, and U.S. policymakers to deliver on commitments to this country. Our future agenda needs to start today.

BACKGROUND

The United Nations [Summit of the Future](#) is approaching this September 2024 in New York, promising to fortify a new international consensus on how its Members States, including the United States, deliver a better current society and safeguard the future.

The international community have a series of agreements and commitments to help navigate the new course ahead, which are the UN Charter, [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#) (otherwise known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs), and the Paris Agreement. The Summit of the Future, arising out of the need to accelerate the SDGs and take steps to respond effectively to emerging challenges, will seek to support Member States in how society can achieve these aspirations and goals. As such, the action-oriented outcome document [Pact for the Future](#) will work as a roadmap towards achieving the Summit's objectives.

The Pact has placed particular focus on meaningful youth engagement and the [recognition of youth having a key participation role](#) in decision-making for safeguarding future generations. It is no secret that there is a global disconnect between generations as demonstrated by cultural jabs like “[Okay, Boomer](#)” and “[Millennials are killing.](#)” Such divide, however, is having deep impacts that is in need of identifying solutions that, while not a participation trophy, American global leadership can make those first critical steps towards.

Contributing to the intergenerational rift is the lack of youth representation at decision-making levels where young leaders *can* earn respect. Only [15.5% of national legislatures](#) across the world are below age 40, which [decreases to 6.7% for the United States](#). The United Nations Youth Office’s “[Be Seen Be Heard](#)” campaign research also found that 2.6% of national legislatures worldwide are below age 30. This [decreases in the United States to 0.46%](#). Moreover, only [3.7% of United Nations staffers are under the age of 30](#), rising to only 30% for employees who are under 40. Similarly, [6.14% of full-time employees of the U.S. federal government](#) are under 30 and 28.96% are under 40 (the average age is 47.5 years).

The impacts of this power imbalance are far-reaching geographically, societally, and [temporally](#). It is known that young people not in education or employed are more likely to experience social and economic exclusion, lasting multiple generations into the future. Such exclusion has negative impacts on essential social progress benchmarks including political stability, crime, and economic growth. Based on the [2022 Social Progress Index](#), the United States has been stagnating in social progress since 2011 and actively sliding backward since 2017.

U.S. QUICK FACTS

NOT ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE A SINGLE SDG BY 2030

- 2023 SDG Index Rank: **39** out of 166, **behind Ukraine**
- SDG Reporting: Only **1 of 3** countries not submitting a Voluntary National Review, alongside **Myanmar and Haiti**
- Status of SDG Targets: **35% Worsening**

Regression within the United States is primarily related to the SDGs of Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. For example, American youth are facing [a mental health crisis as youth suicides have risen since 2020](#), among other indicators, which severely hampers achieving SDG 3 for young people and their families. [Reading and math test scores have also declined](#) considerably since COVID-19, which falls back on meeting SDG 4. And safety troubles such as increased [firearm-related mortality](#) show a deterioration of reaching SDG 16 as violent deaths continue to rise. Such failures are nothing short of a temporal injustice placed on American youth, youth worldwide, and future generations.

Therefore, the Pact for the Future must get youth *leadership* right in the decision-making for safeguarding future generations. Moreover, **the United States must make its commitments to youth and future generations today** to embody strong global leadership, ensuring both national security and global prosperity.

MEETING THE SDGs: A FUTURE FOR ALL

The United Nations Foundation's American Leadership for the SDGs wrote the eye-opening 2022 article on [what Americans think about the SDGs](#) which reveals the following in the figures below:

U.S. PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE SDGs

- **3 out of 4 U.S. adults** have either never heard of them or even if they have heard, do not know what they are.
- After reading the SDGs description, however, **76% U.S. adults** said the SDGs were important.
- There is also **broad support (81%)** for a regular and public accounting of progress towards the SDGs across political affiliations (Republican, Independent, and Democrat).

