



European Union response to the UN Secretariat's request for input for the 'New Agenda for Peace'

December 2022

1. The European Union (EU) welcomes the inclusive and transparent approach by the United Nations (UN) in inviting “views, priorities and potential recommendations for the New Agenda for Peace”. The EU is committed to engage with the UN, UN Member States, regional organisations, and other stakeholders, to ensure the best possible outcome at the Summit of the Future. The EU is therefore glad for this first opportunity to present ideas and will continue to participate in the process following this initial input.

2. The EU is committed to continue to uphold and promote rules-based multilateralism and the principles of the UN Charter, including via strengthening the EU-UN strategic partnership. In parallel with the UN seeking an “interconnected response” to the challenges facing us, the EU has invested considerable effort to link objectives and deliverables in the field of peace and security through its Global Strategy and ‘Strategic Compass’. The EU “reaffirms its intention to intensify support for the global rules-based order, with the UN at its core” and to substantially develop political dialogue.

3. The work of the UN and the EU comes together through a shared recognition of the importance of getting back on track with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Recent geopolitical trends have led to increased polarisation of narratives within the international community and intensification of global and regional rivalries and distrust. Partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global impact of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, progress has slowed or even reversed over recent years. This is affecting the fabric of societies at large, with profound implications for individuals. Setbacks in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions – translate into direct impacts on those most vulnerable. This is unacceptable and only serves to store up trouble for the future.

4. These circumstances call for ambitious solutions. Implementation of Our Common Agenda (OCA) represents an unmissable opportunity for change, by introducing global governance reforms and making the UN-centred multilateral system fit for tomorrow’s world. As part of OCA, it is crucial that the New Agenda for Peace be effective, and this calls for:

- A reinvigorated, rules-based multilateral system with the UN at its core – global cooperation and multilateral solutions are needed to tackle the challenges of the 21st century and to bring forth a legacy that will stand at the 2045 UN Centenary.
- A renewed vow of all nations to respect the main principles of the UN Charter, to maintain international peace and security and refrain from the threat or use of force – this is what the world wants, needs, and deserves.
- A UN Security Council (UNSC) whose members – especially those holding a veto – are held accountable for their task of ensuring peace and security; the veto is not a privilege but an international responsibility.
- Reinforced conflict prevention through enhanced, efficient, and effective cooperation within the whole UN system and with partners – to save human lives, limit suffering, and forestall the outbreak of crises.

- Accountability for violations of International Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law requires that perpetrators of atrocity crimes must be brought to justice; impunity is not an option.

I. SUSTAINING PEACE

Prevention

5. The 1992 Agenda for Peace underlined that “the most desirable and efficient employment of diplomacy is to ease tensions before they result in conflict – or, if conflict breaks out, to act swiftly to contain it and resolve its underlying causes”. The nature of conflicts has evolved significantly over the past three decades, but prevention remains vital and requires a long-term view, including addressing the root causes and drivers of fragility and conflict. Current events show the need to renew the international focus on prevention. The groundbreaking UN and World Bank Group report [Pathways for Peace](#) (2018) made a case for prevention as not only contributing to safeguarding human lives and forestalling the outbreak of crises, but also as an efficient use of resources. Systematic conflict analysis is key to prevention and peacebuilding and for conflict sensitive interventions in all sectors and across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (HDP nexus) – especially if conducted jointly. The joint [Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments](#) (RPBA) between the EU, UN and World Bank represent good practice. The EU can further contribute via its conflict sensitive analysis, Structural Country Assessments, Early Warning System, and Horizon Scanning. **The New Agenda for Peace offers the UN an opportunity to reinforce its longstanding commitment to timely, coordinated and sustained conflict prevention.** This work needs to be strengthened at all levels, including at local level under UN Resident Coordinators’ leadership, together with relevant partners including the EU, donors and international financial institutions (IFIs). It should be supported by Peace and Development Advisers, Human Rights Advisors, UN peacekeeping and special political missions, as well as on the regional level and at UN headquarters, including the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

Dialogue and mediation

6. Dialogue, mediation, and ‘good offices’ can be a key pathway to peace by addressing emerging crisis and conflict at an early stage and have the merit of handling tensions before positions become entrenched and before they affect people’s daily lives. They must be on the top of the list of tools to prevent and resolve conflict and crisis and systematically used throughout a conflict cycle. [The Concept on EU Peace Mediation](#) (2020) sets out EU practice in mediation, and reconfirms its strategic solidarity with the UN. As the sole organisation bringing all countries together, the UN should continue to promote dialogue as the best means to reach sustainable solutions to conflicts in all parts of the world. In the face of rising levels of violent conflict as well as threats to use force around the world, the New Agenda for Peace should serve to reaffirm and strengthen respect for the UN Charter. At the same time, the UN’s role, and the tools at its disposal to prevent and resolve conflicts, have to adapt to more complex conditions. The New Agenda for Peace should put a stronger focus on prevention and the full use of the UN’s diplomatic toolbox throughout all stages of a conflict cycle. Integration across different pillars is key and a strengthened leadership an important part of this. The New Agenda for Peace should also support regional prevention efforts and strengthen mediation capacities of regional organisations, which – if sufficiently equipped – could play a vital role in advancing political solutions to today’s conflicts and crises.

