

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

Ireland welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the New Agenda for Peace. We align ourselves with the EU's contribution and would like to put forward some further inputs below.

Investing in Prevention and Peacebuilding

Adequate, predictable and sustained funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding is critical. This will provide for effective implementation of coordinated action across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus and enable actors to respond to rapidly developing local contexts efficiently and effectively. The New Agenda for Peace should recognise this and include clear calls and targets on peacebuilding financing. Ireland sees the Peacebuilding Fund as the UN's main financial instrument to support the New Agenda for Peace, and therefore supports the proposals for sustainable financing of the Peacebuilding Fund through assessed contributions. However, other UN actors also support peacebuilding, including UNDP and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. More sustainable funding for all relevant actors and greater coherence between their work should be fostered. All sources of financing for peacebuilding should prioritise peacebuilding initiatives that are community-led and driven by locally agreed outcomes where possible.

Ireland also welcomes the expansion of the role of the Peacebuilding Fund from an exclusively post-conflict instrument to also support preventive action and focus on root causes. We believe that the Peacebuilding Fund can help prevent conflict before lives are lost and costly peacekeeping interventions are needed, and sustain peace in fragile contexts. The New Agenda for Peace could usefully include guidance on the role of the Peacebuilding Fund in particular in relation to funding conflict prevention, especially with limited resources available to the Fund.

Human rights have an important role to play in sustaining peace and preventing conflicts and crisis and must be strongly reflected in the New Agenda for Peace.

The universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was underlined in the UN Charter as necessary for the creation of stability and well-being which ultimately ensures peaceful relations.¹ The full implementation of international human rights standards builds resilient, inclusive and peaceful societies, which in turn strengthens conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Persistent violations of human rights can act as long-term drivers of conflict as well as short-term triggers of crisis. Countries where human rights are respected and protected and which have strong democratic institutions based on respect for rule of law are less prone to conflict and have increased resilience to withstand and respond to crises.

As previously highlighted by the UN Secretary General, violations of human rights are early and leading indicators of crisis. Human rights monitoring and analysis can help to identify many of the issues that, if left unaddressed, can lead to conflict and crisis. In addition, addressing accountability for human rights violations and abuses, including through the establishment of accountability and investigative mechanisms, has an important role to play in peace-building as it prevents the recurrence of violations and can help address root causes of conflict.²

¹ Article 55, UN Charter

² [The role of UN-created accountability mechanisms in the global fight against impunity: what's next? | OHCHR](#)

The mainstreaming of human rights across humanitarian, development and peace actions is a powerful tool in building rights-based prevention, leading to better and more sustainable outcomes for peace and development. In addition, providing technical assistance to support domestic efforts to respect, protect and fulfil human rights obligations can contribute to tackling challenges and risks before they result in conflict or violence. Human rights are also central to ensuring durable peace, and so are important in shaping effective peace processes, as noted by the Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights.³ The importance of human rights analysis to promote more comprehensive peace processes which aim to address structural violence through a focus on social justice, political equality and accountability should be reflected in the New Agenda for Peace.

The New Agenda for Peace should aim to ensure adequate prioritisation and financing of the human rights pillar of the UN. In addition to strengthened financing for OHCHR and human rights mechanisms, this could include ensuring full roll-out of the Human Rights Advisors programme, which would enable UN Country Teams to put human rights at the centre of their support to countries; taking a human rights-based approach to country level work, including to further the implementation of the call to action for human rights; and further embedding human rights into all peacekeeping mandates and interventions supported by the Peacebuilding Fund.

The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

The data on fragile contexts – on conflict, climate change, violence, displacement and governance – sounds a warning bell. The international community can and must do better if it is to make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and deliver on its commitment to leave no one behind. Humanitarian needs are not finite nor short term. Shocks and stresses evolve and recur – our approaches and financing must respond accordingly

The humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach aims to strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity across humanitarian, development and peace actors and actions.⁴ It prioritises peace and conflict prevention.

As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development affirmed, ‘There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.’ Without peace, humanitarian needs will endure and increase. The humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach is vital and should be at the centre of the New Agenda for Peace, which could further elaborate how this can be advanced across the work of different stakeholders in the UN system and beyond.

Inclusive Peacebuilding

For peacebuilding to be durable and effective, there needs to be an all-of-society approach, ensuring the participation of a wide array of actors, including groups that are marginalised and minorities. To date, there has been much needed focus on the role of women in peace and security work, and to a lesser extent on that of youth. The Peacebuilding Fund has been a leader in this work, with its specific funding windows under the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, and 47% of its investments being gender-responsive. The New Agenda for Peace should aim to embed this approach systematically across all peacebuilding work, with an increasing proportion of peacebuilding investments being gender-transformative, while all investments should ensure a gender-sensitive approach throughout.