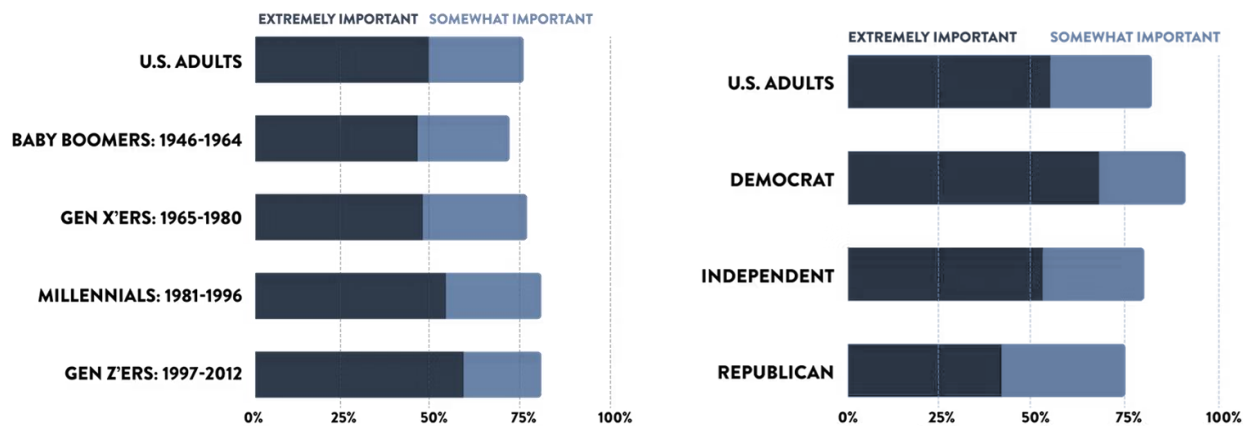


Figure 1 and 2: Survey of 8,000 U.S. adults who believe the SDGs are important based on age and political affiliation, respectively.

This broad support across generations and political affiliations indicates how the SDGs can serve as a key instrument for unlocking intersectional cooperation to tackle major issues the country faces today.

Therefore, this case works to catalyze a public, intergenerational vision for strong American leadership on safeguarding future generations through achieving the SDGs in collaboration with youth.

The case's goal for long-term impact is to successfully stimulate the Biden Administration in making commitments addressing future generations by meeting the SDGs ahead of the UN Summit of the Future.

KEY MESSAGES & OBJECTIVES

KEY MESSAGES

The key messages are the following:

- A. Bring forward clear support for the Biden Administration to commit to safeguarding future generations by strengthening the U.S.-UN partnership through supporting the Pact for the Future.
- B. Foster critical awareness and create opportunities for public and youth engagement through the promotion of the Biden Administration **appointing a Special Envoy on Future Generations**.
- C. Achieve public accountability through the backing of the Biden Administration in localizing data systems to report on progress for meeting the SDGs as an indicator of safeguarding future generations.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the case are to achieve the following:

1. Negotiate a U.S. commitment with the Biden Administration ahead of the UN Summit of the Future on safeguarding future generations, acknowledging the role youth leadership plays.
2. Develop unity among advocates of strong, principled U.S. engagement with the world in the context of the future of foreign policy.
3. Mobilize resources towards meeting and tracking the progress of the SDGs in the U.S. in collaboration with youth leaders, among other stakeholders as a start to long-termism strategy.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The outcome of the case to appoint a Special Envoy on Future Generations is a powerful network connecting the current **and** next generation of U.S. leaders, translated into action-based engagements and awareness raising initiatives predicated upon strategic foresight that will become integral to future policy- and decision-making. The appointment itself will galvanize a movement that will reshape public policy to be not only data driven at both the national and subnational levels but become

connected with long-term strategy and global policy through the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Pact for the Future. Furthermore, international cooperation and the U.S.-UN partnership will strengthen, rendering a return of confidence in the UN system. Lastly, the social fabric of American society will shift towards intergenerational understanding and mutual respect through the proliferation of leadership focused on future generations in organizational decision-making.

SPECIFIC BENEFITS

Establishing a Special Envoy on Future Generations provides compelling, tangible benefits essential to navigating the domestic and foreign policy complexities of the global landscape. Key benefits, in alignment with the include the following detailed below.

- **Improved Quality of Life:** The Special Envoy on Future Generations would foster a more informed and strategic approach to policy formulation and implementation. Decision-makers would have access to a holistic understanding of potential outcomes, enabling them to craft policies that are not only effective in the short-term but also aligned with long-term national objectives.
- **Saves Costs and Yields Higher Returns on Investment:** Being prepared saves lives and costs as for [every \\$1 invested in preparedness saves upwards to \\$13](#) in federal spending on natural disasters. The Special Envoy would play a pivotal role in enhancing the nation's adaptability and resilience planning for responding in a similar context on public issues, foreign, and domestic. By systematically exploring how future generations could be affected by decisions, the Special Envoy will begin equipping the government, businesses, and society with the knowledge and adaptability needed to be prepared for various scenarios, increasing the nation's resiliency. Considering long-term consequences also yields a higher return on investment. In a study observing 90 European corporate managers, it was found that companies who were applying strategic foresight to navigate changing landscapes [had a higher profitability by 33%](#) and a higher market capitalization by 200%.
- **Early Identification of Emerging Opportunities and Challenges:** A Special Envoy on Future Generations would act as an attentive guardian, monitoring and evaluating emerging trends across all domains, foreign and domestic in the growing area of interest on future generations. By identifying early indicators of dialogues, negotiations, and policymaking, the Special Envoy would inform ambassadors and policymakers of key signs, enabling for a united approach to proactively address