Link to Agenda 2030

7. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out essential pre-conditions for lasting peace and stability. It is vital to get back on track with its implementation. The thematic programme [Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention](#) of the EU's Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument ([NDICI Global Europe](#), the EU's main financing tool 2022-2027) emphasises that sustained peace is key for economic growth, prosperity and in realising the vision set forth in the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. There can be no peace without sustainable development, no development without peace, and neither without the inclusion of human rights. **It is crucial that the New Agenda for Peace is anchored firmly in the principles of the 2030 Agenda**, in particular SDG 16. Sustainable peace can only be achieved if the 2030 Agenda remains the common global roadmap and implementation is accelerated across all SDGs, bearing in mind its core principle of leaving no one behind. Likewise, to ensure its success, it is crucial to ensure its broad and universal support.

Partnerships and the role of regional organisations

8. **Strong partnerships between the UN and other international and regional organisations are essential for a networked, inclusive and effective New Agenda for Peace.** The EU and UN are longstanding partners. Together with its Member States, the EU is the largest contributor to the UN system, providing almost one quarter of all financial contributions to the UN's agencies, funds and programmes as well as one quarter of the UN peacekeeping budget. The EU-UN partnership on peace operations and crisis management and its current [2022-2024 joint priorities](#) helps both EU and UN missions and operations act more effectively, improve impact on the ground, thus having a multiplier effect. This is a good practice to build on to ensure synergies with other relevant actors operating in the same theatre. Enhanced capacity building, joint gender responsive conflict analysis and the exchange of best practices between the UN and regional organisations, such as the OSCE, the EU itself and the African Union (AU), are key to improving the ability to prevent and respond to conflict, and to sustaining peace. Developing synergies and avoiding duplication will also reinforce the capacity to deliver better on the 2030 Agenda. The regular meetings among mediation support entities of international, regional and sub-regional organisations, co-hosted by the EU and UN, could serve to feed decision-makers on needs and effective avenues to improve conflict prevention, mediation and dialogue support capacities of regional organisations. **The New Agenda for Peace should aim to strengthen the coordinating role and responsibility of regional organisations in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.**

International Law, including International Humanitarian Law

9. Annual reports by the UN Secretary General have consistently shown that civilians account for about 90% of casualties from explosive weapons in populated areas. Further civilian harm arises from the destruction of critical infrastructure, such as roads, hospitals, and sanitation facilities. The June 2022 [Declaration of the EU and its Member States](#) confirmed the unwavering commitment to upholding and promoting respect for international law, including the principles of the Charter of the UN. International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which seeks to limit the effects of violence and armed conflict and to protect civilians and others not taking part in hostilities, is a cornerstone of modern international law. The [EU guidelines](#) on promoting compliance with IHL underline its commitment to promoting compliance and set out the main tools at its disposal. Noncompliance with IHL has lasting implications on the prospects of peace and development, and growing violations by parties to armed conflicts constitute one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians and for the unhindered access of humanitarian assistance. It is also necessary to ensure full accountability for international crimes, including the crime of aggression and atrocity crimes. In addition, as

the polarised geopolitical context continues to erode long-standing legal norms, the universal nature of IHL is increasingly under threat. It is vital that the UN maintain the promotion of compliance with international law, including IHL, as one of the key elements of its mandate and as a key building block for peace and the protection of civilians. This includes stressing the need to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as well as sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as ensuring peace and the protection of civilians. The adoption of the Political Declaration on strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) constitutes a landmark development in humanitarian disarmament that aims at strengthening the adherence with IHL and the protection of civilians. Further, and in line with the New Way of Working endorsed at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, **the New Agenda for Peace should facilitate a closer collaboration between the different actors across the HDP nexus**, respecting the different mandates without privileging one over the other. This will be key to achieving Agenda 2030.

