

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS



DPPA
Preventing Conflict. Sustaining Peace

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026 

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**VISION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS
PEACE AND 
SECURITY PILLAR**



Adapting to the peace and security challenges of the future

The United Nations peace and security pillar is at the core of the Organization's global mandates to prevent and resolve violent conflict. Within a changing and challenging geopolitical landscape, the number of crises around the world has grown and distinct crises have converged. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and their field operations have been called upon by the Secretary-General to enhance the UN's capacities to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and sustain peace and to work more efficiently, effectively, inclusively and innovatively to deliver collective impact on the ground. In line with the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda*, issued in response to the UN75 Declaration of September 2020, his *New Agenda for Peace* calls for renewed commitments to the collective security system and puts forward proposals to revitalize multilateral action to reduce risks and address threats.

In a context of growing polarization at the national and international levels, political processes and conflict management initiatives are becoming more fraught and fragile. Megatrends such as the climate emergency, digital disruption and inequality are increasingly playing central roles as drivers of more localized conflicts, while crises are becoming multifaceted and overlapping, combining, for example, violent conflict with public health emergencies. Going forward, to play its central role in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, the Organization will need to develop more holistic, integrated strategies to address peace and security challenges comprehensively. Ensuring that DPPA and DPO are effective and impactful in today's diversifying and highly complex contexts requires a learning and innovative approach with inclusion at its centre. Building on DPPA's 2019 Women, Peace and Security Policy and DPO's Action for Peacekeeping Initiative, the two Departments are also working to fast-track women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes through bold leadership and targeted measures that address entrenched obstacles to women's participation, protection, and rights.



Consolidating and strengthening the peace and security pillar

Over the past several years, DPPA and DPO have undertaken significant efforts to harmonize work processes, consolidate management practices, and build a common culture across the two Departments. These efforts have borne fruit. The shared regional political-operational structure is working with increasing cohesion to join regional scope and strategies with country-based analysis and planning. In the pursuit of these goals, peacebuilding support is being more seamlessly integrated into political and programming strategies in both mission and non-mission settings, promoting more inclusive, durable and sustainable peace processes that incorporate, for example, the perspectives of minorities, indigenous groups, and other marginalized communities. Staff across the pillar seek to forge strategies that combine short- and long-term solutions. Activities to achieve a cessation of hostilities or a political settlement, for example, benefit from the accumulated experience and the structural resilience brought about by peacebuilding and development work. While the Departments retain discrete mandates, plans, and sources of funding, they draw on an evolving set of tools and resources that are employed flexibly in mission and non-mission settings to deliver increasingly strategic results.

Peacekeeping operations and special political missions are increasingly able to make use of a broad range of expertise across the two Departments, including mediation support; military, police and rule of law and security institutions expertise; electoral assistance; climate, peace and security analysis; and peacebuilding support. The Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative is designed to accelerate the progress made by the UN and its partners to improve the impact and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in supporting conflict-affected countries to transition to durable peace. In the same vein, the Departments now regularly conduct joint learning exercises to generate insights and identify opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of their activities and operations.

The process of digital transformation across the two Departments, hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic, has facilitated the creation of common work processes and platforms for cooperation. Going forward, the two Departments have considerable opportunities to jointly advance the goals of the “Quintet of Change” set out in *Our Common Agenda*, which highlights key areas of transformation to develop and scale new capabilities that promote agility, integration, and cohesion across the UN system. The Departments will leverage their respective comparative advantages to advance joint and UN-wide data, analysis and communications tools and working methods; innovation and digital transformation resources and technical support; strategic foresight capabilities; performance- and results-oriented decision-making and operational mechanisms; and behavioural science insights.

Informed by an ongoing process of staff consultation, DPPA and DPO are working to leverage the structural reforms to forge a stronger, common professional culture and management environment across the pillar that empowers and fosters creativity, collaboration and innovation through the #BuildingOurPillar initiative.



Our shared priorities

Our ability to achieve these goals will be strengthened by deepening our commitment to a number of shared priorities. These include:

Politics: We work towards the promotion of political solutions to conflicts, which are a prerequisite to sustainable peace.

People: We work to engage societies beyond political elites and ground our action in a deep knowledge of socio-economic, environmental, and structural aspects of the communities and peoples we serve. We are committed to promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, centred on human rights for all people, including by integrating a gender perspective and taking measures to advance the participation, protection, and rights of women, youth, and marginalized groups or communities.

Impact: We support effective and efficient field presences, working to maximize their impact and deliver positive change on the ground.

Partnerships: We engage in partnerships across the United Nations system, with Member States, with international, regional, sub-regional organizations, and with local institutions and actors.

