



SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

BULLETIN NO. 9:

Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9 – A New Agenda for Peace



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ABOUT

Building on the proposals presented in [Our Common Agenda report](#), the Secretary-General (SG) is publishing a [series of Policy Briefs over 2023](#) to serve as inputs into the preparations for the Summit of the Future. The Policy Brief on a New Agenda for Peace is the ninth one in that series.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY BRIEF

In the declaration commemorating the United Nations' 75th anniversary, heads of state and government committed to promoting peace and averting wars. It will take significant changes on the part of Member States to uphold and strengthen the multilateral system as the only practical way to address a complex array of global threats and carry out the objectives of the UN Charter on a global scale to honor this commitment. Nevertheless, for many people around the world, peace is still a distant dream. Despite the complexity and difficulty of resolving their origins, conflicts continue to create harm. This may give the quest for peace the appearance of being an impossible task. In reality, though, it is human political choices and deeds that can either keep or dash hopes for peace. There is always a choice involved in a war: whether to use force instead of negotiation, coercion instead of discussion, or imposition rather than persuasion. Therein lies the best chance because, if war is a decision, then so is peace. Recommitting peace is necessary at this time. The SG expresses his vision for how can these decisions be made in the current document.

Principles for an effective collective security system

- ✚ Trust
- ✚ Solidarity
- ✚ Universality

A vision for multilateralism in a world in transition

- ✚ The Charter and international law
- ✚ Diplomacy for peace
- ✚ Prevention as a political priority
- ✚ Mechanisms to manage disputes and improve trust
- ✚ Robust regional frameworks and organizations
- ✚ National Action at the center
- ✚ People-centered approaches
- ✚ Eradication of violence in all its forms
- ✚ Prioritizing comprehensive approaches over securitized responses
- ✚ Dismantling patriarchal power structures
- ✚ Ensuring that young people have a say in their future
- ✚ Financing for peace
- ✚ Strengthening the toolbox for networked multilateralism
- ✚ An effective and impartial United Nations Secretariat

PREVENTION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL: ADDRESSING STRATEGIC RISKS AND GEOPOLITICAL DIVISIONS

✚ ACTION 1: ELIMINATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- ❖ Recommit urgently to the pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons and reverse the erosion of international norms against the spread and use of nuclear weapons.
- ❖ Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, for States possessing nuclear weapons, commit to never use them. Take steps to avoid mistakes or miscalculations; develop transparency and confidence-building measures; accelerate the implementation of existing nuclear disarmament commitments; and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies.
- ❖ Engage in dialogue on strategic stability and to elaborate next steps for further reductions of nuclear arsenals.
- ❖ States with the largest nuclear arsenals have a responsibility to negotiate further limits and reductions on strategic nuclear weapons.

- ❖ For the Security Council, commit to the imposition of punitive measures to restore international peace and security for any use of or threat of use of nuclear weapons, consistent with its mandate.
- ❖ Reinforce the non-proliferation regime through adherence to the highest nuclear safeguards standards, ensuring that they keep pace with technological developments and ensure accountability for non-compliance with non-proliferation obligations. Strengthen measures to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

✚ ACTION 2: BOOST PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY IN AN ERA OF DIVISIONS

- ❖ Make greater use of the United Nations as the most inclusive arena for diplomacy to manage global politics and its growing fractures, as a platform for Member States to engage even when they lack formal diplomatic relations, are at war or do not recognize each other or one side.
- ❖ Seek the good offices of the Secretary-General to support action to reverse the deterioration of geopolitical relations and keep diplomatic channels open. This could include the establishment of United Nations-facilitated or sponsored frameworks to encourage crisis communications mechanisms and agree on responsible behaviors and manage incidents in the naval, aerial, cyberspace and space domains to guard against escalation between major powers.
- ❖ Reinforce and strengthen United Nations capacities to undertake diplomatic initiatives for peace and support United Nations envoys deployed to that effect. Bringing together global and regional actors, design new models for diplomatic engagement that can address the interests of all involved actors and deliver mutually beneficial outcomes.
- ❖ Building on the experience of the United Nations in the Black Sea Initiative, seek the good offices of the Secretary-General and his convening powers to protect global supply and energy chains and prevent economic links from fraying and bifurcating as a result of strategic competition. This could include finding bespoke solutions to future supply chain disruptions of key commodities and services, as well as major digital disruptions.
- ❖ Deploy the Secretary-General's good offices to maintain a free, open and secure Internet and prevent a rupturing in digital systems between States.
- ❖ Repair regional security architectures where they are in danger of collapsing; build them where they do not exist; and enhance them where they can be further developed. The United Nations can work to further such regional efforts in a convening and supporting role.
- ❖ For the United Nations, regional organizations and their respective Member States, operationalize rapid responses to emerging crises through active diplomatic efforts.