Human Rights

10. Human rights are the fundamental basis for inclusive and sustainable development, conflict prevention and sustaining peace. As per the [EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024](#) and the [EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora 2022](#), the EU is committed to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law consistently and coherently in all areas of its external action. Human rights, irrespective of whether they are civil, cultural, economic, political, or social rights, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. As previously highlighted by the UN Secretary General, violations of human rights are early and leading indicators of crisis. All UN members must make prevention a priority, tackle root causes of conflict, and address human rights concerns earlier and more effectively. Accountability for human rights violations is a cornerstone of effectively addressing human rights concerns; it prevents the recurrence of violations and can help address root causes of conflict. The EU will continue to firmly support the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and calls upon all States to respect the independence and legitimacy of his Office and to fully cooperate with it. The EU will continue advocating for the integrity, independence and functionality of UN human rights mechanisms including through strengthening of the OHCHR, work of the Human Rights Council (HRC), and recognising their unique role and added value. All UN Member States should uphold the highest human rights standards and fully cooperate with the HRC and its mechanisms. Early warning and early action on violations of human rights is key for conflict prevention. **The universality and indivisibility of Human Rights, the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, a rules-based international order founded on the UN Charter, and the value of multilateralism – as an effective and sustainable way to address challenges to global peace and security – must be at the core of the New Agenda for Peace.**

The Responsibility to Protect and Genocide Prevention

11. **The prevention of mass atrocities is a universal responsibility and should be a cornerstone of the New Agenda for Peace.** The EU prioritises the prevention of atrocities in its early warning toolbox, including by linking strategic foresight with conflict and atrocity prevention. This includes the EU's [Atrocity Prevention Toolkit](#) (2018), but also the aforementioned Early Warning System, Horizon Scanning, and Conflict Analysis Screenings in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Lessons show the importance of dedicating sufficient attention and resources to prevention, including preventive diplomacy, dialogue and mediation. Reflecting its determination to address serious human rights violations and abuses, the EU established a global human rights sanctions regime, which is a framework enabling targeted

restrictive measures applied to acts such as genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations or abuses. It is also vital to prevent and address conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, provide comprehensive support the survivors, ensure full accountability for those responsible for such crimes and thereby ending impunity. Additionally the EU actively supports the work of the UN Secretary General's Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and their offices. The EU encourages all UN members to join the ACT Code of Conduct and supports the [French-Mexican initiative on the use of veto in case of mass atrocities](#).

Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption

12. In line with SDG 16, the EU [Global Strategy](#) (2016), and the [New European Consensus on Development](#) (2017) recognise that the absence or low levels of rule of law is a primary driver of conflict, and that access to justice is at the core of sustainable development and long-term peace and stability. Rule of law is one of EU's cardinal values and one of the main objectives of its external policies, reflected in development cooperation, trade, humanitarian and other policy areas, as well as in its international agreements and political dialogues and is an integral part of the EU's common foreign and security policy. The EU attaches great importance to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and its global role; and is fully committed to its own implementation review (the [European Rule of Law Mechanism](#)). At a global level, erosion of trust between great powers and the armament initiatives combined with corruption are recognised as global threats to peace. **The New Agenda for Peace should include provisions for the promotion of and expert support to the development of the rule of law and to continuously combat corruption. It should stress the importance of respecting and implementing the decisions of the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the UN and of other courts and tribunals for the rule of law at both national and international level.** It is important that the UN continue to build on the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) 67th Session on the rule of law at the national and international levels (A/RES/67/1) and the UNCAC and continue to shape its new vision for the rule of law.

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

13. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remains a grave threat to international peace. The EU and its Member States are fully committed to upholding and strengthening the global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The EU provides and will continue to provide significant political and financial support to multilateral institutions to uphold and strengthen international treaties and agreements – including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty – as cornerstones of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, promoting universal adherence and helping to build capacities in partner countries for effective treaty implementation. The EU stresses the need to implement all obligations under the NPT and to make progress towards the full implementation of Article VI, with the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. Compliance with and enforcement of international obligations applicable to these weapons remains a fundamental pillar of the global effort to uphold the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. To prevent erosion of this landscape, and **to continue advancing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control should be a vital part of the New Agenda for Peace.** In this regard, the EU welcomes the adoption of the final outcome document of the Ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention as a significant step towards strengthening the Convention. The expected completion of the destruction of declared chemical weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) by September 2023 is a

positive sign; equally important will be to shift the focus of implementation to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. The EU will continue to support and strengthen conventional instruments as well as the multilateral export control regimes, including efforts to prevent and combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). It is important to address emerging challenges including those related to lethal autonomous weapons systems, advocate responsible military use of new technologies. On the emerging challenges related to lethal autonomous weapons systems, the EU emphasise that human beings must make the decisions with regard to the use of lethal force, exert control over weapons systems that they use and remain accountable for decisions over the use of force in order to ensure compliance with International Law, in particular IHL. The continued non-compliance of some States to their international obligations in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is a matter of grave concern; the international community must ensure accountability, end impunity for violations, and uphold global norms. Responsible behaviours in space, preventing militarisation or an arms race, are also of prime importance.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

14. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), as a political, non-military and transformative process that relies strongly on national and local ownership, peace and development and resilience building is key to transitions from conflict to sustainable peace. The EU and the UN are key partners in these efforts. The [EU's Joint Communication on DDR](#) (2021) is compatible with the UN Integrated DDR Standards, and will effectively contribute to peacebuilding and enhancing resilience of communities affected by fragility and conflicts. A continuation of the UN's strong commitment to support DDR processes is vital, both in the field and at policy level. Continued development, adoption, implementation of the UN system-wide guidance on DDR and its connection to other processes such as Security Sector Reform is central to this work, and is strongly encouraged as it paves the ground for enhanced synergies with the EU and other partners.

