Finland's contribution for the UN New Agenda for Peace

Finland thanks the UN for the transparent and consultative process and for the possibility to give input to the discussions on the New Agenda for Peace. Finland aligns itself with the EU's contribution on the matter, and would like to highlight by this input the importance of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as well as some crosscutting themes of particular importance to Finland. The cross-cutting themes we would like to see reflected in the New Agenda are **Inclusive peace, Climate, water and security, and Technology, innovation and foresight.**

Finland considers that **peace is** not only absence of violent conflicts, but **human security** and **inclusive, democratic societies**, and **respect for human rights**. This is also the foundation for conflict prevention and sustainable peace. It is clear that for this objective, we need a holistic approach and better coherence and compatibility across all the pillars of the United Nations, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. We emphasize **comprehensive approach to conflict situations**, taking into account the whole conflict cycle as well as interlinkages and continuity between conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

Global challenges can only be solved through multilateral cooperation, and Finland underscores the importance of multilateralism and the **rules-based international order**. The United Nations at the core of the multilateral system has a unique role in the field of peace and security. **The UN has an extensive set of tools** at its disposal, across the three pillars of the organization, to be used in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, and upholding peace. To address effectively today's complex and compounded crises, we need more **strategic thinking and coordination** in using these tools.

We see the **HDP nexus approach in many ways as key** to strengthen integration of peacebuilding efforts into the UN system and to foster financing for peacebuilding. **Aligning peacebuilding efforts with Development Cooperation Frameworks** could ensure joint focus of the whole UN System and increase ownership of the host country to peacebuilding, and open much larger financing streams to peacebuilding efforts. Also strengthening the strategic and guiding role of the UN Resident Coordinators is important.

Current and future conflicts may require **new comprehensive approaches to peace operations** and even further breaking of silos. Peace operations should include respect of human rights and rule of law as crosscutting objectives. **Primacy of politics** and importance of political process should be at the core. Key to successful peace operation are integrated, well-trained and equipped civilian and uniformed capabilities. Peace operations should be made **more agile**, have more **flexible and well-resourced mandates, integrated operations**, and closer **cooperation with various partners**, whether other UN entities, regional organizations or civil society actors. We should also make even **better use of UN police** in our operations. As we continue to shift focus towards prevention and peacebuilding, security sector reform and capacity building, UN police can make an important contribution towards these goals.

Ulkoministeriö
Utrikesministeriet

Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

Suggestions:

> ➢ Improve coherence between all entities within and outside the United Nations dealing with conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
> ➢ Strengthen further the strategic and leading role of the UN Resident Coordinators to enable holistic approach and better coherence between humanitarian, development, and peace actors.
> ➢ Enhance the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, make its work more results oriented and transparent, and strengthen PBC's cooperation with other UN entities and CSOs.
> ➢ Ensure financing and support for wide array of conflict prevention and sustaining peace efforts, and align these efforts with Development Cooperation Frameworks. Improve and ensure the coordination between various peacebuilding mechanisms like Peacebuilding Fund, UNDP-DPPA Peace and Development Advisors, and DPPA multi-year appeal.
> ➢ Strengthen strategic cooperation on peacebuilding with civil society actors, particularly at the grassroots level.
> ➢ Improve flexibility of peace operations and ensure sufficient resourcing of mandates, especially on human rights and gender equality.
> ➢ Regarding peace operations, enhance cooperation and coherence between field and HQ.
> ➢ Improve and develop further cooperation and coordination between peace operations and country teams, regional organizations, and CSOs especially in transitions.
> ➢ Ensure sufficient resources and independent working space for UN Mediation activities, including those by SRSG's and Special Envoys. Encourage UN system to use holistically all tools in the diplomatic toolbox.
> ➢ Use and develop new technologies more effectively in conflict prevention and response. Scale up data literacy and the UN's capacity for strategic communication and countering misinformation and disinformation in peace operation contexts as well as in other settings.

Inclusive Peace

Sustainable peace requires inclusive, equal and democratic societies based on human rights, with the involvement of the whole society. We underscore the **meaningful participation** of people, who still often are underrepresented in building peace and peaceful societies: **women, youth, and people with disabilities**. Finland advocates **inclusivity as a crosscutting principle** in all conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. In practice, this means need for inclusive conflict analysis and understanding of context-specific needs, broad participation and ownership of different groups, and partnerships with local entities. Participation of and cooperation with **civil society is the key**. It would be essential to increase sustainable funding for the WPS and YPS agendas, and especially for local women and youth's organizations. To be effective, funding should be more flexible and accessible.

