

NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE – UK SUBMISSION

1. The United Kingdom welcomes the UN's invitation to share views, priorities, and recommendations for the New Agenda for Peace. The risks to our collective peace and security are multiple, pervasive, and complex, and intrinsically linked to global issues such as climate, economic, health and food insecurity challenges. We may need to accept that we are not trending back to a stable and predictable norm. Of imperative concern is the threat to the UN Charter, and its principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are vital for international peace and security. As an international community we will need to simultaneously recognise the reality of volatility, and the fact that we have agency. With foresight, forward planning and operational agility we can shape the future in ways which advance the collective good.
2. The UK remains committed to strengthening international peace and security. As highlighted in the 2021 Integrated Review, the UK will work to reduce the frequency and intensity of conflict and instability, alleviate suffering, and minimise the opportunities for harmful actors to undermine international security. In February 2022, the UK launched its new Conflict Centre within the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, placing greater emphasis on using diplomacy and development approaches to address the drivers of conflict, atrocity prevention, strengthening fragile countries' resilience to external interference and mainstreaming women's pivotal role in all aspects of the conflict cycle.
3. The Sustaining Peace agenda provides a broad framework for strengthening approaches to preventing conflict and humanitarian crises. As well as redoubling efforts to operationalise this agenda, the UK calls for concerted effort in three areas which the New Agenda for Peace should prioritise.
 - a) **Conflict prevention:** This remains the greatest prize, and yet effective implementation remains lacking. Efforts need to be sharpened around moments of particular risk (when eruption, significant escalation are foreseeable) and the most pressing challenges to peace (inter-state competition and political transitions, climate change, economic stress and enduring inequalities). Actors must unite in identifying and addressing these risks together, using tools such as shared scenario planning and inclusive conflict prevention plans that draw on the best evidence.
 - b) **Independent monitoring:** New technologies and innovative approaches offer us new and unparalleled opportunities to identify conflict risks before they escalate into war, monitor conflicts in a world awash with mis- and dis-information, and to gather evidence of crimes when they occur. To harness this potential for the global good, member states, multilateral bodies and civil society should explore how best to support capabilities which combine new approaches, technologies and partnerships with local actors to monitor

emerging and active conflicts. This could, for example, take the form of an independent global conflict observatory. With strong independent mandates, these capabilities should produce fact-based analysis of conflict dynamics, bringing a shared situational awareness to the fore and exposing violations of rights and international law.

- c) **Women, Peace and Security** need to be prioritised. UN and Member States must take ownership to better tackle impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence (GBV), including conflict-related sexual violence. Efforts should focus on strengthening the rule of law at the national level to improve justice and accountability mechanisms. Greater priority should be given to protection for female peacebuilders facing reprisals and taking action against perpetrators. An ambitious approach to sanctions should be taken for those perpetrating GBV including conflict-related sexual violence.

4. The UK wants to see the following areas included in the New Agenda for Peace:

UK Priority: A renewed commitment to conflict prevention and a strengthened conflict response

5. The UK calls for revitalised efforts to prevent conflict by all actors. These should reflect existing evidence that effective interventions require integrated approaches and tackling long-term drivers of conflict whilst re-doubling collective efforts on: 1) moments of particular risk, when emergence, significant escalation and relapse are foreseeable; and 2) the drivers of conflict likely to persist over the coming decades - inter-state competition, political transitions, climate change, economic stress, enduring gender inequality, and declining affordability of and access to food and basic services. Analysis and responses should be better aligned, enhancing our ability to identify and mitigate risks – including through urgent and discreet dialogue - before tensions escalate to crisis. Inclusion, notably around women and youth, must remain a core principle, including women’s leadership in peacebuilding and mediation.
6. The inherently political nature of conflict means technical approaches alone will not suffice. This means utilising approaches that are better grounded in a deep understanding of the political realities of the context and better use of all the tools and resources at our disposal are needed to advance peace and development. This calls for smarter and better-informed use of political and diplomatic instruments from across the international community, with emphasis on impact. The scale of investment, although important, will not be the defining factor in making gains. Rather, progress will be achieved through shared analysis and integrated responses, which break down the silos and maximise the impact of diplomatic, humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, climate, and disaster risk reduction actors.

7. Recommendations:

- Enhance conflict prevention focus and capabilities around particular moments of risk and thematic challenges to peace, making more systematic use of shared analysis, including risk scenarios, that draw together national and international actors and emphasise the political aspects of peacebuilding
- Incorporate evidence and global lessons learnt on conflict prevention and enhance monitoring, evaluation and learning practices to strengthen efforts across the UN and internationally. In particular, draw on evidence from nationally-owned conflict prevention plans to demonstrate the benefits of governments monitoring risk, taking earlier action and investing in peacebuilding.
- Champion a greater role for the UN Security Council in conflict prevention, including regular briefings from the Secretary-General on situations at risk of conflict, and strengthen cooperation with relevant UN bodies (particularly the Peacebuilding Commission) and regional organisations.
- Ensure all UN agencies and UN Country Teams align their strategies towards addressing drivers of conflict in fragile states as an absolute priority, recognising that finding negotiated political solutions is essential for development and humanitarian work to be effective. Including that all UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks have prevention at their centre.
- Strengthen effective UN system-wide integration, cross-pillar collaboration, and reform, including through agreed joint frameworks. Integrated approaches based on joint analysis should be an integral part of UN peacekeeping mandate implementation, transition strategies, and Security Sector Governance and Reform.