PREVENTING CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE AND SUSTAINING PEACE

✚ ACTION 3: SHIFT THE PREVENTION AND SUSTAINING PEACE PARADIGM WITHIN COUNTRIES

- ❖ Develop national prevention strategies to address the different drivers and enablers of violence and conflict in societies and strengthen national infrastructures for peace. These strategies can help reinforce State institutions, promote the rule of law and strengthen civil society and social cohesion, so as to ensure greater tolerance and solidarity.
- ❖ In line with my call to action for human rights, ensure that human rights in their entirety – economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights – are at the heart of national prevention strategies, as human rights are critical to guarantee conditions of inclusion and protect against marginalization and discrimination, thus preventing grievances before they arise.
- ❖ Recognize the fundamental importance of the rule of law as the basis for multilateral cooperation and political dialogue, in accordance with the Charter, and as a central tenet of sustaining peace.
- ❖ Member States seeking to establish or strengthen national infrastructures for peace should be able to access a tailor-made package of support and expertise.
- ❖ Provide more sustainable and predictable financing, including through assessed contributions to peacebuilding efforts, in particular the Peacebuilding Fund, to support these strategies, as a matter of urgency.
- ❖ For groups of Member States and regional organizations, develop prevention strategies with cross-regional dimensions to address transboundary threats, collectively harvesting and building on the wealth of knowledge and expertise existing at the national level on effective conflict prevention measures.

✦ ACTION 4: ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY

- ❖ Accelerate implementation of proven development pathways that enhance the social contract and human security, such as education and health care.
- ❖ Consider new and emerging ways to protect livelihoods and provide social protection in communities emerging from conflict and in post-conflict countries, such as through temporary universal basic incomes, which can promote resilience and social cohesion and break the cycle of violence.
- ❖ For international financial institutions, align funding mechanisms to help address the underlying causes of instability through inclusive sustainable development.

✦ ACTION 5: TRANSFORM GENDERED POWER DYNAMICS IN PEACE AND SECURITY

- ❖ Introduce concrete measures to secure women's full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making on peace and security, including via gender parity in national government cabinets and parliaments, and in local institutions of governance. Support quotas, targets and incentives by robust accountability frameworks with clear milestones towards achieving women's equal participation.
- ❖ Commit to the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence and enact robust and comprehensive legislation, including on gender-based hate speech, tackle impunity for perpetrators and provide services and protection to survivors.
- ❖ Provide sustained, predictable and flexible financing for gender equality. Allocate 15 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) to gender equality, and provide a minimum of 1 per cent of ODA in direct assistance to women's organizations, especially grass-roots groups mobilizing for peace.

✦ ACTION 6: ADDRESS THE INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY

- ❖ Recognize climate, peace and security as a political priority and strengthen connections between multilateral bodies to ensure that climate action and peacebuilding reinforce each other.
- ❖ For the Security Council, systematically address the peace and security implications of climate change in the mandates of peace operations and other country or regional situations on its agenda.
- ❖ Establish, under the aegis of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a dedicated expert group on climate action, resilience and peacebuilding to develop recommendations on integrated approaches to climate, peace and security.
- ❖ Establish a new funding window within the Peacebuilding Fund for more risk-tolerant climate finance investments.
- ❖ For the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations, establish joint regional hubs on climate, peace and security to connect national and regional experiences, provide technical advice to Member States and help accelerate progress on this agenda.

✦ ACTION 7: REDUCE THE HUMAN COST OF WEAPONS

- ❖ Strengthen protection of civilians in populated areas in conflict zones, take combat out of urban areas altogether, including through the implementation of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, adopted on 18 November 2022, and establish mechanisms to mitigate and investigate harm to civilians and ensure accountability of perpetrators;
- ❖ Achieve universality of treaties banning inhumane and indiscriminate weapons, such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols; the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines;
- ❖ Reduce military expenditures, renew efforts to limit conventional arms and increase investment in prevention and social infrastructure and services, with a strong focus on redressing gender inequalities and structural marginalization, to buttress sustainable peace and steer societies back towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- ❖ Request the Secretary-General to prepare an updated study on the social and economic impact of military spending;
- ❖ Stop the use by terrorist and other non-State armed groups of improvised explosive devices.

- ❖ Strengthen, develop and implement regional, subregional and national instruments and road maps to address challenges related to the diversion, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and ammunition.
- ❖ Set national and regional targets and measure progress toward the implementation of regulatory frameworks, including via data collection and monitoring.
- ❖ Pursue whole-of-government approaches that integrate small arms and light weapons control into development and violence reduction initiatives at the national and community levels, as well as in the national prevention strategies proposed under action 3.

