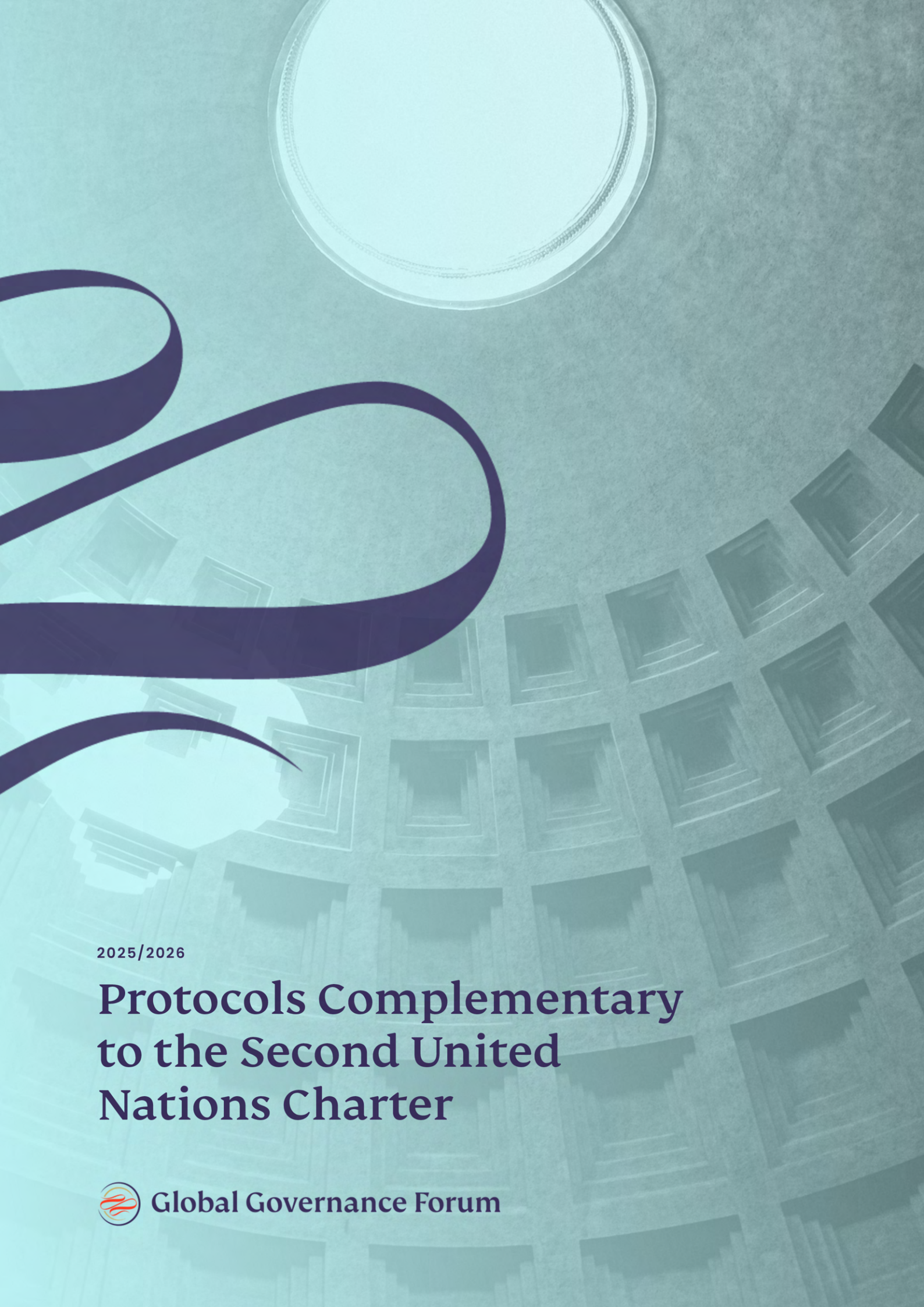

2025/2026

Protocols Complementary to the Second United Nations Charter

Global Governance Forum

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Introducing the Protocols and the Roadmap

This document introduces three companion protocols to *A Second United Nations Charter: Modernizing the UN for a New Generation* (Global Governance Forum, New York, 2024):

1. A New Way to Finance the United Nations;
2. Statement of Principles on Ensuring Inclusion of Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society, and Other Stakeholders in Consultation on Matters of Policy and Process at the United Nations;
3. On the Composition of the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly.

In addition, it presents a Roadmap for collective security and disarmament, which will serve as the basis for two further protocols—one on a United Nations Peace Force and the other on comprehensive disarmament—to be disseminated during 2026. While presently less developed than the three protocols included here, the Roadmap is integral to the project. Issues of peace, security, and disarmament cannot be separated from the institutional reforms outlined in the Second UN Charter; they are part of the same transformational agenda, essential to building a safer and more legitimate system of global governance.