UK Priority: Strengthened international foresight

8. A concerted effort is required to get ahead of the risks that threaten international peace and security. Strengthened foresight requires better understanding of conflict as a complex system which is inherently political in nature. Particular attention should be paid to the intersection of climate change and conflict; accelerating climate impacts exacerbate existing fragilities, increasing humanitarian needs and worsening crises such as food insecurity. Shifts towards anticipatory action and preventative instruments in fragile states would improve resilience to these inter-related hazards.
9. There is an opportunity for the international community to better leverage technologies and data sources that deepen insight of conflict dynamics, expose violations of rights and international law, and establish fact in a world awash with dis- and mis-information. However, such methods are a complement to, not a

replacement for, on-the-ground field expertise that elevates the experiences of local actors. Brought together, field and remote methods should be conflict sensitive and meet common standards for research rigour.

10. Good foresight does not, however, always lead to early or adequate action. As such, the development of UN system's own foresight capabilities should be designed in a way to embed them within decision-making processes and made available to the wide range of actors operating in fragile and conflict affected states.

11. Recommendations:

- States, international, regional, and civil society organisations should collaborate in the creation of an independent Global Conflict Observatory, or similar, which draws on new technologies and partnerships with local actors to monitor active conflict zones, producing fact-based analysis of conflict dynamics and exposing violations of rights and international law.
- States, international, regional, and local organisations should share learning on international foresight to improve capabilities and data, and collaborate to embed foresight into decision-making, including within the UN system.
- Ensure inputs from local actors and civil society are consistently included and used in global foresight mechanisms.
- Maximise use of the UN's in-country analytical capabilities, including Peace and Development Advisers, expanding this resource to mission settings.

UK Priority: Put women and girls at the centre of peace and security policy

12. Research shows that tackling gender inequality is necessary for both preventing and resolving conflict. The last few years have seen a concerted effort to roll back women's rights, including in the UN Security Council. The UK will continue to defend the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) international policy framework in the UNSC as penholder, championing and protecting women's rights. Foreign and development policy centred on gender equality is essential for preventing gender-based violence (GBV) in conflict.

13. The UK will launch a new WPS National Action Plan (2023-2027), broadening our approach to transnational threats to include the use of new technologies and digital spaces by belligerent actors, proliferation of weapons and climate insecurity, and reflecting the domestic application of WPS to help further foreign policy priorities. The NAP will reflect the importance of both supporting and protecting women human rights defenders and peacebuilders, in light of a global rise in reprisals from state and non-state actors. Accountability for women and girls is a critical component, to avoid reinforcing unequal power relations between men and women, which can undermine work to address GBV.

14. Recommendations:

- Ensure women's full and equal participation in peace and security processes and inclusive outcomes in peace agreements. Countries sponsoring peace processes and multilateral institutions should design inclusive processes from the outset.
- UN and Member States to take ownership to better tackle impunity for perpetrators of GBV, including conflict-related sexual violence. Efforts should focus on strengthening the rule of law at the national level to improve justice and accountability mechanisms. Greater priority should be given to protection including enhancing support for female peacebuilders threatened with reprisals and taking action against perpetrators. A greater use of sanctions should be taken for those perpetrating GBV including conflict-related sexual violence.
- Ensuring a survivor-centred approach in preventing and responding to GBV. This should promote and uphold the rights and dignity of survivors, prioritising their wishes, safety, and wellbeing.
- Build a rigorous evidence base on what works to prevent violence against women and girls, in all settings, and for the most marginalised, and encourage upscaling of initiatives that are proven to have impact. The prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG), both as a driver of conflict and obstacle to women's empowerment and meaningful participation in political and peace processes, is vital in times of conflict and peace.
- All states should adopt national legislation that gives effect to international humanitarian law domestically and educate security forces on their obligations to protect civilians in both international and non-international conflicts.
- The UN should support the implementation of the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda by considering the specific needs of children in all peace and security activities throughout the conflict cycle, including in conflict analysis, early warning, peace process and mediation, security sector reform, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and protection and recovery efforts.

UK Priority: better conflict response

15. Compounded by profound geopolitical polarisation, deep technological change and the rising prominence of systemic threats, such as the climate emergency and infectious disease, the last decade witnessed an alarming increase in the severity and scale of violent conflict globally. Efforts to resolve violent conflict are more internationalised and exposed to geostrategic competition than at any time since the end of the Cold War, with more states seeking to project power or secure their interests through engaging in conflict and resolution beyond their borders. Competition to shape the international order is undermining the international peacemaking architecture and weakening the established rules and norms that

govern international conduct. The UK believes that we should re-energise international community efforts to reduce and resolve violent conflict. The UN should resume its central role in this effort, working with other actors best placed to promote positive outcomes to particular conflicts.