Security Sector Governance and Reform

15. Security Sector Governance and Reform is a key component of conflict prevention. It contributes to addressing potential crisis factors, crisis management and conflict resolution, post-conflict stabilisation, peacebuilding and democratic governance. It does this by reinstating accountable and transparent security institutions and restoring an effective and professional people-centred approach to security, thus providing the environment for sustainable development and peace. It is also one of the aforementioned 2022-2024 UN-EU priorities, and remains a strategic field of dialogue. Security Sector reform should be sensitive to developing local institutions and capacities that foster long-term self-sufficiency. The EU welcomes the evolution in the UN SSR approach. A reorientation towards strengthening local ownership and leadership in developing institutions is not only commensurate with, but strengthens delivery on the ultimate goal of SSR, which is the reconstruction of legitimate and people-centred security institutions. In line with the EU Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights, the EU is currently developing a Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on security sector support to third parties, drawing from lessons learned from the UN. **Evolution in the UN approach to SSR, in line with recommendations of the UN Secretary General's report on SSR, should be a priority of the New Agenda for Peace.** More than ever, support to capacity building and conflict prevention needs to be linked to wider engagement, to ensure the respect of global values, human rights, and the implementation of rule of law and good governance focused on human security, centring on the needs and solutions of people and communities, as well as their protection.

Women, Peace and Security

16. The EU strongly encourages the systematic integration of the Women Peace and Security agenda (WPS) throughout the New Agenda for Peace and welcomes the introduction of core area six focused on putting women and girls at the centre of security policy. Full implementation of all pillars of WPS commitments is as relevant as ever in the current geopolitical context and changing security environment and implementation of gender perspective needed when responding to all contemporary security threats, as outlined also in the latest [EU Council conclusions](#) (2022) on WPS. **It is essential that the New Agenda for Peace build on the existing WPS agenda and further strengthen the ability of the UN and partners to deliver and implement it, in order to place women and gender equality at the heart of peace and security.** As exclusion, grievances and inequality are key drivers of conflict, the New Agenda for Peace needs to be based on inclusivity. It is essential to ensure the voice and agency of all, with special consideration to vulnerable groups and individuals in situations of vulnerability, not leaving anyone behind. The full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women in all peace and security related contexts, throughout the conflict cycle, including in peace processes, in mediation, but also in protection and prevention, democratic governance, post-conflict situations and recovery is essential. This will include the need to transform organisational cultures and tackle stereotypes and biases in the workplace in order to retain women staff, particularly in the field where working conditions are most difficult, with a policy of non-tolerance towards sexist, racist or discriminatory work environment. Increased efforts, including sustained and targeted financing is needed to strengthen women's economic, social and political empowerment and reducing gender stereotypes, and eliminating and ensuring accountability for sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence; are key elements to sustaining peace.

Youth, Peace and Security and the role of the Youth Office

17. One of the key proposals of OCA is “to ensure that the voices of youth are more systematically integrated across the UN system”. 2022 was the European Year of Youth, and in October the EU launched its [Youth Action Plan](#) (2022-2027), promoting meaningful youth participation and empowerment in EU external action for sustainable development, equality and peace. The active participation and empowerment of children and youth, is necessary to build more legitimate, peaceful and democratic societies, in which human rights, humanitarian law and the rule of law are respected and no one is left behind. **The New Agenda for Peace should support the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda, promoting the active, inclusive and meaningful role of youth – as well as of children – in building lasting peace, contributing to justice and reconciliation and countering violent extremism.** The establishment of the UN Youth Office (UNGA resolution 76/306) to lead engagement and advocacy for the advancement of youth issues across the UN, in the areas of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights is a positive step. The reference to peace and security in the resolutions reflects the links between the future UN Youth Office and the New Agenda for Peace. By ensuring full, equal and meaningful participation and inclusive of youth – especially from developing countries – the UN Youth Office should, in a gender-responsive way, contribute to addressing in a more effective way the new challenges that we face in the field of peace and security.