issues in relation to future generations before they proliferate or worsen, and its actors take advantage of potential opportunities.

- **Improved Consistent Promotion of U.S. Values:** Appointing a Special Envoy on Future Generations would instill and promote a culture of long-term thinking within the government and gain early influence in foreign policy contexts that align with American values. By steering policies away from short-term gains and focusing on sustainable solutions, the Special Envoy would contribute to the development of strategies aligned with the nation's overarching objectives pertaining to its future. This cultural shift is essential for fostering strategic planning and governance that transcends immediate responses, ensuring the country remains adaptable and sustainable in a quickly evolving societal landscape.
- **Improved Intergenerational Collaboration:** The Special Envoy's initiatives and programming would create a platform that builds bridges for Americans of all ages from diverse fields to collaborate and pool their insights. This intergenerational collaboration would lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics shaping the future. By leveraging cross-generational thinking, the office would generate diverse perspectives that go beyond the limitations of age, fostering innovation and informed decision-making.
- **Unlocking the Potential of Shaping the Future:** By having a Special Envoy in place will assist in continuous navigation of shaping the future, both for America and global majority countries, especially on the African continent (70% of Sub-Saharan Africa are under 30 years old). This role will be important for building upon what has started with the 2022 [U.S.-Africa Summit](#) in strengthening partnerships for new economic engagements, global health, democracy, climate action, and meeting Agenda 2063, among other shared values. One specific case is the forming of bonds between Cameroon and the U.S. through the [Project Energy for Life Cameroon consortium](#). This is a youth-led effort between one of the country's monarchs HRM King Ngum IV of Oku (Cameroon's North West Region) who is under 30 years old, the author who was 30 years old, and an Obama Foundation Scholar and Washington Mandela Fellow who was under 40 years old at the time this initiative began. In this effort, the U.S. team delivered both small-scale solar energy and first aid during a time of internal conflict to assist with inaccessible electricity and cultivate a community of health-seeking behaviors. Unexpectedly, this fostered an imprint on the youngest generation by being able to use the equipment to complete homework at night. Upon receiving one of these aid boxes, a 5-year-old recipient is quoted to say, "When I grow up, I want to be an electrician."

RISKS OF INACTION

On the other hand, there are significant risks that pose to national security and economic prosperity if the U.S. does not act today on this emerging priority.

- **Exclusion will put Global Competitiveness at a Disadvantage:** As discussions on future generations gain traction in policy fora, the United States risks not having a strong and immediate position for key input and navigation. This has already affected the country's perception of leadership in various youth spaces including prominent conferences such as the Future Generations Forum (Wales), One Young World (UK, last U.S. location was 2012), World Festival of Youth and Students (U.S. never sponsored) and Changemaker Xchange Regional Summits (Germany, U.S. lost presence). Each of these global youth summits have taken place outside of the U.S. where young Americans are increasingly having harder access to participate in due to this perception while youth-led discussions, sharing of lessons learned, and forming of deep relationships are taking place without them. Multilateral agency programs are also following this trend as the IMF Youth Fellowship's last American representation, namely the author, was in 2021 and UNICEF Generation Unlimited's Youth Action Team have no American representation. Lastly, while the AFS – formerly American Field Service – Youth Assembly holds their summit in the U.S., each year there is a

significant lessening of American presence. This year's theme is "Forge our Future" which will explore dialogues with a focus on future generations amidst the UN Summit of the Future. All these examples are signaling that the civic and policy youth space is willing to move forward without the U.S., putting the country at a disadvantage when competing globally as a world leader.