STRENGTHENING PEACE OPERATIONS AND ADDRESSING PEACE ENFORCEMENT

🚩 ACTION 8: STRENGTHEN PEACE OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- ❖ For the Security Council, ensure that the primacy of politics remains a central tenet of peace operations: they must be deployed based on and in support of a clearly identified political process. The Security Council should provide its full support throughout, with active, continuous and coherent engagement with all parties.
- ❖ For the Security Council, not to burden peace operations with unrealistic mandates. Mandates must be clear, prioritized, achievable, sufficiently resourced and adapted to changing circumstances and political developments.
- ❖ For the Security Council and the General Assembly, undertake a reflection on the limits and future of peacekeeping in the light of the evolving nature of conflict with a view to enabling more nimble, adaptable and effective mission models while devising transition and exit strategies, where appropriate. This should clearly reflect the comparative strengths and successes of peacekeeping, as well as its doctrinal and operational limitations, as a tool that relies on strategic consent and the support of critical parties.
- ❖ Peace operations must be significantly more integrated and should leverage the full range of civilian capacities and expertise across the United Nations system and its partners, as part of a system of networked multilateralism and strengthened partnerships.
- ❖ In peace operations, fully leverage the use of data and digital technologies to effectively track conflict trends, understand local sentiment, enable inclusive dialogue, monitor impact and help guide evidence-based decisions. To this end, build on the strategy for the digital transformation of peacekeeping and critical innovations in mediation, good offices and peacemaking, in line with the Quintet of Change 39 towards a United Nations 2.0 and the recommendations contained in action 2.
- ❖ Exit strategies and transitions from peace operations need to be planned early and in an integrated and iterative manner to achieve successful mission drawdowns and ensure that gains are consolidated and the risk of relapse into conflict or escalation is minimized.
- ❖ Renew their support and recommit to further peacekeeping reform that builds on the progress achieved through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the reform of the United Nations peace and security pillar. These efforts must make peacekeeping operations more versatile, nimble and adaptable.

🚩 ACTION 9: ADDRESS PEACE ENFORCEMENT

- ❖ For the Security Council, where peace enforcement is required, authorize a multinational force, or enforcement action by regional and subregional organizations.
- ❖ Accompany any peace enforcement action by inclusive political efforts to advance peace and other non-military approaches such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, addressing main conflict drivers and related grievances. Avoid actions that cause harm to civilian life, violate human rights, reinforce conflict drivers or the ability of violent extremist groups to increase recruitment.
- ❖ When countries or regional organizations willing to conduct peace enforcement lack the required capabilities, provide support to those operations directly. Peace enforcement action authorized by the Security Council must be fully in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights law and involve effective and transparent accountability measures, including to the Security Council.
- ❖ In counter-terrorism contexts, ensure accountability and justice, including by advancing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies. Make available appropriate expertise to support counter-terrorism operations through the creation of strategic action groups with support from the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, backed as needed by Member State contributions.

✦ ACTION 10: SUPPORT TO AFRICAN UNION AND SUBREGIONAL PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

- ❖ For the Security Council and General Assembly, ensure that operations authorized under Chapters VII and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations have the required resources to succeed, including assessed contributions where required. Requests related to African Union and subregional organizations' peace support operations should be considered in a more systematic manner and no longer be considered exceptional.

NOVEL APPROACHES TO PEACE AND POTENTIAL DOMAINS OF CONFLICT

✦ ACTION 11: PREVENT THE WEAPONIZATION OF EMERGING DOMAINS AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

Tackling the extension of conflict and hostilities to cyberspace

- ❖ Declare that infrastructure essential for public services and to the functioning of society is off-limits to malicious cyberactivity, from both State and non- State actors.
- ❖ Establish an independent multilateral accountability mechanism for malicious use of cyberspace by States to reduce incentives for such conduct. This mechanism could enhance compliance with agreed norms and principles of responsible State behavior. Strengthen criminal justice capacity to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cyberactivity by terrorist actors against such infrastructure.

Prohibiting lethal autonomous weapons systems

- ❖ Building on the progress made in multilateral negotiations, conclude, by 2026, a legally binding instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapon systems that function without human control or oversight, and which cannot be used in compliance with international humanitarian law, and to regulate all other types of autonomous weapon's systems.