Children and Armed Conflict

18. Children remain disproportionately affected by armed conflict around the world. To break cycles of violence and ensure long term peace and security protecting children amidst conflicts and ending and preventing violations and abuses against them must be at the forefront of our efforts. This is also an integral part of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2022)

and the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict, which are to undergo an inclusive review process in which enhanced cooperation with the UN could be integrated. The EU further supports the work of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other UN actors, like UNICEF. Sustainable and targeted funding for the protection of conflict-affected children and the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups are as relevant as ever. **In the New Agenda for Peace, the UN should further support the implementation of the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) Agenda considering the specific needs of boys and girls in all peace and security related activities throughout the conflict cycle, including in conflict analysis, early warning, peace process and mediation, security sector reform, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding but also in protection and recovery efforts.**

Civil Society

19. The EU recognises the important role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, including in fragile and conflict situations. In its [Council Conclusions](#) (2017), the EU reaffirmed its strong commitment to an empowered and resilient civil society as a crucial component of any democracy in supporting good governance and the rule of law, as well as sustainable development, and in promoting human rights, gender equality, empowerment of persons with disabilities, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles such as inclusion, transparency and accountability. Implementation of the EU's Instrument for contributing to Stability and Peace, showed that support to civil society and human rights defenders, in particular at the local level, has a crucial added value in ensuring effectiveness and ownership of conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. In this context, the EU firmly opposes any restrictions hindering the work of civil society and human rights defenders, and stresses the importance of protecting and promoting a safe and enabling civic space, online as well as offline. **CSOs are vital allies in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and working with local actors and reinforcing their capacities is a cornerstone of any conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategy. This should be fully recognised in the New Agenda for Peace.**

II. ADDRESSING THREATS AND REDUCING STRATEGIC RISKS

Triple Emergency: Climate, Biodiversity, Pollution

20. Under the pressure of more extreme weather events, slow onset risks and approaching tipping points, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution will increasingly threaten food security, livelihoods and competition over (access to) shifting and scarcer natural resources. With around 60% of conflicts today being linked to some form of natural resource, political stability and security within and between countries will be affected, which should be better reflected in our crisis management and peace building efforts. The EU recognises this ([Concept for an Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security](#), [Climate change and defence roadmap](#)) and is currently exploring ambitious steps to address the linkages between security, climate change and environmental degradation. Following the UNGA adopted resolution in July (A/76/L.75), recognising the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right, it is timely and urgent that the UNSC recognise the effects of climate change and of natural resource depletion as a fully-fledged peace-relevant issue of its competence. The EU welcomes the increased focus of the UNSC, but also notes its failure to adopt the resolution on Integrating Climate-Related Security Risk into Conflict Prevention Strategies (2021), co-sponsored by Ireland and Niger and supported by 113 UN Member States. **The New Agenda for Peace should prioritise the climate-security nexus and advance the systematically**

mainstreaming of climate and environmental issues into the regular work of the UNSC, for example through biannual reports by the SG on the impact of climate change on security, the appointment of a Special Envoy for climate and security, build on climate change diplomacy and more targeted local actions and recommendations enhanced information sharing and coordination on climate and security, particularly in vulnerable regions. It should also include proposals for how the UN as a whole can address climate-related security risks, including strengthening the work of the Climate Security Mechanism; supporting more UN missions and regional organisations in the field on Climate, Peace and Security; and to look at further leveraging the PBF for financing projects that address climate-related security risks. Cooperation to address common environmental challenges can be entry points for dialogue and conflict reduction as positive examples of transboundary water cooperation across river basins demonstrate. Conflict interventions must be climate-sensitive and climate responses must be conflict-sensitive.

Cyber and Technology

21. Cyberspace, and in particular the Internet, has become one of the backbones of our societies, offering a platform that drives connectivity and economic growth. The EU supports a global, open, stable and secure cyberspace grounded in the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic values that bring social, economic and political development globally. This vision is defended by EU Member States at the UN in the dedicated format discussions on responsible behaviour in cyberspace, such as the current Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), who will continue to take on these issues forward in the proposed Programme of Action (PoA) process on cyber issues, which has been promoted by a UNGA First Committee resolution this year and should succeed the OEWG in 2025. These principles should also be reflected in the Global Digital Compact as part of OCA. With a [Declaration on Digital Rights](#) and [Principles for the Digital Decade](#), the EU intends to spell out how its values and fundamental rights should be applied in the online world. Likewise the Declaration for the Future of the Internet supports those goals. The EU is working at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels to promote a strategic framework for conflict prevention and cooperation in cyberspace, boost cyber resilience and fight cybercrime in line with the EU's [Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade](#) (2020). **The New Agenda for Peace should aim to strengthen global resilience; advance and promote the UN framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, including the application of existing international law and a rules-based international order in cyberspace; and develop and implement practical cooperative measures, including regional confidence-building measures between States.** The Global Digital Compact should support those objectives. Fighting cybercrime, including ransomware, remains among the priorities for EU action. The EU remains committed to negotiating a new effective instrument against cybercrime in the context of the UN Ad Hoc Committee set up for that purpose and stands ready to provide technical assistance to all partners to strengthen their capacity to investigate cybercrime.