Digital transformation, data and innovation: We embrace the opportunities of digital transformation, use of data, and a culture of innovation to advance our work on peace, while being mindful of new challenges generated by digital hate speech and disinformation, cyber security, and other emerging risks.

Staff: Our most crucial resource is our staff, who carry this vision into action. We will rely on and invest in them to build a culture of mutual learning, creativity, growth, and ownership.

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026

Overview and context analysis



A more complex and crisis-driven context in a new geostrategic era

The international peace and security landscape has transformed rapidly over the last few years. Geostrategic competition at the global and regional levels has reached heights not seen since the Cold War. The war in Ukraine accelerated trends that, while visible for most of the last decade, are redefining international relations and mark the end of the post-Cold War period. While the contours of the emerging global order remain to be defined, we are undergoing a significant and inherently unstable transition. This period will be characterized not only by intense competition for power, security and regional influence but also by competing interpretations of the normative underpinnings of the international system.

Meanwhile, multiple threats to global peace and security are converging. Armed conflicts continue to exact a devastating toll. Digital technologies, hate speech and disinformation are having a significant effect on national- and regional-level conflict dynamics. Populism is on the rise, and democracy is being challenged. An existential climate crisis has profound implications for peace and security. The COVID-19 pandemic has undermined trust in institutions and exacerbated inequality and tensions. The pandemic is estimated to have erased six years' worth of progress in human development, and, even prior to it, only 18 per cent of countries affected by conflict or facing humanitarian crisis were on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Together, these interlocking threats have systemic implications that compound their individual effects. And yet, growing divisions at the global level make multilateral action to address them more difficult. Maintaining peace and security will require new approaches: prioritizing areas where the UN can make a difference; learning how to operate when political space is narrow and our work more contested; and reasserting our impartiality - including by working more effectively with a wider range of Member States. We need to build guardrails - at the global, regional and national levels - to absorb shocks which could trigger escalation and conflict.

In the coming four years, DPPA will have a crucial role to play in helping shape how the UN adapts its work to this new global environment and in supporting the Secretary-General and the wider system to chart the path through this transition.

As the UN Department with primary responsibility for operationalizing the Organization's work to promote the pacific settlement of disputes, DPPA will seek to elaborate and apply new approaches to its conflict prevention, peace-making and sustaining peace mandates and help address new peace and security challenges while redoubling efforts to resolve long-standing ones. In doing so, the Department will work to maximize the potential of the "diplomatic toolbox" of the UN Charter, as called for by Member States in the UN75 Declaration.

The Secretary-General's forthcoming *New Agenda for Peace* will lay out a set of recommendations to address peace and security challenges for the consideration of Member States at the Summit of the Future in September 2024. DPPA has a lead role in the development of the *New Agenda for Peace* and in operationalizing new steps to manage risks, with a focus on:

- Prevention, by helping revitalize the mechanisms contained in Chapter VI of the Charter and investing in national capacities for prevention;
- Peacebuilding, including by strengthening the role of the Peacebuilding Commission as a body that can help mobilize international political and financial support for sustaining peace at the national level, with robust support from the Peacebuilding Fund to align strategic priorities with programmatic action;
- Inclusion, to make progress in promoting women's participation in political processes; and
- Investments – political and financial – for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

More broadly, the *New Agenda for Peace* will look to renew Member States' commitments to the collective security system and to collective action to build trust, reduce risks and address threats. It will demonstrate that even in a more divided world, Member States can move away from a logic of competition to embrace cooperation towards shared interests and in response to shared challenges.



Preventing and resolving conflict

It is expected that the demand for DPPA's work to prevent and resolve violent conflict will remain high. 2021 recorded a global increase of 46 per cent in deaths from organized violence, following several years of decline.¹ The war in Ukraine has shaken the foundations of both the United Nations system and the Charter and will continue to reverberate throughout the period of this Strategic Plan. It has aggravated a global food and energy crisis, with effects across multiple regions including many conflict-affected countries where DPPA is engaged. Major conflicts, political crises and complex transitions, such as those in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, Libya, Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, West Africa and the Sahel, and Yemen demand an increasing share of the Department's attention. These threaten to burden existing crisis management systems, while putting pressure on the political space and resources available for conflict prevention.

During 2023-2026, DPPA foresees increased demand for: support to strengthening national capacities for conflict prevention; facilitating dialogue; preventive diplomacy; advancing inclusive political and peace processes; providing electoral assistance, and contributing to long-term sustaining peace efforts by Member States. In working across these areas, DPPA will harness the network of field presences it oversees: Special Political Missions (SPMs), liaison offices to regional organizations, as well as Peace and Development Advisers (PDAs) jointly deployed with UNDP. Continued progress on the structural integration of DPPA, leveraging the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the programming supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), as well as closer collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), will further contribute to enhancing prevention and sustaining peace. DPPA will continue to work with partners across the development, humanitarian and human rights pillars of the Organization, in particular, Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs), working in complex political situations, to offer political analysis, guidance and support and advance cohesive UN action grounded in conflict sensitivity and political approaches. In all areas of our work, we will continue to explore innovative practices and technologies to enable more data-driven, evidence-based and anticipatory decision-making.