- **Reactionary Policymaking will Continue to Cost Lives:** By not having a Special Envoy on Future Generations in place, the U.S. will continue to rely on reactionary policymaking and diplomacy to catch up to short-term issues and at best prolong long-term consequences. At worst, such lack of investment for preparedness will continue to cost needless lives. This has held true in countless examples, and as a result of such policy shortcomings not taking long-term impacts into account, not only will future generations be impacted but current lives. A study found that [600,000 excess deaths occur in the U.S. annually](#), on average, since the 1980s. Since COVID-19 the excess deaths have spiked to over 1 million. Compared to the mortality rates of peer nations, the U.S. has an excess mortality of 26.4 million years from policy failures. There has yet to be any policy changes to alter this trajectory.
- **Short-termism will Harm the Economy:** Short-termism is the focus of delivering results in the short-term at the expense of long-term benefits. This condition [hurts the economy](#) in three significant ways: fewer jobs are created, economic growth is stalled, and the ability to fight a financial crisis is critically impacted. Specifically, [a McKinsey study](#) revealed that 5 million jobs would have been created if companies had engaged in long-term approaches. In another example, [\\$12 billion in healthcare savings](#) and millions of lives could have been saved had short-termism from lack of policy changes not get in the way of enabling patent protection and \$20,000 price of the Hepatitis C cure. A Special Envoy on Future Generations is an important step for shifting this mindset away from short-termism. Without this leadership to shift perspective, there is only less of a chance that short-termism will subside which will continue to harm the economy and cost lives.
- **Opportunities to Strengthen International Ties will be Missed:** Without a Special Envoy on Future Generations, opportunities to form international relationships will be missed, especially with countries who are projected to be the fastest growing with people, all top ten from [the African continent](#), and [economies](#), including major jumps for African countries such as Nigeria, Tanzania, and Egypt. While having a Special Envoy on Future Generations will foster new and stronger bonds with these nations built on mutual respect, not having continuous engagement will harbor missed chances and eventually resentment. With the upcoming Summit of the Future, the global majority youth not only support the Secretary-General appointing an Envoy on Future Generations but expect it as a bare minimum commitment to future generations. Additionally, global majority youth formed a [Future Generations Tribunal](#) to which was built in response to the limitations of current mechanisms and legal frameworks that do not protect the rights of future generations, some of whom are from the U.S.
- **SDGs will not be Met, Eroding Trust and Endangering Safety:** As noted that the world is on track to achieve only [12% of the SDGs by the 2030](#) deadline, there is a growing perception that current systems and institutions are not to be trusted, especially by younger people. This trend is being seen worldwide where [favorable views of the UN by Americans dropped by 3% points](#) to 58% favorable as well as domestically where [only 7% of American youth](#) believe the U.S. is in a "healthy democracy" and over [75% of both Republican and Democratic youth](#) believe the U.S. only serves the wealthy and powerful. Without having a role focused on future generations to start shifting towards a different direction, the erosion of trust will continue to spread across all institutions, making future global agendas not received well or taken seriously, and endanger public safety at home and abroad.

“Confronting bad governance with fatalistic apathy would be un-American. And it dishonors the memory of what and who we have lost—and are still losing.”

Philip Zelikow, former Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission

“If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we go through with it.”

President Lyndon B. Johnson, on the Wilderness Act of 1964

“What is decided now and in the weeks and months ahead is going to shape the future for generations to come.”

Secretary Anthony Blinken, 2024 U.S. Summit for Democracy

THE RECOMMENDATION

APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL ENVOY ON FUTURE GENERATIONS

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The purpose of the Special Envoy on Future Generations is to help public bodies and those who make policy in the United States to think about the long-term impact their decisions have as well as set a positive and affirmative vision for the future. The U.S. Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy has elevated tech issues but also brought consistency to U.S. engagement and enabled a more forward-looking U.S. stance. Other nations know who to ask advice for cyberspace and digital policy. This appointment on future generations works to do the same for elevating concerns on decisions made today that will affect multiple generations into the future. To define a “special envoy,” the position is a designation for an individual who is chosen to work as a surrogate for the Secretary of State on a specific issue that requires focused attention. The envoy is valued for their ability to raise the profile of an issue, directly engage with decisionmakers, and operate with a greater degree of independence to make progress on the issue. In alignment with the recommendations of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), a Special Envoy on Future Generations should have a clear mission, structured lines of reporting authority as well as structured authority for carrying out a mission, alignment with the appropriate bureau(s), access to appropriate resources, and a time limit or sunset provision.¹ The Special Envoy on Future Generations will therefore fulfill the following specifications.