Terrorism and Violent Extremism

22. The links between security and development need to be addressed in holistic whole-of-society approaches to security that ensure sustainable peace. There needs to be a renewed and sustained focus on prevention, including addressing the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Resilience to violent extremism and terrorism is both a developmental, security and a political matter. The EU greatly values its strategic partnership with the UN and the resulting synergies on the ground, the [EU-UN Global Terrorist Threat Facility](#) being a good example. It is important to remain vigilant in the current context of increasing threats posed by the misuse of new and emerging technologies, such as new means to use the internet to

spread terrorist and violent extremist propaganda, the use of immersive and virtual reality, new technologies in terrorist financing and the use on unmanned aerial systems (drones). **The New Agenda for Peace** will need to take this changing threat landscape into account. It **will require strengthening multilateral cooperation, international exchange of knowledge and expertise, as well as regional approaches to prevent and counter terrorism (CT) and violent extremism (P/CVE) in full compliance with international law, including IHL, as well as identifying and targeting drivers and root-causes.** For security policy in general, and for CT policy in particular, it is vital that the New Agenda for Peace takes full account of women as crucial actors in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism and takes a gender-mainstreamed approach to CT-policy. Equally, the meaningful inclusion of civil society actors is key to achieving long-term results in CT and P/CVE policies. In this regard, the victim's counter-narratives should also be included to invalidate the terrorist propaganda. The New Agenda for Peace should reflect this reality, and emphasise the need for every policy designed to thwart terrorist threats to fully comply with human rights and IHL.

Organised crime

23. Organised crime poses a significant threat to peace, security, and stability. The organised crime landscape is characterised by a networked environment where cooperation between criminals is fluid, systematic and driven by a profit-oriented focus. Conflicts create opportunities for organised crime to flourish and amplify the threat that criminal groups may pose to internal security. UNSC resolutions often refer to organised crime in relation to conflict setting. The UNSC should continue to address the links between transnational organised crime and conflict in cooperation with other UN bodies, regional organisations and Member States. In line with IHL, organised crime needs to be tackled by addressing the specificities of each form of crime but also by tackling the structures behind them, their profits and the technologies used to commit their crimes. The UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocols thereto is an important tool in this fight. The EU and its Member States are stepping up efforts against organised crime groups, in line with the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025 (2021), which sets out actions to boost cross-border cooperation, tackle high priority crimes and criminal networks, eliminate criminal profits and make law enforcement and the judiciary fit for the digital age. Decisive is the role of capacity building, conceived as a multilevel activity including, where appropriate, beyond the capability, also the institutional building, the modernisation of the legal framework – in line with the UNTOC – and the consensus building around the basis of the rule of law.

Disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference

24. Disinformation, including foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), pose a considerable threat to peace, security and good governance around the globe. Information manipulation thrived in the context of COVID-19, as the pandemic provided fertile ground for hostile State actors, acting directly or indirectly through proxies, to manipulate the information environment. These actors exploit existing fears and insecurities, including the uneven social and economic impact of pandemic, to undermine the credibility of democratic governments, polarise societies, rupturing social cohesion and incite violence within societies and against governmental and institutional targets. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has been associated with an increase in hybrid threats which can, for example, combine disinformation campaigns with cyberattacks on infrastructure, economic processes and democratic institutions, with the potential for causing physical damage, obtaining unlawful access to personal data, stealing industrial or State secrets, sowing mistrust and weakening social cohesion. The EU and its Member States have been at the forefront of addressing disinformation and FIMI, especially through multilateral initiatives such as the Partnership on

information and democracy which promotes access to reliable information from free, pluralistic and sustainable media. Co-regulating the digital space can help prevent, mitigate and counter disinformation. The EU has therefore undertaken pioneer legislative (DSA/DMA) and non-legislative work (updated code of practice on disinformation) to better regulate online information and communication space. The EU will continue to build resilience in our societies, by raising awareness, working with media, civil society and the private sector to strengthen our media ecosystem through innovative tools, such as the Journalism Trust Initiative and the International Fund for Public interest Medias and through new legislation (Media Freedom Act). In addition, the EU has invested in cooperation with international partners and has built partnerships with civil society organisations and international fact-checking coalitions. The EU welcomes the inclusion of the proposed “Global Code of conduct that promotes integrity in public information” in the OCA and is committed to working with the UN in developing sound responses to FIMI, firmly rooted in universal human rights, in particular the freedom of expression and freedom of the media. **The New Agenda for Peace should foster multilateral cooperation built on this solid ground.**

Outer Space

25. Preventing an arms race in outer space is vital. The EU therefore welcomes the Preamble and 21 Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities adopted by UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and UNGA in 2019 and welcomes the agreement on the terms of reference, methods of work and work plan of the Working Group on Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. These work strands are essential, particularly to deal with the challenge of space debris mitigation. International security and stability and for safeguarding the free exploration and long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes. The EU supports and engages in the Open Ended Working Group on reducing space threats. An international and inclusive approach in the UN framework focusing on norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours is key to advance space security pragmatically, in addition to being a necessary step toward potential future legally binding, effective and verifiable instruments in the scope of space security. The EU highlights the importance of transparency and confidence building measures as essential. **The New Agenda for Peace should aim to strengthen synergy among the various governance initiatives to reinforce space security.**