We are acutely aware that ours is a time of deep skepticism—sometimes cynicism—about international cooperation, multilateralism, and especially about the United Nations' capacity for meaningful reform. Calls for global disarmament or stronger collective security mechanisms are often met with dismissive claims of utopianism. But that skepticism, though understandable, cannot be our compass. Given the current unraveling of the global order, we believe it is dangerously complacent to wait until catastrophe—perhaps a third world war—forces change upon us. By then, it may be too late. Reforming the global system is not a luxury for calmer times; it is a precondition for preventing collapse in the storm that is already upon us.

A transformational agenda

The Protocols and the Roadmap are not add-ons but part and parcel of the broader vision of the Second United Nations Charter. They embody the same spirit of innovation and hope, grounded in the conviction that the international community is capable of renewing its common institutions. The reforms proposed here are ambitious but realistic, conceived as the next stage in the long historical process of adapting global governance to new challenges.

History shows that bold institutional change is possible. In 1945, the UN Charter itself was a daring innovation, emerging from the collapse of the League of Nations and the devastation of world war. It established principles and norms—such as the universality of membership and the recognition of human rights—that shaped international cooperation for decades to come. The UN oversaw decolonization, expanded development cooperation, and prevented the recurrence of global war, achievements that testify to the resilience of the multilateral project.

Yet the limitations of the existing system have become alarmingly evident. Peace and security mechanisms that fail to prevent major wars, including those which daily threaten to explode into nuclear conflicts. Human rights norms that are rapidly being eroded by a rising sense of impunity among leaders. Poverty and inequality that persist, and recent progress on climate change that is now threatened with reversal. Behind all of this, the Organization is struggling to adapt to the scale and speed of today's global challenges. Eighty years on, the Charter shows its age: it is, as often noted, pre-nuclear, pre-climate, and pre-digital.

Renewal for a new century

The Second United Nations Charter responds to this reality. It reflects years of dialogue and draws on both

contemporary reports—such as Our Common Agenda (2021) and A New Agenda for Peace (2023)—and the long tradition of proposals for UN reform stretching back to the Organization's earliest years.

Its structural reforms are substantial: a more representative Security Council; a nascent Parliamentary Assembly; an Earth System Council; clearer authority for the General Assembly; a new process for the selection of the Secretary-General; the fulfilment of the promise of compulsory jurisdiction by the International Court of Justice (incorporated as well into the companion *Revised Statute of the International Court of Justice* found in Annex III of this publication); and a pathway toward a standing UN peace force and disarmament regime. The companion protocols complement this vision by addressing specific areas where reform can advance more quickly: financing, civil society engagement, and parliamentary representation. Meanwhile, the Roadmap on peace, security and disarmament acknowledges the complexity of these issues but insists that they cannot be deferred indefinitely. It sets the stage for fully developed protocols in 2026 by sketching a phased, interrelated approach to preventive diplomacy, peace operations, arms control, and disarmament—bridging today's impasse with tomorrow's more stable order.

In developing these proposals, care was taken not only to respond to today's geopolitical fault lines, but also to design mechanisms that could plausibly attract support within the current international landscape. For example, with a view to promoting greater democracy and accountability in the Security Council, the reforms outline a feasible formula for expanded membership capable of gaining backing across regional and ideological lines.[1] To address the dysfunction of the permanent veto, the project does not propose outright abolition—an action almost certain to provoke withdrawal by the most powerful states. Instead, it advances a novel override mechanism empowering both the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly.[2]

The wager is that permanent members will prefer to remain engaged in a system where their veto can be challenged democratically, rather than risk isolation or irrelevance.

Equally, the proposals acknowledge that national sovereignty remains deeply embedded in the international system. The reforms do not envisage unlimited legislative power for the UN. Rather, they contain a very limited provision empowering the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly to adopt binding international law under strict conditions and oversight in cases of existential threat to human survival.[3]

An integrated whole

While each chapter of the Second Charter and each subsequent protocol and roadmap stands on its own in many ways, our project is also intended to present an integrated approach to United Nations reform. To take only a couple of examples: As the introduction to the Protocol on the Composition of the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly further elaborates, bringing citizen-linked parliamentary politics into the United Nations will dispose citizens and their organizations to invest in the United Nations and its outcomes, strengthening the organization's ability to be effective across diverse areas of global challenge. Likewise, the democratization of the Security Council and the potential for veto to be overridden by the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly will keep the Council small enough to be manageable while grounding all aspects of collective security on a more legitimate basis of authority.

Technology as a cross-cutting theme

One recurring theme throughout the drafting process has been the role of emerging technologies,

[1] See *The Second United Nations Charter*, Article 23.
[2] *See Ibid.,* Article 12(3).
[3] *See Ibid,* Article 15 paragraphs (2) – (6).

particularly artificial intelligence. Unlike other areas, technology has not been given its own protocol. This is deliberate. The very pace of change in this field is such that a stand-alone protocol would risk being obsolete almost on arrival. What seems like a cutting-edge recommendation today could appear inadequate—or even misguided—within a year.