16. Recommendations:

- The Secretary General should lead mediation efforts in the world's worst conflicts, drawing on the support of heads of state and government of countries which have influence in the conflict-affected state. This should include greater capacity of the SG's good offices to initiate dialogue, supported by a wider network of political negotiators or sherpas.
- Beyond the SG's good offices, mediation and dialogue capacity should be strengthened. Within the UN this could include expanding and strengthening the Mediation Support Unit and the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers, including adequate representation from the global south and from women. The mediation and dialogue training for key UN officials in country should be enhanced. The UN should work closely with those UN member states who are developing their own mediation and conflict resolution capacity e.g. through secondments and exchanges of expertise.
- UN member states should promote more inclusive negotiated settlements to conflict, where appropriate, ensuring adequate support for the meaningful participation of those individuals and organisations most able to progress peace in particular processes e.g. national governments, multilateral organisations, financial institutions, regional organisations, local mediators, civil society actors, religious and community leaders, businesses, NGOs, and women and youth leaders. Member states should provide political and practical support to UN and other mediation efforts e.g. by uniting behind that effort, committing political and development resources to support it, and investing in developing capacity to support conflict resolution efforts.
- Women's leadership and meaningful participation is fundamental to better and more sustainable outcomes and should be prioritised at all levels of peace processes. UN member states should enhance efforts to ensure the active involvement of women from both parties to conflict and the international community as significant arbiters of conflict.

UK Priority: Diverse peace and security partnerships at multiple levels

17. Member States, the UN system, local actors, business, civil society organisations and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), among others, all play a role in fostering peace and security. Coordinated action requires work across multiple levels and actors. Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators have a pivotal role in driving improved coordination across humanitarian, development

and peace systems. Financing models in conflict settings need to incentivise collaboration between actors and reduce silos.

18. Support for Ukraine has seen a transformative contribution from the private sector. We need to find a way to make this the norm rather than the exception, where the private sector is taking an active role in preventing and responding to conflict. Building relationships with IFIs and private sector companies and encouraging investment in fragile states in sectors that build resilience to crises and conflict is imperative if we are to keep pace with growing global needs.

19. There should be increased engagement by actors at all levels from international, national, regional to local level. Local peacebuilding and stabilisation efforts should be empowered and linked to higher level initiatives, including the work of regional organisations in areas such as peacemaking. This can lead to new opportunities and networks for constructive engagement, creating an enabling environment for future peace scenarios.

20. Recommendations:

- Better integrate local insights and experiences into contextual analysis and design of national, regional, and international peace and security responses – including those focussed on bringing about negotiated peaceful settlements – coordinated across different layers and networks of actors.
- Greater cooperation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus at all levels, and integrating climate resilience and adaptation strengthening activities to deliver effective joined-up responses.
- Create the right incentives for greater collaboration between actors at country-level, including the tools that agencies use. Financing mechanisms and strategies should focus on needs rather than mandates.
- Institutionalise the partnership between the UN and the IFIs to leverage comparative advantages consistently and systematically in all contexts and deepen links with local level peacebuilders and civil society.
- Consistently harness and maximise private sector investments, and activities in conflict areas, so they actively contribute to peace, support peacebuilding strategies, meet local priorities and at a minimum do not exacerbate conflict and adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Addressing the barriers faced by IFIs and Development Financing Institutions in investing in risky conflict-affected contexts will be pivotal to achieving this.

UK Priority: Reducing Strategic Risk

21. To reenergise the architecture at risk of being eroded and threatened by malign actors, the existing tools and mechanisms concerning nuclear weapons, conventional arms and cyber capabilities should be maintained and strengthened.

22. The UK firmly believes the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It provides the only credible route to nuclear disarmament. The UK does not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) or view it as complementary to the NPT. We do not believe that the TPNW addresses the key issues that must be overcome to achieve lasting global disarmament, which include, amongst others, the challenges posed by a deteriorating security environment and the technical challenges of verifying nuclear disarmament without proliferating nuclear weapons knowledge.
23. The maintenance and strengthening of robust and transparent export controls over missiles/missile technology, dual use goods and conventional weapons is crucial to maintaining peace and stability. Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECRs) are fundamental to this, and systems must continue to evolve to meet the challenges of developing technology.
24. To maintain international peace and stability in the face of increasing malicious cyber activity it is key to continue to promote the existing UN framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, including the full application of international law to state activity. Women and girls must be at the centre of security policy in cyber to ensure effective policy making and confidence building, as reflected in the recently updated UK National Action Plan on Women in Peace and Security.
25. Recommendations:
- A renewed effort by State Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to strengthen the Treaty which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear architecture and contributes to international peace and security.
 - International community to improve transparency and confidence building measures in conventional arms to reduce conflict risks, including the UN as a respected source of verified information as counter to mis/disinformation.
 - Member States should reiterate, confirm, and continue to implement the existing UN framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace and particularly the full application of existing international law to state activity.
 - Women and girls must be included in formal and informal organisations that design and monitor the safety of cyber space.