MISSION

The mission of the Special Envoy on Future Generations is to highlight and navigate the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing future generations of Americans. Specifically, the Special Envoy will have the following objectives:

- Inform, support, and challenge public bodies to analyze and project long-term impacts of decisions on future generations.
- Work with appropriate partners to mobilize resources around developing robust systems that take future generations into account.
- Serve as the principal public representation of future generations issues, leading and coordinating programming around existing administration priorities and emerging global initiatives while opening pathways for cross-cultural dialogue on shaping the future of global agendas such as the SDGs as well as future agendas.

¹ American Foreign Service Association QDDR Special Envoys Working Group (2014). “Special Envoys Recommendations” https://afsa.org/sites/default/files/Portals/0/qddr_special_envoys.pdf

STRUCTURE & ALIGNMENTS

The Special Envoy on Future Generations will have a direct line to the Secretary of State as will its Office. The Office on Future Generations will reside within the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, which works to serve as the lead policy maker for the Department’s overall public outreach and press strategies. Other bureaus and offices that report to Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs include the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Global Public Affairs, Global Engagement Center, Office of Global Youth Issues, and Office of Policy, Planning, And Resources.

The Office of Future Generations complements, but is distinct from, the other offices. Given the trend that future generations issues complement youth issues, particularly noted in the UN’s [Zero Draft Pact for the Future](#) where Pillar 4 is on Youth and Future Generations, there is a natural fit of closeness to the Office of Global Youth Issues. There is a similar fit with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as not only is there a strong correlation between the Bureau with youth, but that many nations with similar

Offices of Future Generations have a strong education function as well as cultural. In one notable example, the [Strategic 2023-2030 Plan](#) of the Future Generations Commissioner of Wales ensures one of their five main pillars is on ‘Culture and Welsh Language.’

Given that issues focused on future generations are emerging on an international scale, it is important that the Office of Future Generations is in close communication with the Bureau of Global Public Affairs which communicates foreign policy objectives to the American people. Also needing to be in close communication with the Office is the Global Engagement Center. As navigating this emerging field becomes more apparent, there is need for synchronization to so as to not feed disinformation aimed at undermining U.S. interests, particularly because of the nature of approach related to future generations relying upon strategic foresight. Lastly, also close to the nature of approach in future generations issues which focuses on long-term strategy is the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources. What separates the Office of Future Generations from these other bodies, however, that still meet administrative priorities is the following described in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Differentiating the functions of the proposed Office of Future Generations from the Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Offices.

OFFICE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCE & COMPLEMENTARY ROLE	PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While ‘future generations’ are different from ‘youth,’ given the unique situation of the youngest generations as the closest spokespeople to future generations, the Office will ensure youth voices will be given careful consideration as evaluated by key benchmarks and be the focus of who is being affected by decisions. 	<p>Office of Global Youth Issues: Leads and coordinates youth-related programming around the administration’s foreign policy priorities and existing regional initiatives, while consulting with young people to uplift the voices of youth making a difference at home and abroad.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and cross-cultural collaboration are to be part of the Office’s programming, however, the goal is to have a look at how public bodies, on behalf of American communities, can improve cultural well-being, for example in areas like housing, land use planning, health, education, and community regeneration while valuing multi-culturalism. 	<p>Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: Cultivates ties among current and future global leaders that build long-lasting networks and promote U.S. national security and values.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issues of future generations is an emerging foreign policy and diplomacy issue, and therefore this office will be communicating its role domestically but also liaising with foreign partners on navigating this area of interest in a way that also is in the interests of the U.S. 	<p>Bureau of Global Public Affairs: Communicates U.S. foreign policy priorities and the importance of diplomacy to American audiences as well as engage foreign publics to enhance their understanding of and support for the values and policies of the U.S.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies a systemic lens in using strategic foresight to tackle issues of disinformation and propaganda, especially because of its long-term consequences. 	Global Engagement Center: Addresses foreign adversaries' attempts to undermine U.S. interests using disinformation and propaganda.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporates strategic foresight as a core function of the advisory role to public bodies for understanding impacts on future generations that decisions make. 	Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources: Provides long-term strategic planning and performance measurement capability for public diplomacy and public affairs programs.

The Special Envoy on Future Generations will need to have close relationships to other existing bodies, especially the U.S. Permanent Mission to the UN due to major developments within the UN system including the UN Summit of the Future and its deliverables, the Pact for the Future and the [Declaration on Future Generations](#).

Additionally, as discussions are underway for better use of foresight, science, and data as well as more meaningful engagement of young people as stewards for future generations, it would benefit the nation to establish a U.S.