¹ Shawn Davies, Therése Pettersson and Magnus Öberg, 2022. "Organized Violence 1989-2021 and Drone Warfare." *Journal of Peace Research*, 59 (4).

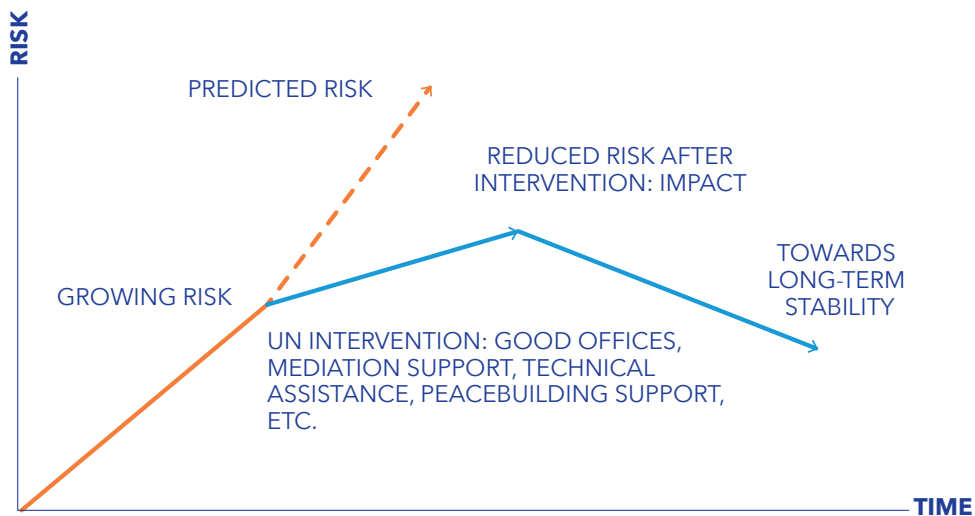
Theory of change

If DPPA deploys the full range of its resources based on cross-cutting analysis, in collaboration with others within the UN system and in partnerships with regional, national and local stakeholders, drawing on an internal culture shaped by a commitment to learning and innovation, it will contribute to the prevention and resolution of violent conflict and to sustainable peace.

DPPA's overarching priority is to anticipate and contribute to a reduction in the risk of the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of violent conflict globally, while also helping move towards recovery, increased inclusion, social cohesion, resilience and development. While demand for its services has grown, the fundamental understanding of how, when and why DPPA's work is effective in meeting this objective remains unchanged from the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. However, as recommended by the mid-term review of the previous Strategic Plan, the Results Framework accompanying the 2023-2026 Plan articulates more explicitly and in greater detail how the theory plays out in operational terms, at different levels of the Plan's Objectives and with different tools and partners.



The risk reduction model for DPPA's work



DPPA's impact in contributing to the prevention and resolution of violence conflict and to sustainable peace can be understood in terms of a "risk reduction model," under which the Department continuously works to reduce the risk of the outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict, often as one actor among many. The model rejects the notions that the impact of the UN can be measured in terms of the simple binary of "whether or not conflict occurred," nor whether its efforts were a "success or failure." Instead, we must examine the extent to which DPPA has contributed to a diminishment in the risks of violence across a wide range of settings and timeframes, and in conjunction with other actors.

Devising and coordinating political strategy across the UN system

In practice, DPPA contributes to the reduction of risk through its leading role in designing and coordinating the UN's political and peacebuilding responses, both in the face of acute risks of conflict, and with respect to longer-term conflict prevention and sustaining peace efforts. The Department works across multiple types of interventions to facilitate delivery of a strategic, coherent and sustainable political strategy for ending violent conflict, reducing risk, and promoting long-term resilience and stability.

In devising strategies for integrated political responses, DPPA draws on internal capacities and resources - that is, the regional divisions shared between DPPA and DPO - and from other parts of the UN system. SPMs and special envoys, supported by DPPA, bring the Secretary-General's good offices directly to conflict parties to help defuse tensions, end violence, build peace processes, and reduce risk over time. DPPA's Policy and Mediation Division supports peace and dialogue processes, and provides expert advice on process design, constitutional assistance, ceasefires and gender inclusion, among others, completing 142 operational deployments in 2021 as well as provides advice and devises support on innovation and technologies across the peace and security pillar. Leveraging the role of PBSO as a connector to key partners such as the international financial institutions (IFIs), and in close coordination with Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams is essential to support informed, joint analysis and their design of in-country responses to advance sustainable development.

