

# PEACEMAKING REFLECTION GROUP (PRG)

FORMER UN SYSTEM STAFF FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE – SUPPORTED BY FOGGS

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE

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# **PEACEMAKING REFLECTION GROUP (PRG)**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1. INTRODUCTION – THE OVERALL STATE OF AFFAIRS**
- 2. GETTING DOWN TO SPECIFICS**
- 3. RESPONSIBILITY TO ACTIVATE / APPLY TO THE MAXIMUM ARTICLE 99 OF THE UN CHARTER AND OTHER ENGAGEMENT OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, THE SECRETARIAT AND THE UN SYSTEM IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION**
- 4. UNARMED DEPLOYMENT FOR PREVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION PURPOSES**
- 5. REFORMING THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND INTRODUCING A ‘GLOBAL RESILIENCE COUNCIL’ TO SHIFT ATTENTION TO COMMON THREATS TO HUMAN SECURITY, LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE AND PANDEMICS**
- 6. ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACEBUILDING**
- 7. EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION – THE OVERALL STATE OF AFFAIRS

The United Nations peace and security system was established in the aftermath of the Second World War and provided the framework to stabilize an antagonistic Cold War period in a rather effective manner. With the end of the Cold War the UN peace and security system initially focused on security threats resulting from the Cold War's aftermath. However, confronted with "new enemies", including "non-state actors", the system and its protagonists failed to collectively agree on a new "common agenda" on peace and security. The result was the creation of a "selective agenda", where peace and security was no longer defined as "collective" but along the lines of mostly Western interests.

A range of policy debates started, often in the shadow of UN Security Council sessions, mandating specific peace operations, usually driven by rather short-lived expectation spans and limited to specific "security threats". The process to mandate a "UN Peace Operation" was without exception initiated and driven by a small group of Member States, usually limited to one or two of the Security Council Permanent Members (P5), the "pen holder" supported by "loyal" non-permanent members.

These mandates were advocated by some Member States, even in good faith, based on their own set of cultural norms and political convictions. However, they were also used by Member States yielding the political and economic power and influence to advance a political agenda of their own. The "organizational hypocrisy", in particular of the P5 but also others serving as non-permanent members of the Security Council, resulted in double standards weakening the UN as a global organization and turning the UN Charter into a "menu of options", to be applied selectively, as and when required. The diversity of Nations was not reflected in a diversity of views.

A "New Agenda", which could be called "Agenda of Innovative Action for Peace", should first of all address the issues which have resulted in the current situation of "peacekeeping as organizational hypocrisy" and the failure to manage a global agenda under conditions of deeply divided Member States.

## 2. GETTING DOWN TO SPECIFICS

The seminal publication of the *Agenda for Peace* at the end of the Cold War ushered into an era of optimism that was short-lived, because of apparent failures in UN peacemaking and peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda, including genocide in Rwanda and Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conceptual framework that the original *Agenda for Peace* created, though, is still largely valid, and certainly valid is the terminology and definitions that it introduced or systematized, from conflict prevention to peacemaking to peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It would be wise to build on that solid foundation and subsequent UN reports, such as the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* and the "Brahimi Report" to bring up to date the framework for the UN's work in peace and security.

Four elements that certainly need to be introduced into the existing framework are:

- How does the UN address a *conflict that involves as aggressor a major power*, especially a nuclear power, even more so when the latter is a permanent member of the Security Council (see current

# PEACEMAKING REFLECTION GROUP (PRG)

FORMER UN SYSTEM STAFF FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE – SUPPORTED BY FOGGS

Russia-Ukraine war but also earlier conflicts involving other permanent members of the Security Council)?

- How does the UN address *new threats to human security* that are not of direct military nature but may also have devastating consequences and may eventually lead to actual military confrontation? In this category one can include climate change and its impacts, pandemics, as well as cybersecurity, and the effects of organized criminal networks and rogue corporate behaviours that inflict large-scale harm (e.g. some extractive mining, environmental damage, excessive energy and water surges, and other systemic shocks).
- The concept of *unarmed civilian protection* (UCP), meaning protection of vulnerable groups and individuals, such as human rights activists, by unarmed civilian monitors, as distinct from uniformed personnel (military or police). It has been pioneered by NGOs, most particularly, Nonviolent Peaceforce (a coalition of various NGOs), and has been piloted successfully in Mindanao in the Philippines, and elsewhere.
- Securing and sustaining peace requires *building a partnership of people and governments/intergovernmental organizations* working closely together at all levels. Top-down peace solutions have serious limitations, with conflict festering and ready to reignite even in the event of a peace agreement. It is time for a new, more holistic, inclusive, people-centered approach to conflict resolution, peace-building and sustainment, through concepts, strategies and practices that engage and channel the power of people to these ends.