This distinguishes technology from areas like disarmament, where we already know the principles and priorities that must guide the process, and where these are unlikely to change significantly in the near future. With AI and other rapidly evolving technologies, by contrast, humility and adaptability are required.

Rather than treating technology as a discrete subject, therefore, the Charter and protocols weave it into every domain of UN activity: human rights, development, disarmament, peace and security, environmental protection, and even the Organization's internal procedures and staffing. To have addressed it separately would risk trivializing its pervasive influence, much as if the League of Nations had drafted a protocol on the steam engine. At the same time, the ethical issues raised—equity, bias, privacy, and the conditions for a just transition—will require continuing and focused attention in specialized forums.

Peace, security, and disarmament

A central pillar of the project remains unfinished: the comprehensive framework for peace, security, and disarmament. The Roadmap presented here is intended as a bridge—conceptual and practical—between the current state of deadlock and a more effective global system. It connects long-standing proposals for a standing UN peace force (already envisaged in 1945 but never implemented) with a phased approach to disarmament covering nuclear, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons, as well as newer domains such as outer space and autonomous weapons.

Unlike technology, where recommendations risk becoming outdated almost as soon as they are drafted, the principles of disarmament are stable and enduring. The urgency of reducing weapons of mass destruction, curbing arms races, and addressing the humanitarian impact of small arms, landmines, and new classes of weapons is as clear today as it was decades ago. The challenge lies not in defining the principles but in building the political will and institutional architecture to implement them.

The Roadmap is not a substitute for detailed protocols, but rather a structured pathway toward them, integrated with the institutional reforms of the Second UN Charter and aligned with the urgent need for progress on the most intractable problems of global security. It aims to provide a phased plan, with benchmarks that relate across different domains, and connect these to the broader institutional restructuring already envisioned.

A work in progress, a source of hope

Taken together, the Second United Nations Charter, its three companion protocols, and the Roadmap for peace, security, and disarmament are presented as a conversation-starter and a work in progress. They are an invitation to governments, parliaments, civil society, and citizens—especially youth—to engage in shaping the future of global governance. Disagreement is expected and welcome; proposals can and should be refined.

The underlying message, however, is one of cautious hope. The experience of the past eighty years demonstrates both the resilience of multilateralism and the need for its renewal. Understandably, many diplomats approach questions of UN reform with caution, mindful of the political difficulties and the sensitivities of major powers. But excessive caution risks becoming its own form of inertia, while the challenges confronting humanity—climate change, pandemics, disruptive technologies, widening

inequality—are advancing on timelines that will not adjust to diplomatic hesitations.

Recognizing the obstacles without being immobilized by them is therefore essential. By combining structural reform with pragmatic pathways in peace, security, and disarmament, this project demonstrates that constructive ideas are within reach. The Second UN Charter and its protocols show that renewal of the United Nations is not a utopian dream but a practical necessity. None of this is easy; transformational reform never is. But the alternatives—drift, decay, and eventual disaster—are far more costly. And unlike in past eras, the consequences of systemic failure today may well be irreversible.

The invitation to participate in this necessary transformation is open to all. But it falls with particular urgency on progressive mid-level and smaller powers—those who historically have often championed reforms to the global system. In today's multipolar and fragmented world, responsibility must be more widely shared and leadership more democratic. Only by acting collectively—and with courage—can we usher in a new era of global governance that is both fit for purpose and equal to the challenges of our time.

A New Way to Finance the United Nations

1. Introduction

In *A Second United Nations Charter: Modernizing the UN for a New Generation*, the amended versions of Articles 17 and (new) Article 18.4, reproduced below, address the financing and budgetary dimensions of the United Nations system. In particular, these revisions envisage the possibility of other forms of funding beyond those that have emerged in practice since the UN's founding. This protocol on financing the UN system is organized as follows: Section 2 provides some background information on the various systems and practices that currently underpin the finances of the UN, with particular attention focused on the distortions and inefficiencies that these have introduced. Section 3 supplements this with some important historical context, to better understand the proposals that follow. Section 4 presents an alternative funding mechanism that builds on the existing system but that is more transparent and predictable in application and that reduces the scope for the politicization of UN funding and has other distinct advantages as well, without necessarily creating a greater financial burden on Member States. Sections 5 and 6 identify alternative sources of funding that could provide additional resources to the UN system over the medium term but that would require additional institutional innovations by UN Members. In one case building on the large body of experience accumulated within the European Union in developing transparent and reliable sources of funding and in another case building on the changing nature of the global financial system over the past several decades. Section 7 discusses the issue of short-term versus longer-term financing mechanisms while the last section presents a list of Articles which incorporate the essence of the proposals being made in the previous sections and that would capture the primary content of this Protocol.

Article 17

1. The General Assembly shall consider and approve the budget of the United Nations. The budget shall go into effect upon final approval by the Parliamentary Assembly.

2. The expenses of the United Nations shall be borne by the Member States as apportioned by the General Assembly, subject to final approval by the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as other means as determined by a Protocol to this Charter on budget and funding initially adopted by Member States.