Office of Strategic Foresight as proposed by the [Federal Foresight Advocacy Alliance](#). Longer term, an ambition for the Office of the Special Envoy on Future Generations could fit within this office should it grow into its own standalone entity. The U.S. Government Accountability Office already houses the Center for Strategic Foresight and in 2021, issued a variety of products [relevant to all 17 SDGs](#), once again demonstrating the interrelatedness between foresight, global agendas, and being mindful of what kind of country future generations of Americans will be born into.

RESOURCES REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT MISSION

The key resources required to enable the Special Envoy to carry out this mission include both financial and human. Therefore, a suggested budget template for FY '25 is provided below in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Template Budget for FY '25.

BUDGET ITEM	QUANTITY
Staff Compensation	6 (Special Envoy, Deputy Special Envoy, Social Media and Email Marketing Manager, Financial & Reporting Analyst, Policy Analyst, and Staff Assistant)
Office (Utilities, Electricity, Trash, and Internet)	N/A
Travel	For each staff member as necessary
Training and Professional Development	For each staff member as necessary
Equipment	1 Laptop and 1 phone for each staff member, one fax machine and printer for office, and one office line for office
Office Furniture	No less than 1 desk and 3 chairs for each staff member and guests
Supplies	Office-wide as necessary

TIME LIMIT & SUNSET PROVISION

The time limit of the Special Envoy on Future Generations should be one by which could provisionally end by 2030 during which the UN Sustainable Development Agenda concludes. By this time, it will also be six years after the Summit of the Future by which the issues of future generations will gain more of a foundation in terms of understanding its landscape by public bodies and intergovernmental institutions to which the U.S. could make a more informed response in determining the merits of the Special Envoy. Additionally, it will be two years into a new U.S. presidential election cycle to wind down operations should a future administration decide to move in another direction.

Should the position require an extension, the next suggested sunset date should align with other commitments such as what the U.S. agrees to through its Member State status of the UN General

Assembly pertaining to a renewed sustainable development agenda or future generations pact, of which talks are looking at 2050 as the next time of reference. This time frame would encompass an entire generation, which would be a fitting potential conclusion should there not be any further extensions.

KEY DELIVERABLES

The U.S.-based youth organization [Global Futurist Initiative](#) lays out key targets and indicators of success in a similar framework to that of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for sovereign states to adopt as a monitoring and evaluation tool for achieving what they refer to as ‘youth equity.’ This concept is defined as the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities for youth.

Given the unique nature of the Special Envoy’s prominent stakeholders being generations not yet born, the current generation of young people effectively fulfill the delegation as their stewards. Therefore, the Special Envoy on Future Generations will work to achieve deliverables that are most aligned with the vision of American youth for what they believe their future should look like.

While achieving ‘youth equity’ is proposed by Global Futurist Initiative to be a newly added SDG, namely “SDG 18,” and targets and indicators encompass both nation states and the UN system, below is a reformatted framework as **Table 3** that more closely aligns with a U.S. context.

Table 3. Key Deliverables for the Special Envoy on Future Generations.

DELIVERABLE	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1. Provide strategic directions and recommendations to navigate future generations issues that protect American values in foreign and domestic policy settings.	1.1 Participation rate of Special Envoy in foreign policy dialogues concerning issues related to future generations 1.2 Influence of Special Envoy in providing provisions that align to U.S. values and interests concerning future generations in intergovernmental agreements and negotiations
2. Make efforts to significantly increase the level of youth leadership, including in American-owned businesses, to increase intergenerational collaboration and futures thinking.	2.1 Proportion of young people in managerial positions 2.2 Proportion of youth representative or young people on boards of directors 2.3 Proportion of young people in (international, supranational, and/or national) advisory boards and/or delegations
3. Substantially increase youth representation at the national, state, and local level of law- and policy making as well as government unelected employed positions.	3.1 Proportion of seats held by youth in (a) Congress, (b) state-level legislative bodies and (c) municipal governments 3.2 Proportion of youth in (a) federal-level government employment, (b) state-level government employment and (c) municipal-level government employment 3.3 Number of legislations created and/or introduced by young advocates 3.4 Number of states and municipalities with laws and regulations that promote political youth engagement
4. Strengthen efforts to safeguard and protect societal, cultural, and environmental well-being due to decision-making that impacts multiple generations into the future.	4.1 Amount of federal-level public allocations for conducting assessments and building capacities to enact changes that align to principles of safeguarding future generations based on data-driven results 4.2 Proportion of states and municipalities with systems to track and make public allocations for long-term impacts based on future generations assessments

