

Inputs from India on the New Agenda for Peace

The New Agenda for Peace [NAP], proposed by the United Nations Secretary General in his report 'Our Common Agenda', is based on the premise that 'our collective peace and security is increasingly under threat as a result of emerging risks and dangerous trends for which traditional forms of prevention, management and resolution are ill suited'. SG has advocated a peace continuum to protect and manage the global public good of peace. In the words of SG 'Our Common Agenda, and the process it has initiated, are aimed above all at reinvigorating multilateralism to deal with today's interconnected threats'.

2. NAP proposed by SG focuses mainly on six core areas, i) Reducing strategic risks; ii) Strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new risks; iii) Reshaping responses to all forms of violence; iv) Investing in prevention and peacebuilding; v) Supporting regional prevention; and vi) Putting women and girls at the centre.

3. Following the informal thematic consultations organized by the President of the General Assembly on "Our Common Agenda" in February and March 2022, the United Nations was invited to develop a 'Policy Brief on NAP' as part of the preparations for the Summit of the Future. The efforts of the UN Secretariat to elaborate on the New Agenda for Peace by engaging Member States is well appreciated. The Member States are the primary stakeholders in the United Nations. United Nations should remain an organization comprising of sovereign Member States, who have agreed to uphold the United Nations Charter.

4. From India's perspective, the following key ideas / concepts merit finding space in the NAP Policy Brief:

a. UN Security Council Reforms

A New Agenda for Peace (NAP) cannot be arrived by the old UN system and the starting point therefore needs to be a UN that re-invents itself, rather than a UN that continues to reflect 1945 geo-political realities in some organs of its decision making. As such, in addition to the SIX CORE areas outlined in the report, an equally important area needs to be added: "UN reforms, including reforms of UNSC at its core" to make the UN system fit for delivering on this NEW Agenda for Peace.

5. NAP provides an excellent opportunity for Member States to have a candid conversation about the effectiveness and credibility of multilateral institutions created more than 75 years ago. Four key ideas that could inform this dialogue should include:

- i. NAP's core areas should include early and comprehensive reforms of the UN Security Council--the pre-eminent organ of the UN mandated to maintain international peace and security. The efforts should be to strengthen and reform the existing mechanisms to address the contemporary global challenges and reflect the current geopolitical realities and correct the glaring lack of wider UN membership in the Security Council and other key decision-making bodies of the UN, rather than creating new structures/mechanisms.

- ii. Comprehensive reforms of the UNSC should encompass all five clusters of reforms as stipulated in the UNGA Resolution 62/557 and must be aimed at making the Security Council broadly representative—especially with greater presence of the Member States from the Global South and improve its working methods to make the Council efficient, and transparent and thus to enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. In effect, make the Security Council, “fit for purpose” to effectively respond to contemporary global challenges.
- iii. Towards this end, the NAP should call on Member States to conduct the *Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) Process* in the UN General Assembly in a manner similar to any serious international negotiation process with an overall aim to achieve concrete outcomes within a fixed time-frame that the General Assembly could consider during UN’s 80th Anniversary.
- iv. NAP must also call for reform of the Council’s working methods, particularly of its Sanctions Committees, by formally codifying its procedures, to enhance the involvement of wider UN Member States in this critical aspect of Council’s subsidiary bodies, with a view to make the UNSC sanctions regimes more objective, transparent, evidence-based, and effective, free from political bias and double standards.

b. Counter-terrorism

6. From India’s perspective, NAP has rightly identified countering terrorism as an integral aspect of its core priority area of ‘Reducing strategic risks’—given that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. NAP’s Policy Brief could outline the following elements on countering terrorism.