3. The General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly shall have the power to enact such regulations as are authorized by the Protocol on budget and funding, in particular related to the borrowing of funds on the credit of the United Nations.

4. The General Assembly shall consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements with specialized agencies referred to in Article 57, subject to final approval by the Parliamentary Assembly, and shall examine the administrative budgets of such specialized agencies as well as allocate to them in the annual budget of the United Nations such funds as it deems necessary for their expenses.

Article 18

1. Decisions on budgetary questions, including amendments to the Protocol on budget and funding, shall be made by a two-thirds majority decision of the General Assembly and a majority decision of the Parliamentary Assembly, whether or not present and voting, which, in respect of votes in the General Assembly, shall include a majority of the Member States of the United Nations whose allocated financial contributions would represent the ten largest shares in the existing budget or a new budget voted upon.

2. Basic institutional features of UN finances

As the foremost institution in the area of international cooperation, the United Nations (UN) is expected

to address an expanding range of challenges, from geopolitical conflicts and humanitarian crises to climate change and sustainable development. However, its ability to execute these responsibilities effectively is increasingly undermined by a flawed financing model that is characterized by fragmentation, unpredictability and undue politicization.

As reported in *Financing the UN Development System*: *Resourcing the Future* (2024)[4], the UN budget system comprises a variety of specialized agencies, funds and programs, each governed by its own mandate, governance framework, and budgetary structure. Despite their institutional distinctiveness, UN entities share common financing mechanisms, with the majority relying on contributions from Member States. Their funding is derived from a mixture of financing instruments, which can broadly be divided into four types: 1) assessed contributions, which finance the regular budget (covering the UN's core functions, including general operations, political missions and development programs) and the peacekeeping budget[5]; 2) voluntary core contributions (unrestricted funds provided by states or other donors); 3) voluntary earmarked contributions; and 4) revenue from other activities. The two most important of these are assessed contributions and voluntary earmarked contributions, accounting for 81% of the total. Assessed contributions constitute the consolidated payments made by all Member States arising from their treaty obligations as UN members. Voluntary core contributions are untied financial contributions made by Member States and other contributors to support the budgets of UN entities and are relatively small in relation to the total (9%).[6] Assessed contributions and voluntary core contributions together provide more flexible funding streams to UN entities in support of their overall strategic and operational plans, as they are not explicitly linked to individual Member State projects or other priorities. The table below provides these figures for 2023, the latest year for which they are publicly available.

Funding of the UN System by Financing Instrument (2023)[7]

Financing Instrument	**Amount (US$ billion)**	**Percentage of total revenue**
Assessed contributions	13.8	20.4
Voluntary core contributions	5.8	8.6
Voluntary earmarked contributions	41.0	60.7
Revenue from other activities	7.0	10.4
Total UN system revenue	**67.6**	**100**

However, heavy reliance on voluntary contributions has added a degree of unpredictability and uncertainty to UN funding streams. Moreover, the reliance on a few countries for the bulk of all funding creates considerable asymmetry, wherein the top 10 contributors account for 72.3% of the assessed contributions, and the top 20 account for 86.6%. For the period 2022–24 the three largest contributors to the UN's regular budget are the United States (22.000%), China (15.254%) and Japan (8.033%). Total voluntary earmarked contributions in recent years have been much larger than assessed contributions, in 2023 by a factor of 3. Voluntary earmarked contributions tend to be lopsided, with five countries—United States, Sweden, United Kingdom, Japan and Germany—accounting for about 62% of the total, according to the latest available data. The UN General Assembly, which discusses and approves the assessed

[4] The figures referenced in this document are the latest publicly available from official sources and reports:
Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation & United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, 2024: *Financing the UN Development System: Resourcing the Future*

[5] Both are mandatory but peacekeeping operations are calculated using a different formula that is linked to a country's income level and the nature of its membership in the UN, such as permanent membership in the Security Council.

[6] Total Revenue of the UN System - Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 2023.

[7] Figures for 2023. Sources: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

part of the UN's budget as per Article 17 of the UN Charter, both regular and for peacekeeping, has little say on the way voluntary earmarked contributions are used, and this tends to reflect individual donor country's economic, political, and development priorities. Donor countries thus bypass the General Assembly and use the UN infrastructure as a channel to leverage the impact of their bilateral aid programs, where national donor priorities take precedence over the interests of the whole membership.

While this critique identifies real risks of fragmentation, it is also the case that many Member States channel a substantial share of their Official Development Assistance "ODA" through the UN precisely via voluntary windows to capitalize on UN delivery capacity and field presence, and because of the budget structure of the donor administrations with funds often tied to a certain theme or geography. The challenge, therefore, is not earmarking per se, but overly rigid ("hard") earmarking that can undermine coherence and flexibility. A pragmatic compromise is for donors to rebalance toward core funding and, where earmarking is used, favor "soft" earmarking (e.g., pooled, thematic, multi-year, country-owned frameworks) that aligns with intergovernmental agreed priorities.