<p>5. Increase access to skills building and training on strategic foresight, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.</p>	<p>5.1 Participation rate of youth and in formal and non-formal strategic foresight education and training in the previous 12 months</p> <p>5.2 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional strategic foresight</p> <p>5.3 Extent to which (i) strategic foresight education and (ii) education for strategic foresight are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment</p>
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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Below is the analysis conducted by the [Future Generations Commissioner of Wales](#):

“ Institutions follow many different concepts and models. Some are governed by statute, whereas others are more dependent on political decisions. The latter is the case of the **German** Parliamentary Advisory Committee for Sustainable Development (PACSD), in which the parliament decides in every electoral period how to define its goals, composition, and function.² The PACSD’s explicit mandate for implementing intergenerational equity can be understood by the institution’s use of intergenerational equity as a factor to assess the sustainability efforts in the government’s progress. However, since the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, intergenerational equity is no longer used and has been replaced by the SDGs.

It is also notable that few institutions explicitly focus on future generations or intergenerational equity such as **Wales**, **Gibraltar**, and **Hungary**. There is a difference between institutions or processes where intergenerational justice is one aspect of their remit, or has become a part of their remit, and those for which it is the core tenet. In the parliamentary context, the tasks of the committee in **Finland** expand well beyond environmental norms and options. The Finnish Parliamentary Committee deliberates factors that influence the development of the future, future research, and the impacts of technological development rather than having a significant legal or policy role.³

Institutions can also be fragile, or become fragile over time, such as in the case of the Israeli Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations.⁴ The Commission began operating in late 2001 with specific focus on the creation of a dimension of the future that would be included in the primary and secondary legislation of the State of **Israel**. After some time, the Commissioner and his group of experts developed real influence across a wide policy spectrum. However, in 2006, with the conclusion of the Commissioner’s term, no new commissioner was appointed and in 2010 the Commission’s work ceased.

In 2021, **Uruguay** launched the Comisión Especial del Futuro. The Committee’s focus relies on imagining the post-pandemic stage, with a leading role for technology, innovation, and social issues.⁵ As with the Finnish case, it also expands beyond environmental sustainability. Institutions also work in different levels of influence. The Commissioner in **New Zealand** reports to the Parliament through the Speaker of the House and the officers of Parliament Committee,

² Reimer, F. (2021) “Institutions for a Sustainable Future: the German Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development”, in *International Justice in Sustainable Development Treaty*

³ Tiihonen, P. (2021) “Power over coming generations: Committee for the Future in the Eduskunta, the Parliament of Finland”, in *International Justice in Sustainable Development Treaty Implementation: advancing future generations rights through national institutions*. Eds.: Segger, M-C. C.; Szabó, M.; Harrington, A. R. UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 395-410.

⁴ Shoham, S.; Kurre, F. (2021) “Institutions for a Sustainable Future: the former Israeli Commission for Future Generations” in *International Justice in Sustainable Development Treaty Implementation: advancing future generations rights through national institutions*. Eds.: Segger, M-C. C.; Szabó, M.; Harrington, A. R. UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 332-351.

⁵ United Nations Development Programme (2021) “Comisión del futuro: nuevo espacio bicameral para abordar asuntos estratégicos del país”. Press release. https://www.uy.undp.org/content/uruguay/es/home/presscenter/articles/2021/07/Comision_del_futuro.html

being a separated entity from any Ministry.⁶ In the case of **Goa, India**, a group of six experts of environmental areas were put together by the Supreme Court to form an Expert Committee on a cap on mining on the grounds of intergenerational equity and sustainable development.⁷ More specifically, it was the outcome of the “Goa Foundation versus Union of India” case which began in 2012 when the local campaigning group filed the public interest litigation because of the continuation of illegal mining in Goa. The ECOC had clear demands to meet, and its final proposal was the institution of a Permanent Fund to allow for intergenerational equity to be implemented. The Centre for Strategic Futures in **Singapore** is an in-government, futures think tank particularly focused on the public sector and how to implement and support governmental, cross-departmental strategic thinking on risk and the future.⁸

The case of the **Dutch** institution is a unique example of an informal institution trying to exert influence beyond its formal power. The self-appointed Ombudsperson is not backed by any government mandate, but rather part of the Lab Future Generations foundation. They work on methods and instruments that can be used to include the welfare of future generations in decision making. This approach is more movement and momentum building than a formal authority. In **Scotland**, the Scotland’s Futures Forum works with key partners in academia and think tanks to create resources that support the Parliament to look towards the future. Recently, the Scottish Government has also announced that the country aims to establish a Future Generations Act and appoint a special Commissioner to ensure that future generations interests and concerns are considered in policymaking.⁹