³ [The role of human rights in peace and mediation processes | OHCHR](#)

⁴ [OECD DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus](#)

Putting women and girls at the centre

As recognised in Our Common Agenda, it is vital that we place women and girls at the centre of the New Agenda for Peace. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's most recent report on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, women's participation in UN (co)-led peace processes declined to 19% in 2022 from 23% in 2020. We know from our own peace process that the participation of women is essential to building sustainable peace. We strongly advocate, therefore, for the New Agenda for Peace to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all stages throughout the conflict cycle, including peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes.

Youth, Peace and Security

Furthermore, youth play a critical role in the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as peacebuilding, as recognised by the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, as well as the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action, 2022-2027. Peacebuilding is an intergenerational process and therefore must be inclusive of young people in a meaningful way. The New Agenda for Peace should harness the positive role played by youth in peacebuilding efforts, ensuring engagement with youth is a cooperative and collaborative process and not one merely of consultation.

Broadening the inclusion agenda

The New Agenda for Peace should also put forward a new inclusion agenda focused on ensuring the meaningful participation of all marginalised groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, and gender and sexual minorities. This is needed both from a human rights perspective but also in view of the role that ethnic and religious divisions can play in inter-communal violence and conflict.

Putting civil society at the centre

A strong and active civil society, in particular at the national and local level, is a key factor in social cohesion and conflict prevention. It is also central to effective and durable post-conflict peacebuilding. Ireland is therefore strongly committed to recognising civil society's indispensable role and to creating and maintaining a safe and enabling environment for civil society. We are committed to harnessing and ensuring civil society's active involvement in peacebuilding work at every level. The New Agenda for Peace should uphold and strengthen the role of civil society in peacebuilding, in particular in UN fora and mechanisms. This could include, for example: permanently accrediting civil society representatives to the Peacebuilding Commission (as is currently the case for ECOSOC); ensuring unhindered access to and communication with international bodies, in particular the UN, without fear of threat or reprisal; and maintaining and, where possible, deepening the Peacebuilding Fund's work with international, national and local non-governmental and civil society organisations.

Strengthening UN Peace Operations Transitions

The unanimously adopted UN Security Council Resolution 2594 codified advances in understanding on improving the success of UN transition processes. The New Agenda for Peace should seek to operationalise and implement the principles outlined in Resolution 2594. The UN needs to prioritise early, integrated and inclusive planning for transitions that promotes collaboration across the UN system and draws input from regional, national and local stakeholders. The UN should promote civil society participation in transition planning and monitoring to ensure inclusive national ownership of the process. Given the risks to civilians involved in transition processes, national plans for the Protection of Civilians are critical during and after transition. To ensure that transitions are conditions-based and in line with the capacities of national and local authorities, benchmarks and

indicators should be agreed to measure the conditions necessary for a sustainable transition. Transition planning and actions should be progressively included in the mandates of UN peace operations and missions should be equipped with the necessary guidance and capacity to ensure the principles set out in Resolution 2594 are given practical effect. The New Agenda for Peace should also seek to ensure that adequate financing is put in place to avoid the “financial cliff” in support for peacebuilding activities, which countries commonly face after a peace operation drawdown.⁵

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Promoting disarmament and non-proliferation is a priority for Ireland and will be a critical element of the New Agenda for Peace. Nuclear weapons represent an existential problem with catastrophic humanitarian consequences and their total abolition is a global imperative. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international security architecture and this should be reflected in the New Agenda for Peace. It would also be important to reflect the positive contribution of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which is fully compatible with and complementary to the NPT, as well as the integral role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the urgent need for its entry into force.

The devastating humanitarian and development consequences of the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) cannot be overstated. Ireland has been a strong and vocal proponent of the need to address the humanitarian harm arising from the use of EWIPA, taking up the call of the UN Secretary-General to champion the issue of EWIPA since 2019. On 18 November 2022, Ireland hosted States, International Organisations and civil society for a high-level Conference in Dublin to formally adopt a “Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA)”, resulting in the Declaration being adopted by 83 States.

This multilateral approach remains vital going forwards – both as we address longstanding humanitarian and protection challenges like EWIPA, but especially as we look towards emerging challenges on the horizon – such as Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Ireland believes there is an urgent need for the international community to agree rules and limits on LAWS. For Ireland, the necessity of retaining human control over weapons systems is critical; there can be no accountability gap.

The need to defend and strengthen core disarmament instruments including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), as well as the international non-proliferation regime, including through multilateral export control regimes, should be recognised as part of the New Agenda for Peace. It should also reaffirm the key role of the Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. The preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable basis for all would also be important to reflect in this process. The New Agenda for Peace stands to benefit as well from the inclusion of the insights that gender perspectives to disarmament provide.

⁵ [Peacebuilding and sustaining peace : \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/peacebuilding/peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace), p. 14