Fundamentally, Article 17 of the UN Charter originally envisaged a funding model based primarily on assessed contributions, without explicit provisions for voluntary (tied or untied) financing. It presupposed that all UN expenditures would be funded through assessments paid by Member States, with the General Assembly maintaining authority over both the allocation and prioritization of these resources. However, in practice, donor countries have sought alternative funding mechanisms that afford them greater control, rather than increasing contributions to the regular budget, where decisions are made collectively within a 193-member General Assembly, which skews disproportionally voting power to smaller countries. The rise of voluntary contributions from wealthier nations can be seen as a strategic response to this dynamic, particularly given the principle of equal voting rights within the Assembly. For instance, Belize, with an assessed contribution rate of just 0.001%, has the same influence over budgetary decisions as Japan, whose contribution is 8,033 times larger – an imbalance that has incentivized wealthier states to channel resources through voluntary earmarked funding streams that provide them with greater discretion over their use.

In response to these systemic weaknesses, this Financing Protocol outlines a new mechanism of funding the UN system – consistent with the revisions made under the Second United Nations Charter. In the sections that follow we will present a number of different proposals which would go a long way towards addressing the above weaknesses and empower the UN to generate resources in a more predictable way and set the stage for potentially expanding in the future the magnitude of resources generated to fund UN operations and programs, at a time when there is enormous scope for the UN to do more, against the background of multiple crises the solutions to which require much stronger levels of international cooperation.

3. Historical context and rationale

Since its establishment in 1945, the financial architecture of the UN has evolved from a model of collective economic responsibility into a multifaceted and politically nuanced framework shaped by shifting global power dynamics. Article 17 of the UN Charter indicates that "*the General Assembly shall consider and approve the budget of the Organization. The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly.*" However, the Charter lacked explicit directives for equitable financial burden-sharing amongst Member States and did not mandate a singular, consolidated budgetary framework. This absence of predefined financial governance mechanisms resulted in the organic development of a multi-stream funding structure, with distinct financial channels evolving to support the UN's expanding institutional and operational mandates.

One of the earliest comprehensive proposals for reforming the UN's financial system was laid out by Grenville Clark and Louis Sohn in *World Peace Through World Law*. Their proposal envisioned a rules-based revenue model that would ensure a stable and equitable funding structure for the UN. Their approach proposed that each member nation contribute a fixed percentage of its Gross National Product (GNP), with an adjustment mechanism to account for economic disparities, ensuring that lower-income nations bore a proportionally lighter burden. Contributions would be collected through existing national tax structures, with UN fiscal offices established in each Member State to receive and transmit funds. Additionally, the plan capped total UN revenue at 2% of global GNP and limited individual country contributions to 2.5% of national GNP, levels which seem exceptionally large in today's world with a US$105 trillion economy and sharply constrained fiscal space in the great majority of UN Member States. While politically unfeasible at the time, Clark and Sohn's proposal established an important conceptual reference point in the pursuit of a systematic and depoliticized financing mechanism for the UN, reinforcing the case for a structured revenue system that ensured financial sustainability and greater institutional independence.

Initially, the UN's financial model was based on assessed contributions, where Member States were required to contribute a sum based on economic indicators such as GNP, per capita income, and external debt levels. The Committee on Contributions, established in 1946, devised a formula to account for economic disparities, ensuring that wealthier nations bore a greater financial responsibility whilst granting discounts to lower-income states. Over time, the UN's funding model became increasingly complex, as separate budgets emerged to accommodate different operational needs. The organization now operates through multiple financial streams including: the Regular Budget – which funds the UN Secretariat; the Peacekeeping Budget – which sustains peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions; and the budgets of specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). These budgets are primarily financed through assessed contributions, but a separate and expanding category – voluntary contributions – has come to dominate UN funding, as noted earlier.

By 2023, voluntary earmarked contributions accounted for approximately 61% of total UN revenue. This shift in funding structure has had profound implications for the organization's autonomy and strategic priorities. Unlike assessed contributions, which are determined collectively and updated every three years, voluntary contributions allow donor states to earmark funds for specific programs, effectively enabling them to exert policy influence over the UN's agenda. As noted earlier, a handful of high-income countries account for nearly two-thirds of all earmarked contributions, which itself is by far the largest component of UN revenue. This disproportionate funding power has led to concerns regarding the independence of UN decision-making processes and the risk of institutional bias in favor of donor interests.

To address these concerns without discouraging ODA channeled through the UN, Member States should be encouraged to increase the share of core (unearmarked) resources, and, where earmarking is retained, to shift from hard project-level earmarks to "soft" thematic or pooled modalities (e.g., multi-partner trust funds) tied to UNGA-approved frameworks (Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews or QCPRs, and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks or UNSDCFs). Complementary incentives—such as enhanced transparency dashboards, predictable reporting, the UN investing its own resources and staff and engagement into pooled funding, visibility for core, thematic and pooled contributions, and multi-year compacts—can make flexible funding more attractive while preserving accountability.