7. NAP should provide a blueprint for global approach to counter terrorism for consideration of and adoption by all member states. India’s proposed eight-point action plan to the international community in the fight against terrorism could be factored in:

- i. Summon the political will: don’t justify terrorism, don’t glorify terrorists,
- ii. No double standards. Terrorists are terrorists; distinctions are made only at our own peril,
- iii. Don’t place blocks and holds on listing requests without any reason,
- iv. Discourage exclusivist thinking and be on guard against new terminologies and false priorities,
- v. Enlist and delist objectively, not on political or religious considerations,
- vi. Recognize the linkage to organized crime,
- vii. Support and strengthen the FATF
- viii. Provide greater funding to institutions dealing with Counter Terrorism at the UN including the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

8. In addition, NAP should focus on the following key areas that would make international community ability to combat terrorism effective:

- i. The policy brief could suggest practical steps to conclude the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism with the objective of providing a comprehensive legal framework to combating terrorism.

- ii. Call for zero tolerance towards terrorism, consistent with their obligations under international laws and take urgent action to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations through the full and effective implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and other relevant international instruments relating to terrorism, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- iii. It should call for preventing and suppressing the financing of terrorist acts.
- iv. It could provide a roadmap for responding effectively to the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.
- v. The Policy Brief should also call for the UN to support regional counter-terrorism mechanisms with *sustained financing*, including through assessed contributions.
- vi. It must also focus on threats from possible misuse of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes and build on the "Delhi Declaration" adopted by the UNSC's Counter Terrorism Committee in October 2022.

c. Nuclear Disarmament

9. NAP's vision for disarmament, including a nuclear weapons free world, is fully aligned with of India. NAP's Policy Brief's must clearly spell out the following:

- i. The goal of universal, non-discriminatory, and verifiable nuclear disarmament, to which India is firmly committed, must be a top priority for NAP.
- ii. It must call for complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a step-by-step process, underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework, including the negotiation of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention, as also outlined in our Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 (CD/1816).
- iii. Without prejudice to the priority India attaches to disarmament, NAP must also reiterate the call to commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty based on CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.
- iv. It must call upon all nuclear weapon States to maintain credible minimum deterrence based on a No First Use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States, as part of their nuclear doctrine.

d. Effective UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

10. India acknowledges NAP's focus on 'Investing in prevention and peacebuilding for sustaining peacekeeping outcomes. However, the following considerations could be factored in further consolidating this agenda:

- i. Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding are mutually exclusive. Attempts to extend the role of peacekeeping Missions to peacebuilding tasks would strengthen neither; it would only weaken both. The military component of peacekeeping can only play an enabling role but cannot, on its own, bring about peacebuilding.
- ii. The Peacebuilding Architecture comprising of the three pillars, namely Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Support Office needs to be made more effective, through greater focus, resource support and oversight from member states in fulfilling their mandate.

- iii. Mandate of the PBA on several issues such as climate change, gender, human rights etc. should not encroach upon that of other UN organs / agencies including on UN Peacekeeping Missions, thus eschewing dilution of objectives and wastage of resources.
- iv. The UN Peacekeeping Missions should be given clear, unambiguous mandate; must be free from extraneous responsibilities such as taking up climate change related responsibilities; should be adequately funded and staffed; the accountability for crimes against UN Peacekeepers should be strengthened as envisioned in UNSCR 2589 of August 2022; and, should have a clear "exit strategy" - so that UN Peacekeeping remains a credible option for UNSC to uphold international peace and security.

e. Role of Regional Organizations

11. The cooperation between UN and regional organizations is a cardinal principle of maintenance of international peace and security, enshrined in chapter VIII of the UN Charter. India fully supports NAP's core area of 'Supporting Regional Prevention' and believes that this could be based on the following key ideas:

- i. The activities of the UN and regional organizations could complement each other, without duplicating work and keeping their core mandates intact.
- ii. The partnership between the UN and regional organizations could be based on region-owned and region-led solutions centered on security and development for the people of the region.
- iii. The Security Council should respect the regional approach adopted by countries, and work in collaboration with regional organizations to address these shared challenges.
- iv. Sustained financing, including through assessed contributions, needs to be provided to regional peace support operations, including counter-terrorism operations, authorized by the Security Council.