Beyond a 'new agenda', there is need for a 'new culture' of how the work of peace is pursued, in tandem with development, on the basis of respect, trust and equality for all involved. This does not refer only to the governments or leaderships of the warring parties. It concerns all actors, state and non-state, formal and informal. Although it is quite challenging, the UN has started to and must further put this into practice in how it engages and interacts with civil society, corporations, and governments for the common good.

The proposals below attempt to address some of the above observations and concerns, without claiming to be all-inclusive or exhaustive. The Peacemaking Reflection Group ([PRG](#)) of former UN system staff, supported by the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability ([FOGGS](#)), remain at the disposal of the UN/DPPA to further discuss and develop these proposals.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY TO ACTIVATE / APPLY TO THE MAXIMUM ARTICLE 99 OF THE UN CHARTER AND OTHER ENGAGEMENT OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, THE SECRETARIAT AND THE UN SYSTEM IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION**

Developments in the three decades since the publication of the original *Agenda for Peace* have further strengthened the Charter's provision that global peace and security are indivisible and require universal participation in conflict prevention and resolution. Article 99 of the UN Charter authorizes the UN Secretary-General to bring an issue that in his/her opinion threatens international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council and ask for action to be taken. Article 99 should be used more frequently and assertively by the Secretary-General, possibly through a monthly or quarterly review of the state of world peace, which the Secretary-General would present to joint sessions of the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, indicating the situations where Article 99 might apply, also as an early warning / preventive measure.

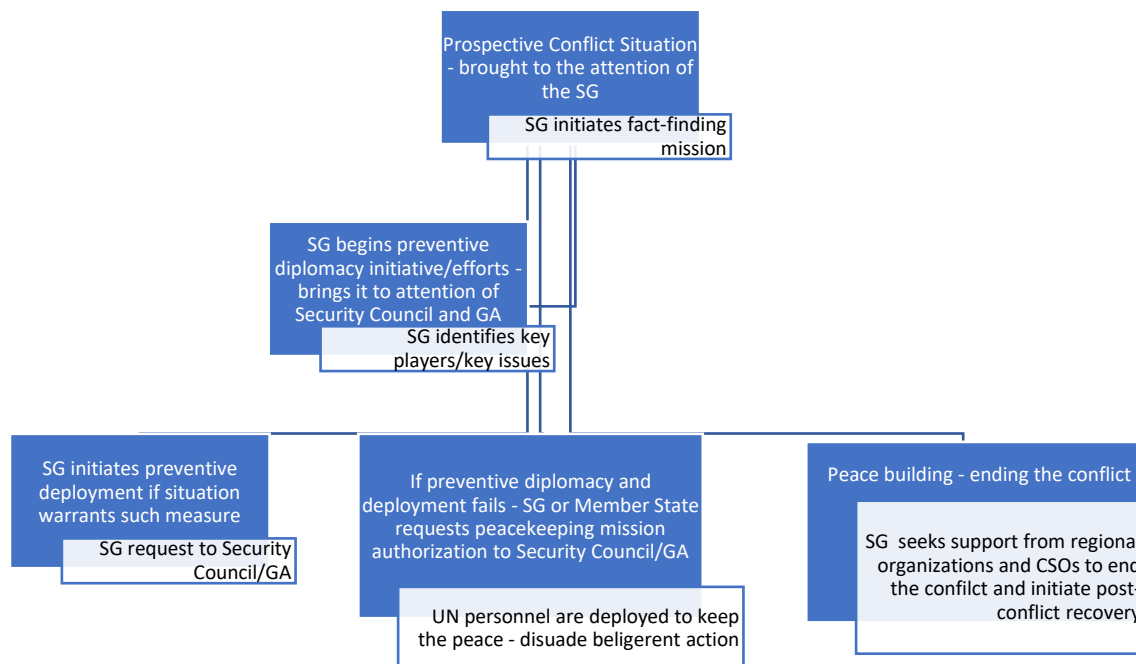
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FORMER UN SYSTEM STAFF FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE – SUPPORTED BY FOGGS

As and when a breach of the peace comes to the attention of the UNSG, the first step should be to establish a fact-finding mission to objectively determine the state of affairs (see schematic presentation of the action sequence below). If the situation warrants it, the Secretary-General should immediately initiate preventive diplomacy measures and, if need be, also preventive deployment of observers or other unarmed personnel with approval from the Security Council or, if the Council is unable to act, from the General Assembly.