The principle of 'one-country-one-vote' within the General Assembly has further compounded financial tensions. Although smaller states collectively possess the majority voting power in budgetary decisions, their combined financial contributions amount to only a marginal fraction of the total budget. For

example, according to the 2025-27 budget cycle, the 173 countries with the lowest assessed contributions accounted for a mere 14.9% of the assessed budget, whilst the top 20 contributors supply 85.1%. This disparity fueled debates regarding the potential introduction of weighted voting mechanisms for budgetary decisions, a proposal that has been consistently opposed by smaller states seeking to preserve their influence within the Assembly.[8]

In addition to structural inefficiencies, the UN's financial system has been further destabilized by instances of non-compliance and arrears. Article 19 of the UN Charter stipulates that Member States exceeding two years of unpaid contributions may be stripped of their General Assembly voting rights, barring exceptional circumstances.[9] Moreover, several large contributors have historically leveraged their financial contributions as a tool of political pressure. These financial maneuverings have repeatedly led to liquidity crises, hampering the UN's ability to execute its mandates effectively.

These persistent financial inefficiencies, coupled with the increasing politicization of UN funding, have raised critical questions about the Organization's long-term viability and effectiveness. As the UN's responsibilities continue to expand, the limitations of its current financing model have become increasingly evident. Given these challenges, there is a growing consensus that a strengthened UN system, with a broader set of responsibilities and expanded institutions, would need a reliable source of funding – one free of the inconsistencies, opaque practices, arbitrariness and contradictions that have emerged through several decades of practice. It would also need to be delinked entirely from the kinds of domestic political considerations that have sometimes intruded upon budget debates and have held the UN's activities hostage to the demagoguery or bias of local politicians, the occasional emergence of isolationist tendencies in some member countries, and so on.

4. A fixed proportion of GNI[10]

Building upon proposals put forth by Joseph E. Schwartzberg (2013), this proposal presents a structured and transparent approach to UN financing, wherein all Member States contribute a fixed percentage of their respective GNIs to the UN budget. The main advantage of this system is simplicity and transparency. Every country would be assessed at the same rate; the criterion for burden-sharing is unambiguously clear. Contributions are linked to economic size – as in the current system – but without the need for carve-outs, exceptions, floors and ceilings, discounts and the need to develop "formulas" of questionable transparency and credibility.[11] [12] Furthermore, this proposal avoids a current feature of the existing system

[8] See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1946–47, New York, UN Department of Public Information, p. 217, in Laurenti, Jeffrey. 2007. "Financing," in Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 675–701, at p. 678.

[9] As of early 2025, two Member States—Afghanistan and Venezuela—have had their General Assembly voting rights suspended under Article 19 of the UN Charter for arrears equal to or exceeding their assessed contributions for the preceding two full years (loss of voting rights). Countries that remain in arrears for at least one year but have not yet lost their voting rights include: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Congo, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Granada, Sao Tome and Príncipe, and Somalia—all listed in Secretary-General notifications on arrears under Article 19.

[10] Gross national income (GNI) measures the total income earned by residents of a country, including income earned abroad. Gross domestic product (GDP) counts only income generated from goods and services produced domestically in a nation, leading to two different figures. For example, in 2023, Germany's GDP was US$4.456 trillion, whereas its GNI was slightly higher at US$4.559 trillion, reflecting net income from foreign investments.

[11] United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 79/249, adopted on 24 December 2024, establishing the scale of assessments for Member States' contributions to the UN regular budget for 2025–2027. These are reproduced in Annex I.

[12] The current scale of assessments is based primarily on each Member State's GNI, adjusted for factors such as external debt burden and low per capita income. The methodology includes a maximum contribution ceiling (currently 22% of the budget) to limit the financial burden on the largest contributors, and a minimum floor (0.001%) to ensure all Member States contribute. Additional reductions are granted to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and other adjustments are made to account for economic capacity disparities.

where, to illustrate in respect of the assessed contributions for the period 2022-24, India with a GDP in 2024 of US$4.19 trillion (the world's fifth largest economy) had an assessed contribution set at 1.044 percent of the total and Brazil, with a GDP of US$2.13 trillion (the world's twelfth largest economy) had an assessed contribution set at 2.013 percent or nearly twice as large, a discrepancy seemingly completely delinked from the concept of "capacity to pay."

Some might argue that one feature of the existing system is that it is "progressive." Brazil has a higher income per capita than India and thus, the argument goes, it should pay more. The argument for a progressive system is considered below. Those advocating a flat system might argue that income per capita is not the relevant metric to best capture a country's payment capacity. The latest figures on official international reserves for India put it at US$685.7 billion, compared to Brazil's at US$340.5 billion which, incidentally, broadly mirrors their relative GDP sizes. At least four more arguments in favor of a "fixed proportion of GNI" proposal are relevant here.