f. Mainstreaming the Women Peace and Security Agenda

12. India appreciates that one of the six core areas of NAP is 'Putting women and girls at the centre of security policy', and in turn, fully supports the mainstreaming of the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Putting WPS at center stage would require prioritizing collective action in at least four core areas:

- i. Acknowledging and responding appropriately to the entrenched nature of gender-based violence and exploitation in conflict situations.
- ii. Eliminating the culture of impunity through swift and effective institutional remedial action.
- iii. Identifying and eliminating barriers to women's greater participation in all peace and security decision-making, including in the UN Peacekeeping Missions and peacebuilding efforts.
- iv. In addition, encouraging efforts towards equal participation of women in political and developmental processes, anchored in the paradigm of women-led in lieu of women's development.

g. Strengthening the Youth Peace and Security Agenda

13. As we collectively aim to build back and get on track our SDGs in the post pandemic phase, it is imperative that we keep the concerns and aspirations of our youth at the center of our policies. For, our youth are our 'Growth Ambassadors' and 'Development Drivers'. They are also the foundations on which peaceful societies are built. This would necessitate the following:

- i. YPS agenda should be an integral part of the NAP, with a balanced and integrated *implementation* of all its five pillars, namely prevention, protection, participation, partnership, and disengagement.
- ii. Prioritization of action by all Member States to provide security to their young population in all respects: physical, psycho-social, and financial, in order to prevent the youth from falling prey to violent ideologies. This would entail NAP seeking to catalyze widespread action on providing holistic security to the youth through investment in at least five priority areas viz. education; employment and entrepreneurship; youth leadership and development; health, fitness, and sports; and social justice.

h. Cyber Security:

14. The dynamic and continuously evolving feature of cyberspace has also brought cyber security into the discourse of peace and security. The borderless nature of cyberspace, and more importantly anonymity of actors involved, has challenged the traditionally accepted concepts of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and privacy. These unique attributes of cyberspace present their own set of challenges for Member States. As Member States, we need to adopt a collaborative rules-based approach in cyberspace and work towards ensuring its openness, stability, and security. India is committed to an open, secure, free, accessible, and stable cyberspace environment, which will become an engine for innovation, economic growth, sustainable development, ensure free flow of information and respect cultural and linguistic diversity. The policy brief should suggest ways to harness cyberspace for the growth and empowerment of people.

15. Member States are engaged in negotiations at the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes. An outcome of the AHC is expected to complete its work by 2024. The Policy Brief should take into consideration the negotiations which remain underway and should avoid pre-empting any issues which can be prejudicial to the ongoing intergovernmental process.

i. Refraining from Securitization of Climate Change Issue

16. India reckons that climate change could exacerbate conflicts in some parts of the world, thereby adding an additional, complicating dimension to achieving peace and security. However, NAP's identification of such new risks and responses to them could factor in the following:

- i. It should be based on scientific evidence and data. India's position on securitization of climate change issue has been informed by objective, scientific data such as in IPCC's Reports. IPCC's 2022 Report observed that, "While non-climatic factors are the dominant drivers of existing intrastate violent conflicts, in some assessed regions extreme weather and climate

events have had a small, adverse impact on their length, severity or frequency, but the statistical association is weak”.

- ii. The climate change crisis and its ramifications of the four pillars of the UN viz. peace and security, human rights, the rule of law and development must be addressed through the most appropriate forum UNFCCC—informed by genuine requirements of developing countries, as reflected in Nationally Determined Contributions, based on certain fundamental principles, foremost amongst which is CBDR-RC (Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities) the priorities of all Member States. UNFCCC represents *an equitable* and fair approach as it seeks a balance between mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology transfer, capacity building, etc. Thus we believe it should remain the pre-eminent institutional platform to discuss and address Climate Change related issues.
- iii. NAP must underscore UNFCCC’s call for affordable access to climate finance to move forward on climate action, with developed countries providing climate finance of \$1 trillion at the earliest. This climate change finance has to be ‘new and additional’ and climate specific; and not just diverted from existing levels of ODA towards climate finance.