Food, Finance and Fuel

26. The adoption of UNSCR 2417 (2018) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict was a breakthrough moment as, for the first time, UNSC acknowledged the link between hunger and conflict. The EU is supportive of UN efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict. Today, the world is facing a global food crisis, triggered in particular by conflicts, the triple planetary emergency, and COVID-19, and fuelled by Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine. More than 828 million people are currently chronically undernourished, 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, and one third of all food produced is either lost or wasted. Food systems contribute to over one-third of greenhouse gas emissions, up to 80% of biodiversity loss and use up to 70% of freshwater. Conflicts and instability are both key triggers of food insecurity and one of the consequences of food crisis. The EU supports the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance that the UN swiftly put together to address the interlinked causes of the global “cost of living crisis”. In line with the UN recommendations, EU and its Member States jointly put forward a comprehensive [Team Europe Global Food Security Response](#) as well as supported "Grain from Ukraine" initiative. This complex food crisis has again underlined the

need to act in an aligned, coordinated and comprehensive manner as food security stands at the nexus of agriculture, peace and security, climate, biodiversity, energy, water and innovation. **The New Agenda for Peace provides the UN with an opportunity to amplify its efforts to improve the “one UN” approach and increase the effectiveness of actions at local level.** Poverty, conflict, fragility, and forced displacement are deeply inter-linked. There is a need to promote coherent ways of working across the HDP nexus to be more effective and efficient in analysing the factors of fragility, vulnerability and conflict, as well as the local/national capacities to address risks and vulnerabilities, and in developing prevention measures and responses, supporting early recovery and stabilisation, building resilience and reducing risks. HDP nexus approaches are key to respond to the current crisis and to avoid similar situations in the future. Food and energy security should never be allowed to be weaponised for political ends, and not should other critical civilian or humanitarian supply systems.

Issues related to forced displacement

27. Over 100 million people worldwide have been forced from their homes as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or disasters. The EU is fully committed to their needs, and remains the leading international donor in this area. Aware of the growing link between climate change and forced displacement, EU has recently scaled up its action, setting up new policy and priorities in 2022. The EU favours a nexus approach to address the needs of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, in line with the [Communication Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-Reliance](#) (2016). Regarding internally displaced persons (IDPs), making up the majority of forcibly displaced persons, it is important to remember their marginalisation in development planning hinders long-term peace, stability and recovery, and constitutes a major obstacle to achieving the SDGs. The EU supports the UN Action Agenda on IDP Solutions and the work of the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General on Solutions for Internal Displacement. Finding an adequate governance framework within the UN to tackle their needs, including their development needs, should be a strategic priority for the UN going forward, reflected in the New Agenda for Peace.

III. THE UN TOOLBOX

Review of the role of the United Nations’ Security Council

28. The UNSC of today is often unable to fulfil its main duty – to prevent violent conflict and to maintain peace. The EU therefore calls for a renewed vow of all nations to adhere to the main principle of the UN Charter, to maintain international peace and security. This holds especially true for the members of the UNSC, who need to be held accountable to their task, especially the permanent and veto-holding members. Conflict prevention should be on the top of the UNSC’s agenda and strengthened through enhanced cooperation with the whole UN system, in particular with the other UN main bodies as well as with the OHCHR and Special Procedures of the HRC and the PBC. In this regard, the EU welcomes the landmark UNGA resolution 76/262 adopted in April 2022, which aims to hold the five permanent UNSC members accountable for their use of veto. Further strengthening of the role of UNGA in peace and security remains crucial in order to react when the UNSC remains silent. It is clear that the world wants, needs, and deserves a UN that delivers better on our shared global commitments and reflects the reasons why it was founded: to ensure peace, prevent wars and guarantee the rights of all. The EU calls for a reform to make the UNSC more inclusive, transparent and accountable and better reflecting the world – strengthening the voice of unrepresented regions, especially Africa as well as other regional groups.