First, the primary beneficiaries of UN aid programs and other expenditure outlays are low-income countries. So, even if each Member State was obligated to contribute, say, 0.1 percent of GNI to the UN budget, much of this money would come back through the UN's various aid channels. Indeed, such redistribution is already evident within the existing framework, particularly through expenditures allocated to specialized agencies and development programs, which then pass on a large proportion of these funds to low-income Member States. For example, organizations such as the World Food Program (WFP), distribute substantial aid; over the period 2022-23 total food aid amounted to US$22.4 billion, assisting some 152 million people in 120 countries and territories. This highlights how, in many low-income nations, the assistance provided by UN agencies far exceeds what they would contribute under a system where each Member State allocated 0.1% of its GNI to the UN budget. In the case of Malawi, for instance, its hypothetical contribution under such a system would be roughly $12.7 million, far below the assistance received through various UN facilities and institutions, to say nothing of other bilateral assistance provided by donor countries outside the UN system.

This pattern can be observed in other UN agencies as well, such as the World Health Organization (WHO)[13] whose programs have included in recent years vaccine procurement, distribution, and healthcare training programs. These cases exemplify how the financial structure of the UN and its many supporting institutions and programs already operate as a redistributive mechanism, ensuring that funds from wealthier nations are funneled into critical aid programs that disproportionately benefit lower-income Member States. Under a system where each country contributes a fixed proportion of its GNI, this redistributive effect would remain intact – if not enhanced – whilst eliminating the need for complex funding formulas and discretionary carve-outs that characterize the current system.

A second consideration is that a fixed contribution linked to a member's GNI would address another problem: Many countries currently contribute such negligible amounts that the current system fosters a culture of detachment or, worse, indifference, and a diminished sense of ownership of UN institutions and initiatives. A uniform contribution rate seen as a non-negotiable obligation of UN membership would not only enhance financial sustainability but also reinforce the principle of collective responsibility, encouraging greater commitment from all Member States. Third, this approach would depoliticize UN financing debates by eliminating the possibility of coercion by some Member States in the context of the delivery of their assessed contributions.

[13] For example, Chad where ongoing regional conflicts have intensified resource constraints and health vulnerabilities. In response, WHO has played a crucial role in strengthening Chad's healthcare infrastructure, particularly seen recently through the simultaneous rollout of 3 life-saving vaccines – the R21 malaria vaccine, PCV13 pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, and rotavirus vaccine, targeting 19.7 million children under five to reduce child mortality and combat preventable diseases.

Finally, it would thus make more transparent the financial costs and benefits of UN membership, and would also help the organization gradually move to a system in which, as noted in Article 17 of the Second United Nations Charter, primary responsibility for budgetary decisions would rest with the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly, as opposed to a handful of members who, because of their outsize earmarked voluntary contributions, currently now operate semi autonomously, weakening the General Assembly and bypassing the letter and the spirit of the Charter. Needless to say, the 0.1% ratio could be revisited from time to time and increased as required by circumstances and the needs of the membership, particularly its lower-income members.

At the same time, there are also good reasons to consider an alternative model: a progressive system of contributions in which countries with higher GNI per capita would contribute at a somewhat higher rate. This approach starts with a different premise—that fairness is best served not only by linking contributions to overall economic size, but also by recognizing relative prosperity. Under such a system, even with a modest ceiling—say, below 0.2% of GNI—the additional burden on high-income states would remain minor in fiscal terms, while enhancing the overall financial sustainability of the United Nations.

The merits of a progressive model are several. First, it would make the system more visibly equitable, reinforcing perceptions of fairness and trust in global burden-sharing. Second, it would reduce the relative weight of contributions for lower-income countries, ensuring that financial obligations do not fall disproportionately on those with the least capacity to pay. Third, it could strengthen political legitimacy by aligning UN financing more closely with principles of distributive justice, thereby fostering broader support from both governments and civil society.

From a practical perspective, a progressive system need not be significantly more complex than a flat rate. Contributions could be calculated on the basis of clear, formula-driven criteria—such as GNI per capita and population—without resorting to discretionary exceptions or ad hoc formulas. With a cap in place, concerns about excessive burdens on high-income countries would be mitigated, while still maintaining the redistributive effect inherent on a progressive scale.

There is also a political rationale for such an approach. Since the Second UN Charter presents itself as an invitation to reimagine fairer and more effective global governance, adopting a financing system that is visibly just and equitable would enhance its credibility and appeal. By ensuring that financial commitments are more closely aligned with economic realities, a progressive model could help engage governments, parliaments, and civil society in a shared vision of responsibility and solidarity.

That said, this protocol does not explicitly advocate for one model over the other. Both the flat-rate and the progressive approaches have strong arguments in their favor, and ultimately it will be for Member States to decide which better serves the collective interest. What matters most is that either option would be a marked improvement over the current system, which is hampered by complexity, distortions, and a lack of transparency.