In addition to these specific institutions, in numerous countries there is growing momentum towards new institutions. On such example is in **Costa Rica**. The country has received the ‘UN Champion of the Earth’ award in 2019, for its role in protecting the environment and combating climate change.¹⁰ Costa Rica has also launched an ambitious National Decarbonization Plan by 2050, embedding long-term thinking into its governance strategy, and this is paired with other non-governmental movements. Another example is **Jamaica**; the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC)¹¹ and the Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZ),¹² a Governmental Agency for promoting development, have embraced the commitment to preserve the environment for this and future generations as one of their core values.

To show where each country stands comparatively across its peers visualized is **Table 4**.

⁶ Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (n.d) “About us: the Commissioner”.
<https://www.pce.parliament.nz/about-us/the-commissioner>

⁷ Coutinho, R. (2017) “Intergenerational Equity Case Study: Iron-ore mining in Goa”. The Goenchi Mati Movement.
<https://goenchimati.org/intergenerational-equity-case-study-iron-ore-mining-ingoa/>

⁸ Jones, N.; O’Brien, M.; Ryan, T. (2018) “Representation of Future Generations in United Kingdom Policy-making”. Futures. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.01.007>

⁹ Geraghty, L. (2021) “Scotland is getting a new commissioner to look out for future generations”. News’ article. The Big Issue. <https://www.bigissue.com/news/politics/scotland-is-getting-a-new-commissioner-to-look-out-for-future-generations/>

¹⁰ United Nations Environment Programme (2019) “Costa Rica named ‘UN Champion of the Earth’ for pioneering role in fighting climate change”. Press release. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/costa-rica-named-un-champion-earth-pioneering-role-fighting-climate>

¹¹ Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (n.d.) “Ministry Overview” <https://megjc.gov.jm/ministry-overview/>

¹² Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority (n.d) “Sustainable Development Framework”
<https://www.jseza.com/about-us/sustainable-development-framework/>

Table 4. Role of Future Generations in Governments.

COUNTRY	BEST COUNTRY RANKING ¹³	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX 2021 ¹⁴	INSTITUTION	FUNCTION AND POWERS
Canada	2	15	Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development	Research/advisory; Audit
Australia	4	3	Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	Research/advisory; Complaints, Investigation
USA	5	21		
Germany	7	9	Parliamentary Advisory Committee for Sustainable Development	Research/advisory; Monitoring/scrutiny
New Zealand	8	13	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment	Research/advisory; Education; Investigation
Gibraltar	9	18	Commissioner for Sustainable Development and Future Generations	Policy development; Capacity building; Agenda setting
Scotland	9	18	Scotland's Futures Forum	Research/advisory; Education
United Kingdom	9	18	All-part parliamentary group on Future Generations	Research/advisory; Space for debate
Wales	9	18	Future Generations Commissioner	Research/advisory; Recommendations are binding
Netherlands	10	10	Self-Appointed Ombudsperson for Future Generations	Campaigning; Education
Finland	14	11	Committee for the Future	Research/advisory; Education
Singapore	16	12	Centre for Strategic Futures	Research/advisory; Education
Goa, India	30	132	Ombudsperson for Future Generations	Research/advisory; Complaints; Investigation; Shaping constitutional jurisprudence
Israel	36	22	Commission for Future Generations	Research/advisory; Initiate/veto legislation
Hungary	49	46	Expert Committee on a Cap (ECOC) - Intergenerational Equity	Research/advisory; Legal enforcement
Uruguay	57	58	Comisión Especial del Futuro	Research/advisory; Dialogue
Malta	N/A	23	Guardian of Future Generations	Research/advisory; Observer

¹³ U.S. News & World Report (2023). "U.S. News Best Countries" <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/rankings>

¹⁴ UNDP (n.d.) "Human Development Insights" <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>

— ADDITIONAL DETAILS —

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The timeline is amenable to changes, but this is a proposed visualization of how this work will proceed over the course of 2024, inclusive of both major communications activities (the Washington, D.C. communications activities and the Summit of the Future proposed deadline).

ACTIVITY	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Initial discussions and planning							
Coalition Building							
Official Declaration Proposed							
D.C. Communications Activities (Forums)							
Outreach to Primary Audiences							
First Round of Negotiations for Commitments							
Last Round of Negotiations for Commitments							
Commitments Finalized and Presented at UN Summit of the Future							