As such, DPPA is necessarily a crisis actor, engaging in crisis diplomacy and management in tandem with SPMs, UNCTs, envoys and through its own staff, and at the same time, works towards implementing its core mandate of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. This requires an ability to prioritize, when necessary, but both key functions must be carried out as part of DPPA's overall approach to conflict as the Organization's lead actor in peace and security. DPPA often leads the development of political analysis and strategy, and guides the UN system, including by convening actors across the system and helping shape politically informed approaches that contribute to reducing the risks of conflict.

Assumptions and risks underlying the theory of change

The theory of change makes five key assumptions about the nature of conflict and international peace and security landscape during the 2023-2026 period, and the role and positioning of DPPA. Should these assumptions fail to hold due to the risks discussed below, DPPA's capacity to execute its mandate according to the theory of change could be compromised.

First, because risk of conflict is complex, multidimensional and involves varying timescales, DPPA's responses must involve a flexible combination of interventions that range from political engagements aimed at reducing the risks of immediate escalation, to the facilitation of inclusive peace processes, to support for peacebuilding initiatives that build resilience and ultimately help a country along on the path to sustainable development.²

Second, DPPA is often one among multiple actors. Regional and sub-regional organizations, other international, national and local actors frequently work alongside the UN, with varying degrees of coordination.

² DPPA's understanding of the causal pathways for conflict escalation and de-escalation are generally contained in the 2018 joint UN-World Bank study *Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, to which it was a major contributor. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>.

The Department's impact must therefore be measured as much in terms of its effects in enabling and maximizing the efforts of others to reduce risk as by its direct political engagement with conflict drivers and actors. DPPA will seek out and maximize its added value and comparative advantages in each situation.

Third, the theory of change assumes that, within the UN system, DPPA will continue play a leadership role in analyzing, advising on and taking action when faced with risks of violent conflict, under the broader rubric of the Secretary-General's mandate and authority, and with respect to the UN's global conflict prevention mandate. This will require clarity on the intention and direction of DPPA's role both within evolving UN institutional structures and across the international system.

Fourth, perceptions of the UN in general and DPPA in particular; levels of national and regional comfort with international involvement; and the breadth and depth of pre-existing relationships will affect the Department's impact. In a global context in which disinformation is being used to advance political agendas with increasing frequency, effective strategic communications, multilingualism and strong anticipatory relationships are likely to be decisive for DPPA's ability to have an effect. At the international level, when there is a lack of consensus among key global powers – including within the Security Council – on the role for the UN in a given situation, it is challenging for the Secretariat, including DPPA, to decisively influence a situation.

Fifth, the implementation of the Strategic Plan is dependent on the availability of sufficient, predictable and sustained resources. DPPA's primary source of financing is the regular programme budget of the United Nations, which remains under considerable strain. With the growth in demand for DPPA activities at Headquarters and on the ground, the Department has come to rely increasingly on voluntary contributions for both core needs and capacities, and for operational and programming engagement in the field, including travel. The Multi-Year Appeal is DPPA's primary extra-budgetary instrument and is calling for \$170 million until 2026.

Goals and objectives

The Strategic Plan organizes the Department's work into three broad Goals, two of which are externally facing and one of which is more focused on internal systems and working methods. Under each Goal are more specific Objectives, which describe discrete areas of work that will contribute to the achievement of the Goals. Together, these Goals and Objectives underpin the Department's Results Framework, which will be used to monitor and report on its performance. DPPA's Multi-Year Appeal, in turn, funds activities and additional capacities across all the Goals and Objectives.

Goals 1 and 2 divide DPPA's substantive work into two categories, the first covering the Department's engagement in specific conflict situations, and the second on DPPA's interaction with, and contribution to, the mechanisms and frameworks that constitute the international architecture for peace and security.

Goal 1 is concerned with how DPPA, SPMs, and other field presences support the Secretary-General in preventing and resolving conflict and sustaining peace in specific field situations. This work includes "good offices", preventive diplomacy, mediation and crisis resolution to electoral assistance and local-level programmatic initiatives and the strengthening of national institutions to build peace.