Women, Peace and Security. Inclusion of women in peace processes means **more sustainable peace**. On the other hand, processes that uphold inequalities create more risks to post-conflict societies. Hence, **women's full and meaningful participation** in peace making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and their active role in efforts towards comprehensive security **should be ensured at all levels, and in all stages of a conflict**. We also have to pay special attention to the **diversity of women**. Women can have

diverse roles and positions in peace building, including those of leadership. Women **mediators** and their networks are a good example of how to build more inclusive peace processes, but they also show what potential can be lost, if women don't have same possibilities to participate in peacebuilding. Increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations improves operational effectiveness, and it can help to empower local women by improving access and support for them. The **WPS agenda** should be a **cross-cutting theme** in peace operations. **Protection** measures for the women human rights and peacebuilding **activists**, who are threatened for their work, need to be created and enhanced. Diversity of civil society voices is a marker for healthy, strong and resilient society and therefore a building block for peace.

Youth, Peace and Security. Young people are frequently among the most affected in conflict-situations globally. Growing impact of climate change threatens humanity itself, and especially the future genera-tions, jeopardizing aspirations of intergenerational equity. It is important to ensure that the voices of **youth are systematically integrated** across the UN system. The views and perspectives of the youth can bring fresh solutions and **new impetus for peace** work. We must ensure the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda, including full and **meaningful participation of youth in all their diversity** in resolving the pressing questions of peace and security and building lasting peace. Advancing and coordinating implementation of YPS agenda across the UN system and advocacy with external partners must also be an integral part of the work of the future **UN Youth Office**. The Office should oversee improved cooperation, coordination and coherence on youth inclusion.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in peacebuilding. Persons with disabilities, who comprise even 15% of population, are often in the most vulnerable position in conflicts. The need for protection is clear, but **persons with disabilities** should also be seen as **actors, who can contribute to building peace**. This is why we emphasize the rights and meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in every stage of the peace processes and peacebuilding. This means improving accessibility, including the views and needs, as well as active **participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organi-zations** all the way from conflict prevention to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Implementation of the Security Council Resolution 2475 on Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Conflict is important.

Suggestions:

➢ Promote partnerships and enhance cooperation with civil society organizations to ensure broad participation and ownership of different groups.
➢ Encourage the implementation of WPS and YPS agendas at the national level, and share best practices and lessons learned.
➢ Ensure sustainable and additional funding to WPS and YPS agendas and especially for local women and youth' organizations. Make funding more flexible and accessible.
➢ Increase number and influence of dedicated inclusion expertise (WPS, YPS) in the UN Country Teams and particularly in peace operations.
➢ Promote diverse roles and positions for women and youth in peacebuilding in every level and throughout the conflict cycle. Pay attention to the diversity of female and youth participants.
➢ Create and enhance protection measures for women and youth human rights activists and peace-builders, who are facing threats because of their work.

> ➢ Increase the number of women in peacekeeping and strengthen the implementation of the WPS agenda as a crosscutting theme in peace operations.
> ➢ Implement the YPS agenda across the UN system, and promote opportunities for meaningful youth participation within the UN system. Ensure role of advancing and coordinating implementation of YPS as an integral part of the work of the future UN Youth Office.
> ➢ Include persons with disabilities and their representative organizations as active participants and contributors in peacebuilding and peace processes. Improve accessibility, include their views and needs, and give opportunities for participation in every stage of a conflict.

Climate, Water, and Security

The climate crisis is the defining challenge of our time, an existential threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to international peace, stability and security. **Climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are all interlinked** and have severe impacts on global security at multiple levels. It is urgent that we understand and address connections between **climate change and security comprehensively in conflict prevention and response**. Ongoing conflicts also exacerbate the impact of climate change as it further degrades the environment.

Typically, climate change translates to people through changes in hydrological cycle, and **majority of climate change risks are water-related**. The unsustainable use of natural resources, such as water, is often a cause of conflict, especially where **inequality in access and management of natural resources** is prevalent and where there is a lack of inclusive governance and respect of human rights. Inclusive peace is also inherently linked to the climate, water and security, as **persons and groups in vulnerable situations are often most impacted by the climate change** while being excluded from decision-making processes related to natural resource management and climate change adaptation.