If preventive diplomacy fails and a conflict ensues, the Secretary-General should step-up diplomatic efforts to end hostilities and find a mediated solution, which may involve the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force. It is worth noting that it is not for the UN Secretariat to find solutions – unless being asked – to the underlying problems which led to military confrontation, but it is for the UN Secretary-General to find ways and means and formats, in which a political dialogue, reconciliation and eventually a negotiated agreement may be pursued to end the war. Once the conflict ends, the Secretary-General should seek support from Member States for recovery, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building efforts.

Benchmarks that trigger each of these phases should be clearly outlined by the Secretary-General in his reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly. Past practices should inform these decisions, as well as the evidence gathered for the specific case during the fact-finding mission. Regional and civil society organizations should be consulted and involved throughout the process, as should be the range of UN system agencies, including the Bretton Woods Institutions. However, the onus of reaching an international peace/ceasefire agreement rests with States that hold the legal personhood and authority to reach such agreements under public international law.



# PEACEMAKING REFLECTION GROUP (PRG)

FORMER UN SYSTEM STAFF FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE – SUPPORTED BY FOGGS

## 4. UNARMED DEPLOYMENT FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION PURPOSES

As part of its broader peacekeeping tradition, which was devised out of necessity in practice and is not foreseen in the UN Charter, the UN has deployed unarmed and uniformed military personnel to monitor implementation of agreements between belligerents, like respect of ceasefires (see UNTSO in the Middle East and UNMOGIP between India and Pakistan). In recent months a somewhat similar arrangement was agreed, even if at a very small scale, regarding the Ukrainian nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia. In this case, unarmed civilian personnel of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were allowed to be based at the power plant and monitor its operations, ensuring a global presence and thus deterring the shelling of or other damage to the plant.

Civil society organizations have declared and already demonstrated in practice their interest in being involved in unarmed civilian protection (UCP) in conflict zones, independently or in conjunction with UN personnel. In the case of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, civil society organizations have offered to augment the number of IAEA monitors to ensure that there is no intentional or accidental nuclear incident at the plant. This poses various challenges in terms of acceptability of civil society monitors by the warring parties, issues of security training and standard operating procedures, interests that may be served directly or indirectly including through the funding arrangements for such initiatives, and other issues that potentially compromise impartiality if not in substance at least in perception.

The UN could more proactively deploy primarily unarmed monitors of its own, with the agreement of the warring parties, of course. A standing unit of qualified and well-trained individuals, an **Unarmed Observer Corps**, could be established under the auspices of the UN for quick deployment where necessary to protect not only civilian nuclear installations, as in the case of Zaporizhzhia, but also civilian settlements, world heritage sites, etc. The extent to which such a corps would deploy or work with unarmed civilian monitors or unarmed military observer can be considered further and would probably be case-specific.

## 5. REFORMING THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND INTRODUCING A 'GLOBAL RESILIENCE COUNCIL' TO SHIFT ATTENTION TO COMMON THREATS TO HUMAN SECURITY, LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE AND PANDEMICS

It is by now abundantly clear that the presumed stalwarts of international peace and security, the five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council (P5), cannot be relied upon to deliver their Charter-mandated responsibilities, especially when they are themselves involved in a conflict. The use of veto, though, to stop a decision from being taken, is becoming increasingly illegitimate and untenable, with increasing public scrutiny of the motives of the P5. The provisions of the UN Charter's article 27, paragraph 3 should be interpreted to prevent any P5 country from vetoing a resolution in any dispute to which it is a party.

While efforts at Security Council reform drag on for years without major result, the war in Ukraine has made clear that when the Security Council is deadlocked because of the use of veto the Council majority can, procedurally, thus without the possibility of a veto, transfer the blocked item to the UN General

# PEACEMAKING REFLECTION GROUP (PRG)

FORMER UN SYSTEM STAFF FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE – SUPPORTED BY FOGGS

Assembly for debate and action. This should become a routine under the new Agenda for Peace, as should implementation of UNGA resolution A/RES/76/262 that foresees that each time the veto is used the P5 who used it should explain their reasons / position to the UN membership for the whole world to know.