Goal 2 is concerned with DPPA's contribution to the multilateral system for international peace and security at the global and regional levels. This includes its mandated support of UN bodies and mechanisms, its efforts to advance critical normative agendas, such as Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), and its engagement on major trends that impact conflict dynamics, such as the effects of climate change and the roles played by digital technologies. The two Goals are closely linked, and both focus on partnership building, enhancing inclusion, working with civil society, and greater use of data analytics, innovation and evidence-based analysis, policies, and political strategies.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1

Preventing and resolving violent conflicts and sustaining peace



1

Analysis



2

Crisis response and support to "good offices"



3

Longer-term prevention and peacebuilding support

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

GOAL 2

A more effective multilateral architecture for international peace and security



4

Support to UN bodies



5

Multilateral partnerships and frameworks

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

GOAL 3

A stronger, more diverse and more effective Department



6

Innovation and continuous learning



7

A more collaborative, creative, diverse, inclusive and empowering work environment

GOAL 1

Preventing and resolving violent conflicts and sustaining peace

Through its network of SPMs, PDAs, Headquarters-based capacities and field presences and working with the UN system (notably RCs and UNCTs) and external partners, DPPA will act in response to violent conflict that is occurring or at risk of breaking out. This work, which is central to the operationalization of Chapter VI of the Charter, encompasses a wide variety of tools and approaches such as mediation, preventive diplomacy and support to peacebuilding delivered through operational activities of Headquarters staff, SPMs and other field entities. It also includes peacebuilding programming and support that strengthen national resilience, local mediation capacities and mechanisms for social cohesion. It further comprises the identification and implementation of measures to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and to engage young people, as well as groups that are marginalized or at risk of being left behind.



Objective 1. Analysis

DPPA will conduct analysis of country and regional situations to provide situational awareness to the Secretary-General and Member States, support early warning, inform inclusive political strategies and new operational activities, and identify entry points for action at Headquarters, by SPMs, and among other UN entities and presences in the field. The Department will provide timely, integrated, multidimensional, gender-responsive, data-driven and climate-informed analysis, leading to UN responses that are better informed and targeted. DPPA's analysis will also support, and provide political guidance to, the work of other parts of the UN system, including through Headquarters mechanisms such as the Secretary-General's Executive Committee and Regional Monthly Reviews; regional and country-level analytical and planning documents, such as Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (SDCFs), integrating political analysis with, among others, human rights, socio-economic and humanitarian lenses. Analysis also draws on, and informs, the work of external partners, for example the World Bank through its fragility assessments, as well as regional development banks, civil society (including women's and youth groups), regional and sub-regional organizations, and the international research community.

The Department continuously works to improve and innovate in its use of methods, practices and processes for developing and communicating analysis such as the use of digital technologies, new forms of data, and visualization tools across the peace and security pillar. DPPA also strives to expand its analytical scope to systematically integrate emerging peace and security issues, including the effects of climate change, into foresight. DPPA will seek to improve the rigour and depth of its analyses by employing a range of futures thinking methodologies, and by periodically conducting deeper analytical exercises on country and regional situations identified through a prioritization process that will form part of regional divisions' work plans. These exercises will seek to promote creative and unconventional thinking, including by employing "Red Teams" or other sources of external review to challenge assumptions, mitigate cognitive bias (including in relation to gender or race), and hedge against institutional orthodoxies.



Objective 2. Crisis response and support to "good offices"

DPPA has a leadership role to play within the UN system to promote the pacific resolution of disputes, including under Chapter VI of the Charter. It works to identify and open entry points for action and formulate, plan and operationalize political strategies to resolve violent conflicts peacefully. As part of the UN's responses to emerging and ongoing conflict, DPPA and its components, including SPMs, directly execute activities such as crisis response, preventive diplomacy, and mediation, and provide political guidance to the activities of others at Headquarters and in the field, in partnership and operational coordination with other national, regional, and international actors. This entails convening the relevant actors and rallying them around politically informed approaches and strategies that contribute to reducing the risks of conflict and sustaining peace. In this respect, DPPA offers guidance and support, particularly to actors across the three pillars of the United Nations.

DPPA will ensure that its approach is rapid and flexible and supportive of multi-track efforts that promote inclusivity and sustainable peace outcomes. The Department seeks to advance women's direct participation through targeted measures, effectively engage women's groups and women-led civil society and integrate gender expertise to ensure gender-responsive work. It similarly seeks to systematically enhance the participation of youth in peace and security dialogue and processes, including through support to and engagement with youth associations and groups. By being reflective of a diverse set of voices and experiences, DPPA will be able to provide appropriate and effective expertise to crisis responses in both mission and non-mission settings, including advice to RCs and UNCTs, as well as other UN partners that engage with political and conflict actors.



Objective 3. Longer-term prevention and peacebuilding support

DPPA works with partners to help build national capacities for inclusive dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding and sustaining peace in accordance with national priorities. The Department will support national actors, including civil society organizations, through, for example, electoral assistance, SPMs' work to deliver local capacity-building initiatives, and technical support to national dialogue initiatives, in addition to the Peacebuilding Fund's support through its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives.