Water Diplomacy. Water diplomacy refers to the **dynamic, politically driven process** that aims to prevent, mitigate and resolve tensions and conflicts over shared waters by simultaneously using **diplomatic tools and water expertise**. Water diplomacy as such enables countries to establish formal transboundary water cooperation agreements and institutions that are foundations for well-governed shared water resources that serve as a platform for regional integration. Importantly, **transboundary water cooperation** also brings together different sectors in dialogue, not just over security but also for example regarding agriculture and energy. **Water can act as the starting point for cooperation** on foreign and security policy at all levels. In situations where relations between countries are strained due to political reasons, water cooperation often continues in a normal manner, allowing for sustained dialogue and serving as an incentive to peaceful relations.

At a global level, the **UN should have a stronger role** to lead cooperation on water issues and to **advance the water and peace agenda**, including by mediating in water related conflicts. The UN system should be stronger in its efforts to promote water and peace and to develop a common strategy, vision and clear leadership on water. **Building capacity on water**, especially water resource management and water negotiations, in all agencies and programs, and in peace operations, is one way to strengthen water cooperation. Another is to take steps to develop a **UN system-wide approach to water** to enable it to address more effectively water issues and to appoint a UN Special Envoy on water to provide political leadership.

Suggestions:

- ➢ Mainstream the climate issues across the UN peace and security pillar, and consider the climate change in all conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Enhance climate and peace nexus work in the UN through the Climate and Security Mechanism.
- ➢ Include the climate change in conflict and context analysis, and peace operation mandates and capacities, for example by deploying climate and security advisors.
- ➢ Include water in the agenda, as the effects of the climate change often translates to people through the hydrological cycle. Strengthen the understanding and addressing interlinkages between climate change, water issues, and inclusive peace.
- ➢ Include water diplomacy and transboundary water cooperation into the UN diplomatic toolbox for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- ➢ Build capacity on water issues, especially water resource management and water negotiations, in all agencies and programs, and for example in peace operations.
- ➢ Develop a UN system-wide approach to water to enable it to address more effectively water issues and develop a common strategy, vision and clear leadership on water, including by appointing a UN Special Envoy on water.

Technology, Innovation and Foresight

Digital technologies present new potential to **enhance practices for conflict prevention**, mediation and peacebuilding. The digital realm also **complicates conflict dynamics** and provides tools for extending conflicts into the cyberspace. While continuing to bolster norms and rules around responsible behavior in cyberspace, the UN should work to strengthen digital readiness and cybersecurity where it is most needed. As outlined in Our Common Agenda, the UN system can also greatly benefit from developing new capabilities for using of digital technologies, data and innovation **to support sustainable development and peace**. New disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence present much potential for this, but they also pose risks that need to be understood and **democratically managed**. Therefore, efforts are needed to root their use on strong frameworks to minimize the risks involved, and to ensure that technology is used by all parties in line with universal **human rights obligations**.

For more effective conflict prevention, the UN should better anticipate and respond to global and local threats to peace. The use of **strategic foresight and predictive data analytics** can improve the crisis preparedness and enable more effective conflict prevention. Advanced data analytics can help produce insights to identify and **understand complex and multifaceted risks**, such as the effects of the climate change. For example, utilizing meteorological data could help to improve societies' resilience and preparedness to extreme weather events as well as to changing weather patterns. **Data-based planning and decision-making**, utilization of digital tools, data literacy, **strategic communications** as well as **countering mis- and disinformation** are essential in peace operations, but similar methods or tools should be more broadly used also in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As all parts of society play a key role in conflict prevention, **foresight practices should be fully inclusive** and participatory.

To achieve the above, Finland emphasizes the operationalization of the UN 2.0 concept contained in Our Common Agenda and highlights the role that **UN Global Pulse and UN Futures Lab** can play in the process. Pushing the boundaries of innovation requires open cooperation, **sharing of information and data** between the UN, academic partners, private sector and civil society across the HDP nexus.

Suggestions:

> ➢ Enhance innovation and strategic foresight in the UN system through innovation programs and platforms such as the UN Global Pulse and the UN Future Lab, or the DPPA's Innovation Cell.
> ➢ Ensure financing and support for new innovative approaches to anticipate and respond to complex crises through data and digital technologies. Encourage cooperation and collaboration among various UN entities.
> ➢ Utilize best practices and lessons learned in institutionalizing foresight in the public sector and political processes.
> ➢ Strengthen cooperation and in particular sharing of strategic foresight and predictive data with the civil society all the way to the local grassroots level.
> ➢ Strengthen data based planning and decision-making as well as utilization of digital tools in peace operations and peacebuilding activities.
> ➢ Advance the agenda for Digital Cooperation through the Global Digital Compact, and ensure its links to the UN New Agenda for Peace, including in issues of cybersecurity.