Strengthen and financing peacebuilding

29. To strengthen peacebuilding has been on the agenda of many different UN Secretary-Generals. Following the landmark twin resolutions on Peacebuilding, the UNSG in 2018 called for a “quantum leap” in financing for peacebuilding and for Member States to increase the PBF to USD 500 million annually. As this failed to be met, the call for greater burden-sharing of peacebuilding funding in the form of assessed contributions has grown stronger, supported by the EU. The UN lacks a coherent focus and structure on conflict prevention and peacebuilding partly because it is perceived as controversial among some Member States, feeling that the “prevention” agenda is intrusive. The result is that much of conflict prevention and peacebuilding is funded by voluntary or extra-budgetary support of just a few donors. This is the case with all of UNDP, PBF, Peace and Development advisors in UNRC offices, the Standby Mediation Team, and even DPPA (the Multi-Annual Appeal) – who is most clearly mandated to deal with conflict prevention and peacebuilding. **The landmark Resolution 76/305 on Financing for Peacebuilding adopted by consensus by the General Assembly provides momentum on options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing that the New Agenda for Peace should build on.** Even if centralising peacebuilding in the UN may be a complex and challenging endeavour, it should be possible to ensure more coherence between the various entities dealing with conflict prevention and peacebuilding within the UN (PBC, PBF, UNDP, DPPA) but also with EU, WB, IFIs, and donors. It is important to strengthen the linkages between the PBC and the UNSC, to further integrate the UN’s peace and security pillars making the architecture more coherent. PBC would also benefit from becoming a more results oriented platform, with a clearer link to the PBF, without the latter losing flexibility to respond to peacebuilding needs. In addition, it would be important to strengthen the links between peacebuilding and peacekeeping, recognising that many peacekeeping missions also provide peacebuilding functions. Peacebuilding could be strengthened by increasing the focus on supporting the rule of law and addressing corruption and organised crime. As the UN peacekeeping along with its budget is decreasing every year, **finding ways to channel funds into the realisation of the New Agenda for Peace would mean maintaining assessed contributions for peace and security but channelling them to address the new threats rather than to traditional peacekeeping.**

Strengthen Peacekeeping

30. **The New Agenda for Peace offers an opportunity to revisit the working of UN peacekeeping operations**, draw lessons learnt from past engagements (such as the Action for Peacekeeping Agenda and the A4P+ implementation plan) and look at their added value in the face of compounded threats (e.g. climate/security conundrum; more complex sources of instability). Sustainable political solutions, addressing underlying causes for conflict, should be at the core of peace operations. To achieve the intended output, peace operations need adequate resources as well as flexible and adaptable mandates that has the potential to enjoy the confidence and support of host countries. The link between peacekeeping and peacebuilding should be integrated already when planning peace operations to facilitate the transition. UNSC Resolution 2594 needs to be operationalised, including through early, integrated and inclusive transition planning and strengthening the capacity of representative, responsive host State security sector and rule of law institutions. The UN should promote gender expertise and a gender perspective should be applied from the initial analysis to conflict analyses to operational planning and design, to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all EU and UN peacekeeping/crisis management operations. The UN should also promote increased participation of women in UN operations and lead by example, ensuring gender balance at all levels. In addition, policies must be put in place and enforced with greater accountability towards the UN membership when it comes to sexual exploitation and abuse –

SEA (e.g. as per UN OCHA, IOM and UNHCR commitments) in the context of UN operations. The UNSC needs to ensure that mandates contain clear political mandates with guidelines on, amongst other, Protection of Civilians and when to initiate a transition to peacebuilding. A more efficient approach to strengthening the operational capacity of the UN peacekeeping is needed, but also a focus on bridging the gap between policy and practice increasing capacity to reduce conflicts in a principled manner. There is a need to focus more actively on disinformation and public diplomacy within the framework of UN peacekeeping missions as information manipulation has a direct impact on the ability of these missions to exercise their mandate and, in principle, on the safety of the peacekeepers. Partnerships between the UN and regional actors, including EU-UN cooperation, should be strengthened and developed, both in the field and at headquarters. **The New Agenda for Peace should take forward work to ensure AU peacekeeping operations mandated by the UNSC are supported by stable and predictable funding through UN assessed contribution.**

Strategic Foresight

31. The potential of foresight to support peace, sustainable development, to develop common responses to systemic and existential risks, and to empower and enable communities to pursue sustainable futures, is a key dimension to enable a UN that is more responsive, better prepared and fit-for-purpose. Strengthened international foresight can enable preventive and early responses to threats to peace. The EU is committed to strengthen its foresight, and with the Vice-President for Foresight, it has institutionalised foresight at the political level. The EU is engaged in strategic foresight, particularly on mega trends regarding global challenges, and engages with national partners on foresight in the context of specific projects, including through the [European Strategy and Policy Analysis System](#). Another important instrument is the EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme, to strengthen the capacity across Europe and to create a vibrant foresight research community bridging policy-making across countries and domains. **A reinforced and strategic use of data on structural risks of conflict with clear links to toolboxes for early warning and early action, and a more tailored approach to evolving types of violence, including inter-State conflict and geopolitical tensions, should be a cornerstone of the New Agenda for Peace.** This could include the development of a strong UN Futures Lab as a hub for a global foresight research community and a forum for exchange, encouraging exchanges between the foresight research and community and broader research communities in science, technology, social sciences and humanities and the arts.