As part of this work, it will contribute to stronger linkages between humanitarian-development-peace work and provide political guidance for the design and implementation of programming by UNCTs. This includes support on key issue areas in peace and political processes, including on WPS, YPS, climate, peace and security, and efforts to combat hate speech and misinformation, all of which underscore the importance of holistic and people-centered approaches. Such approaches also contribute to the promotion of mental health and psychosocial support through DPPA's conflict resolution, prevention, and peacebuilding engagements. Longer-term prevention and peacebuilding support also includes focus on UN mission transitions, in which continued political engagement and catalytic support to programming such as that provided by the Peacebuilding Fund can play a critical role to shore up hardwon gains.

Ultimately, the emphasis lies on contributing to the achievement of sustained peace and sustainable development, with transitions away from a mission deployment in countries and regions where this is the case. This work overall requires consistent relationship-building with national, regional, and international partners through regular dialogue and joint initiatives, including through south-south and triangular cooperation as well as fragile-to-fragile cooperation and an enhanced focus on civil society, including women-led civil society, youth, and other marginalized communities.

GOAL 2

A more effective multilateral architecture for international peace and security

DPPA serves and helps the international peace and security architecture and contributes to more effective and networked multilateralism. This includes the support DPPA provides to UN bodies (including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission, and other subsidiary organs) to enable them to effectively perform their functions and deliver on their respective mandates, as well as innovation in the types and methods of support DPPA provides. It also concerns the building of strategic partnerships with other multilateral organizations, including regional and sub-regional organizations and IFIs, that establish the frameworks for cooperation on specific situations foreseen under Goal 1. DPPA further plays an important leadership role in advancing the UN's normative role on priority global issues affecting peace and conflict dynamics.



Objective 4. Support to UN bodies

DPPA provides support to UN organs and bodies, including its assistance to the Security Council and analytical outputs on Council precedent and practice, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), and the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24).

DPPA will continue to enhance its administrative, analytical and technical support to UN bodies, facilitating Member State decision-making and communicating with wider UN stakeholders, in order to position multilateral architecture for international peace and security to be more effective, credible, inclusive and complementary. DPPA will encourage and enable innovation in how the UN's support is delivered, including by leveraging digital technologies and data platforms to deliver visualizations of information and analysis in support of better informed and more efficient decision-making.

Objective 5. Multilateral partnerships and frameworks



DPPA builds strategic institutional relationships, including substantive and capacity- building partnerships, with multilateral and regional and subregional organizations, and contributes to the global normative discourse on critical issues of international peace and security. The Department also plays an important role in implementing aspects of the Secretary- General's Call to Action for Human Rights and works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). DPPA will similarly seek to increase engagement on conflict prevention and crisis responses with non-traditional partners that may be expected to play increasingly important roles in international peace and security framework and operations in the coming years, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), or youth-focused actors. Continuing to build and strengthen these partnerships will enhance its capacity and those of its partners to act effectively to reduce conflict and sustain peace. Critically, this will include efforts to ensure that investments by partners are conflict-sensitive and peace-supporting. DPPA is central to advancing the UN's normative role within the multilateral system and the broader public discourse, for instance on the WPS agenda and on priority global issues affecting conflict dynamics, such as the accelerating effects of climate change and the impacts of digital technologies on peace and security.

GOAL 3

A stronger, more diverse and more effective Department

DPPA strives to be an inclusive, collaborative, creative, diverse, innovative and learning work environment that supports staff in continuous improvement, innovation, and enhances cross-pillar cohesion, to strengthen internal effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency.



Objective 6. Innovation and continuous learning

DPPA undertakes active formal and informal learning in the Department to feed innovation and continuous improvement of staff skills, technical tools, and working methods, while improving its digital infrastructure and approach. Jointly with DPO wherever appropriate, the Department systematically reflects on its work and translates these lessons into improvements to its policies, procedures, tools, and skills-based training, while at the same time undertaking targeted initiatives to generate innovative new approaches and working methods across the peace and security pillar. This includes innovations that help DPPA and its partners reach a broader and more gender- and age- diverse set of interlocutors, and reinforces efforts to implement the zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. The lessons learnt through these processes inform Department- and pillar-wide efforts to devise new strategies, ways of working, and tools to improve mandate delivery. The evidence of the Department's impact also supports a more deliberate approach to strategic communications to effectively convey DPPA's work and impact to Member States and beyond.