Beyond the Security Council and instead of attempting to de facto expand its mandate by bringing before it also non-traditional threats to human security, like climate change and pandemics, a new body should be established to deal with threats to human security. It could be a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC, and eventually of other UN system bodies, from which it would extract its legitimacy and to which it would report. This body could be called “**Global Resilience Council**” (GRC) and would have a representative intergovernmental core with major states and regions as members, as well as states representing the major regional and functional groups, in the latter case groups like the small island developing states, least developed states, etc. A number of key non-state actors organized in self-governing constituencies would be institutionally connected to the GRC, for the provision of advice and the best possible implementation of decisions made.

## 6. ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACEBUILDING

Securing and sustaining peace requires building a partnership of people and governments working closely together at all levels. Top-down peace solutions have serious limitations, with conflict festering and ready to reignite even in the event of a peace agreement. It is time for a new, more holistic, inclusive, people-centered approach to conflict resolution, peace-building and sustainment, through concepts, strategies and practices that engage and channel the power of people to these ends. Elements of such an approach have already been introduced, de facto, in the work of the UN in the peace and security sector, including through the Women Peace & Security Agenda (UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000), the 2030 Agenda-Sustainable Development Goals (2015 – see in particular Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and strong Institutions), the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Agenda (2016), and the World Humanitarian Summit (2016).

The *New Agenda for Peace* should pay more attention to the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding Nexus (HDPN); should bring women to the table across the entire spectrum of issues and all stages of a conflict/peace process (before-during-after); ensure youth participation and that the voice of young people is heard. To these ends, civil society organizations, local communities and governments (central/local) should work in tandem, with decentralized authority, decision-making, finances and accountability. UN Country Teams coordinated by the UN Resident Coordinator should actively facilitate peacebuilding partnerships of government and civil society based on regular sharing of crisis and peacebuilding management, drawing in the relevant local expertise and UN experience. The actual work should be mostly carried out by local and national peace facilitators, mediators and networks of monitors.

Good practices already exist and allow us to build on what has been proven to work over 77 Years of UN and local experiences. These include women’s post-conflict leadership in crossing ethnic divides (UNIFEM in Kosovo and UN WOMEN in Burundi), indigenous peoples’ integrated peace and development (UNDP, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh), preventing conflict in transition to democracy

# PEACEMAKING REFLECTION GROUP (PRG)

FORMER UN SYSTEM STAFF FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE – SUPPORTED BY FOGGS

(UNDP in Malawi), humanitarian relief in a failed state (UNCT in Liberia), social cohesion and empowerment of women (UNDP in Yemen).

Such an approach, to be managed successfully, needs to prioritize and phase in the New Agenda in-country, seizing opportunities for collaborative actions to prevent conflict/build peace, with early results in pilot countries. It needs to be underpinned with emphasis on Human Security and integration with Human Development. Resources can be provided through a **Peoples' Peace Fund** (funded by the people worldwide), supplemented by IFI funds and multilateral contributions.

## 7. EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As per UNESCO's Constitution, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" [where "men" read people/human beings]. Is anybody doing that systematically? Although UNESCO persists with its [Culture of Peace Programme](#) and UNICEF works in the same direction with its [Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme](#), peace education is at best a topping of no particular taste in education curricula and at worst the subject of much acrimony between "nationalists" and internationalists".

UNESCO has developed curricula of peace education that can be rolled out worldwide, for developing countries under UNDP funding, in close cooperation with UNESCO itself, UNICEF and other funds and programmes of the UN system. A core group of trained trainers consisting of government and civil society could provide the in-country training sessions reaching out to the local and national level. Implementation should be monitored by the UN Resident Coordinators in each country, and for those countries where this position does not exist, the UN Secretariat should agree with the national authorities, who in their case assumes this monitoring role.

A first roll out should reach at least 30 % of all UN Member States by 2030, and further phases can be agreed upon after a thorough evaluation of the programme's impact. The ultimate target should be to reach 100% of all Member States by 2040, and to establish an education/training system which will continue into the future in all countries. The universality of human rights and their application in political and judicial systems in all Member States should be part of the curriculum. Special training sessions for national politicians, in addition to the regular school courses, would eventually lead to a broad understanding of the importance of the global public good called peace and the protection system of human rights for all people in all countries, irrespective of law and ideological traditions.