Preventing conflict in outer space

- ❖ Develop, through the relevant United Nations disarmament bodies and with the widest possible acceptance, international norms, rules and principles to address threats to space systems and, on that basis, launch negotiations on a treaty to ensure peace, security and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Peace and security implications of artificial intelligence

- ❖ Urgently develop national strategies on responsible design, development and use of artificial intelligence, consistent with Member States obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law.
- ❖ Develop norms, rules and principles around the design, development and use of military applications of artificial intelligence through a multilateral process, while also ensuring engagement with stakeholders from industry, academia, civil society and other sectors.
- ❖ Agree on a global framework regulating and strengthening oversight mechanisms for the use of data-driven technology, including artificial intelligence, for counter- terrorism purposes.

Improve global anticipation, coordination and preparedness to address biorisks

- ❖ Identify emerging and evolving biological risks; reinforce anticipation, coordination and preparedness for such risks, whether caused by natural, accidental or deliberate release of biological agents, and work with the United Nations system to provide options for strengthened prevention and response.
- ❖ Develop measures to address the risks involved in biotechnology and human enhancement technologies applied in the military domain. To do so:

- Set norms, rules, and principles of responsible behavior on military uses of human enhancement and degradation technologies, including to increase transparency around defense planning and practices, and work with other stakeholders to set out guidelines and policies for responsible research;
- For States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention), explore the potential implications of advances in neurobiology and related converging technologies for the respective governance regimes.

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

ACTION 12: BUILD A STRONGER COLLECTIVE SECURITY MACHINERY

Reform of the Security Council

- ❖ Make urgent progress in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council to make this body more just and representative.
- ❖ For the Security Council, democratize its procedures as a way to enhance its ability to reach consensus and make the results of its decisions more durable, including by:
 - More burden-sharing among Council members on resolutions, in particular on situations in their region to which they are not a party;
 - Systematic consultations with host States ahead of the adoption or renewal of mandates that affect them, as well as with regional organizations and troop- and police-contributing countries as appropriate;
 - Promoting greater accountability of permanent members for the use of the veto.
- ❖ Ensure that sanctions measures are targeted and regularly adjusted to ongoing political dynamics; ensure that sanctions regimes contain from the outset benchmarks for assessing progress, which are regularly reviewed; take prompt action on proposals for listing and delisting individuals and entities and ensure that they have an opportunity to request an independent review of their listing; and consider whether future United Nations sanctions regimes specifically relating to terrorism should include terrorism motivated by xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief.

Revitalization of the General Assembly

- ❖ Hold annual meetings of the General Assembly to put forward measures for the peaceful settlement of any situation which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations. Hold more regular interdisciplinary discussions across its Committees on cross-cutting issues.
- ❖ The General Assembly should exercise its primary role for substantive deliberations in the field of disarmament, in accordance with its rules of procedure and practice. The General Assembly should also agree on standards for the participation of other stakeholders in the work of its subsidiary organs in the field of disarmament.
- ❖ Reform the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, in order to optimize their respective roles, including to build consensus progressively on evolving disarmament priorities and review and make recommendations on developments in science and technology and their potential impact on disarmament and international security.
- ❖ Establish an intergovernmental process to discuss how to achieve the above goals and consider the role, timing and preparations of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

Elevating the work of the Peacebuilding Commission

- ❖ Enhance the role of the Peacebuilding Commission as a convener of thematic discussions on cross-pillar issues, with a focus on the interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of peace and development.
- ❖ Create a mechanism within the Commission to mobilize political and financial support for the implementation of the national and regional strategies suggested in action 3; and formalize the Commission's relationship with international

financial institutions and regional development banks in order to align financing instruments with national priorities and enable the Commission to fulfil its mandate in marshalling resources for peacebuilding.

- ❖ Formalize the participation of regional and other organizations in the Commission to enable holistic engagement, coordination and inclusiveness in the deliberations of the Commission.
- ❖ The Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council should ensure that the Commission is consulted in their proceedings. The Security Council in particular should more systematically seek the advice of the Commission on the peacebuilding dimensions of the mandates of peace operations.

CONCLUSION

The SG's vision is one of hope and optimism, as it is described in the current manifesto. Despite how difficult things are right now, the SG believes that Member States will rise to the occasion. The United Nations has repeatedly heard predictions of its impending extinction or growing irrelevance during its 78-year history. Despite setbacks and flaws, the organization has not only survived but also continued to serve as the backbone of the international system. The declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and my report on "Our Common Agenda" gave Member States a much-needed chance to have an open discussion about what they view as the future of their shared society. The key issue facing the membership at the Summit of the Future is how to strengthen the cooperative structures required to shift us from the path of destruction to the path of prosperity. In this regard, the SG's vision is unmistakable: these frameworks must be founded on a reaffirmed commitment to multilateral solutions that are built on mutual trust, solidarity, and universality. Acting now is more important than waiting until our divides and cracks have overwhelmed us.

RESOURCE

1. [Policy brief on a New Agenda for Peace](#)