Objective 7. A more collaborative, creative, diverse, inclusive and empowering work environment

DPPA's diversity is its strength. More inclusive and collaborative approaches to its tools and working methods will increase its impact in preventing and resolving violent conflict and sustaining peace. The Department will work proactively to improve its operational, administrative, management and recruitment practices and culture to enhance the effectiveness and diversity of its staff in delivering on their responsibilities, and to empower staff to take appropriate action. DPPA aspires to be part of a cohesive, integrated peace and security pillar that encourages and catalyzes innovation in tools, frameworks and working methods, combats prejudice, discrimination and racism, and promotes LGBTIQ+ and disability inclusion. As efforts to achieve gender parity continue, DPPA will continue to advance the empowerment of women at all levels. The Department will leverage innovative practices and techniques for collaboration, accountability mechanisms, training programmes and internal communications and decision-making channels to maximize the collective impact of its staff.

DPPA's approach

In the execution of its Strategic Plan, DPPA will leverage an array of tools and capacities and adopt several ways of working, guided by a principled approach based on UN values, lessons learned, and the Secretary-General's guidance.

The following considerations will inform the Department's way of doing business:

A field-facing posture

Analysis and expertise must be translated into action in the field to reduce the risks of violent conflict. In 2023-26, DPPA will continue to strengthen the strategic focus and impact of its work in the field with and through SPMs, its liaison offices, and the PDAs deployed under the UNDP-DPPA Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, RCs and UNCTs, and through the programming supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). DPPA offers political analysis and support both at Headquarters-level and to actors across the UN spectrum deployed in the field. Its Headquarters-centric role, however, must also remain focused on what can be achieved on the ground, including through convening the relevant actors and rallying them around politically informed approaches and strategies for conflict resolution, risk reduction, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Prioritization

In a context of constrained resources and multiple crisis situations, DPPA's global mandate contains both crisis response and conflict prevention actions. It presents the Department with numerous competing country and regional situations and mandates. Ensuring that all situations benefit from systematic reviews of political analysis and strategy presents a considerable challenge that has only grown in recent years, as the reforms to the peace and security pillar have meant that the regional Assistant Secretaries-General (ASGs) and divisions are expected to engage substantively with a larger number of situations, demands and mandates.

DPPA regional divisions are expected to regularly apply a set of prioritization criteria to determine analytical and operational priorities. These will include, but are not limited to, the Secretary-General's priorities; Security Council mandates and collective Member State priorities; situations which, according to DPPA's analysis, pose short or medium-term risks of violent conflict that are not likely to be addressed through other channels; the planning cycles of CCAs and SDCFs, where the Department's analysis could add value; and areas in which DPPA's work could offer a unique comparative advantage and return on investment, particularly in light of resource constraints.

Innovation, data and digital transformation

In line with the Secretary-General's "Quintet of Change", the Department will expand efforts to advance innovation, including through digital transformation and the leveraging of data, improving foresight, and strengthening impact measuring through behavioural science, in partnership with DPO, as applicable. In 2020, the Department established a dedicated Innovation Cell to explore new methods and practices in support of conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding efforts.

Utilizing the catalytic role of the Innovation Cell but drawing on the capacities of all staff members, DPPA will promote a mindset that constantly scouts new methods, harvests imagination, advances analytics and transformation of process, and explores opportunities for change to create greater impact, incorporating both digital and non-digital approaches as appropriate.

DPPA will continue to increase its work to strengthen data-driven foresight and decision-making in line with its early warning role and in support of UN-wide mechanisms. Consistent with the Secretary-General's Data Strategy and Guidance on Behavioural Science, the Department will emphasize data-related skills while integrating existing digital tools more thoroughly across the workforce and investing in the development of new digital applications and methods.



Cross-Pillar

DPPA draws upon capacities and expertise across the peace and security pillar, including, above all, the regional divisions shared with DPO. Across the Secretariat, DPPA works with entities such as the Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT) and the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) – both of which, in addition to DPO, are collaborating with DPPA to elaborate the Secretary-General’s *New Agenda for Peace* – in addition to its ongoing partnerships with other actors across the development and human rights pillars and among the humanitarian community. In this respect, its close working relationship with the Resident Coordinator system through the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and UNCTs on the ground is critical to ensure cohesive analysis, approaches and politically informed and sensitive strategies. DPPA also increasingly seeks to work with non-traditional parts of the international system that may become more central to its work in the evolving global context.

DPPA’s convening role in the UN system, as well as its participation in the Integration Working Group, are crucial in this regard, bringing together entities across pillars to enhance the individual and collective impact of the United Nations response, with focus on those activities required for sustaining peace. DPPA will also work to further strengthen conflict sensitivity and the incorporation of a strong peacebuilding approach in policy and programming of Agencies, Funds and Programmes across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the partnerships with the World Bank, IMF and other international and regional financial institutions. This work is advanced through DPPA’s participation in the UN Transitions Project, a collaborative partnership with DCO, UNDP and DPO, offering support to field missions and UNCTs in aligning around shared peacebuilding objectives, and initiating proactive and integrated transition planning. Ultimately, our aspiration is to advance from the deployment of field mission towards UN approaches focused on longer-term sustaining peace and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As the climate crisis accelerates, its cascading effects on lives and livelihoods around the world risk undermining DPPA’s efforts at prevention, peacebuilding, and peacemaking. Through its role in the inter-agency Climate Security Mechanism (jointly run by DPPA, UNDP, UNEP and DPO), DPPA therefore leverages extensive networks with partners across and beyond the UN system to analyze climate-related security risks and support comprehensive and gender-sensitive prevention and response strategies, while also advocating to ensure that climate-related investments are conflict-sensitive.



Inclusion

The WPS agenda remains a core priority for the Department. DPPA will accelerate efforts to ensure that a gender perspective and women's participation, protection, and rights are centrally reflected in all of its work. This will include identifying and implementing targeted measures to advance women's direct and meaningful participation, leveraging gender expertise to ensure gender-responsive peacemaking, and meaningfully engaging women's groups and civil society to inform conflict prevention and peacemaking work.

The integration of gender in a wide variety of initiatives ranging from peace process design to constitutions and ceasefires, and from electoral assistance to preventing acts of sexual violence in conflicts, will help to advance women's political participation, and build more sustainable and inclusive political settlements. The Department's growing work on climate, peace and security will also increasingly address gender-sensitive climate security efforts, including on natural resource conflicts. DPPA will continue - and, where funding is available, strengthen - the financing of activities in these and related areas through the Peacebuilding Fund and the Multi-Year Appeal.

The inclusion of young people in promoting and maintaining peace and security processes is also a growing priority for DPPA, pursuant to the Security Council resolutions adopted in recent years. DPPA, as a global co-lead on the YPS agenda together with UNFPA, will work to further incorporate understandings of the roles of youth in conflict prevention and sustaining peace into its analyses and recommendations. DPPA will continue to build and roll out its technical expertise on strategies to meaningfully include young women and men in formal and informal peace processes.

In line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, DPPA will also raise its standards for the incorporation of strategies for the empowerment of persons with disabilities and their human rights into its analysis, early warning and strategy formulation processes.

Internally, in line with the UN Values and Behaviours Framework, DPPA will continue to take action to create an environment of dignity and respect for all staff regardless of any aspect of their identity, including but not limited to age, disability, gender, nationality, racial identity, and sexual orientation.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Results Framework accompanying the four-year Strategic Plan has three main purposes: to stimulate improved performance; to facilitate decision-making; and to strengthen accountability for DPPA's work.

As the key monitoring tool for the Plan, the Results Framework breaks down the overarching Goals and Objectives into 21 Outcomes articulating what the Department - in partnership with others - will be working to achieve over the four-year period (2023-2026).

To track progress towards achieving these Outcomes, quantitative indicators have been developed for the Department to report against on a six-monthly basis. These indicators both measure desired changes and provide a management tool to assess where there might be issues and challenges in achieving the Outcomes. Targets for the indicators will be updated on an annual basis.

Noting that indicators are necessarily indicative and cannot capture everything the Department does, in biannual reporting, the Results Framework also has a qualitative dimension. Each Objective includes a question that will be part of the division work plan reporting. Answering these seven questions will allow DPPA to supplement the Key Performance Indicators/quantitative data with qualitative narrative reflections, resulting in more comprehensive storytelling about its work.

For the first time, the Department has also developed more operational-level theories of change for each Objective. These causal pathways that link DPPA's outputs to Outcomes and Objectives help reach common agreement on how the Department contributes to the reduction in violent conflict and sustain peace.

In addition, DPPA will also conduct a mid-term review and a final evaluation of its Plan. As part of its learning and accountability commitment, the Department will continue to undertake a range of evaluative exercises such as after-action reviews, lessons learned studies and self-evaluations. Findings and recommendations from these exercises will be used to enhance the relevance and impact of the Department.

Conclusion

The four-year period 2023-2026 will be a challenging one with respect to global peace and security – and a demanding one for DPPA and the work the Department carries out with respect to conflict resolution, prevention, management, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

DPPA's Strategic Plan sets out a framework to guide the work the Department does, to facilitate focus and prioritization, and to enable impact on the ground, where it matters. The Strategic Plan is accompanied by a Results Framework that allows DPPA to measure the work it carries out and the impact it achieves. Both documents are not meant to be static: they are meant to be dynamic, 'living' documents that can and should be adjusted as realities evolve. But they also set the tone and guide the Department as it embarks on the four years that lie ahead. DPPA stands ready to face the challenges of 2023-2026.



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