In weighing these alternatives, it is also useful to give context to what a contribution of, say, 0.1% of GNI would mean in practical terms for Member States. According to the World Bank in 2024, nations allocated approximately 2.5% of their GDP to military expenditures – an amount that is 25 times greater than the proposed initial 0.1% contribution to the UN budget. This stark contrast underscores the relative affordability of the proposed funding model, making the 0.1% of GNI a modest yet highly impactful investment in global stability, conflict prevention, and international cooperation. Given the extensive benefits derived from a strengthened UN, this contribution represents a cost-effective mechanism for enhancing collective security and advancing multilateral governance.

It should be noted that the 0.1% of GNI UN contribution would coexist with significant amounts of directly

provided bilateral aid. For instance, Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, the only countries currently exceeding the 0.7% of GNI aid commitment made by Development Assistance Countries (DAC) would continue to fund projects across the planet, as would other less generous DAC members. One would also expect fairly large aid flows (grants and soft loans) provided by the international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank) and regional development banks, and other privately provided aid flows. It will remain the case that different UN functions—development, peacekeeping, climate adaptation—may well require differentiated funding models, all of which could be accommodated for now within the 0.1% of GNI envelope or whatever level Member States may opt for.

In this context, a more balanced financial framework—one that reduces reliance on voluntary contributions and ensures equitable burden-sharing—would not only secure the UN's financial sustainability but also restore its legitimacy in global economic governance. Anchoring expenditures in meaningful General Assembly and Parliamentary Assembly oversight, as envisaged in Article 17, would create stronger incentives for member states to engage actively in decision-making. Just as importantly, it would help reverse the UN's marginalization in major economic discussions, a trend exacerbated by funding distortions that have elevated alternative groupings such as the G-20—forums that, for all their influence, remain limited in inclusivity and legitimacy. By reinforcing both the UN's financial independence and its institutional authority, this proposal offers a path to reassert the organization's role as the central, representative body for global governance, ensuring that all nations—not just the wealthiest—have a meaningful voice in shaping the international agenda.

5. The EU model

While the above proposal is perhaps the simplest way to build on the existing system, over the longer term it would be desirable to introduce a funding mechanism similar to that currently operating in the EU, where member contributions to the EU budget are linked to clearly established metrics, firmly embedded in EU law and providing, therefore, a steady and predictable stream of income which allows the EU to do long range planning and protects it from domestic political disturbances, changes of government, the occasional emergence of populist politicians who might be tempted to politicize their countries contributions for some temporary advantage. In the EU each country's payment is divided into three parts: a fixed percentage of GNI, customs duties collected on behalf of the EU (known as "traditional own resources") and a percentage of VAT income, all of which Member States collect and allocate automatically to the EU budget.[14]

As outlined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the EU system ensures financial stability through structured, rules-based contributions that are less susceptible to political influence or discretionary delays. One of the defining strengths of the EU's funding system is its automaticity, which ensures that once revenue-sharing arrangements are agreed upon, contributions cannot be withheld or delayed due to national political considerations. This eliminates financial unpredictability at the Member State level, allowing the EU to maintain fiscal discipline whilst preventing funding crises. A similar approach in UN financing would help shield the organization from the budgetary constraints and political maneuvering that frequently impact its operations. This need not imply that the reference metrics in the

[14] In respect of the GNI component of budget contributions: Each member state's contribution is roughly proportional to its GNI, ensuring that wealthier countries contribute more. In 2021, GNI-based contributions accounted for over 70% of the EU's revenue. Specific percentages can vary annually based on the EU's budgetary needs and each country's economic performance. For instance, in 2021, Germany's net contribution was approximately 0.58% of its GNI, while the Netherlands contributed about 0.48% of its GNI. As regards VAT-based contributions: a uniform rate of 0.3% is applied to the VAT base of each member state. To ensure fairness, the taxable VAT base for each country is capped at 50% of its GNI. This mechanism ensures that countries with higher consumption levels contribute proportionally without being disproportionately burdened. Finally with respect to customs duties: these are duties on imports from non-EU countries collected by member states on behalf of the EU. During the 2021-2027 period, member states retain 25% of the collected customs duties to cover collection costs, remitting the remaining 75% to the EU budget. These mechanisms collectively ensure a balanced and fair financing structure for the EU, reflecting each member state's economic capacity and consumption levels.

UN case should be identical to those used in the EU, perhaps other than that part linked to GNI. Nevertheless, all countries trade internationally and thus customs duties are a potential candidate for a tax base. Likewise, VAT is a feature of most tax systems in the world; and where it does not exist, there are typically in place indirect taxes which could act as proxies for VAT.

It is worth noting that once member countries have accepted the principle of delinking their contributions to the EU budget from any potential voluntary funding dependent on the political will and agendas at national level and have agreed to provide a reliable source of income to fund EU operations, it is possible to innovate in various ways, to strengthen and add flexibility to EU financial operations. In recent years the EU has further modernized its revenue streams, as evidenced by the 2020 revisions under Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2020/2053, which introduced new revisions such as a levy on non-recycled plastic packaging waste. This innovation aligns financial contributions with environmental policy goals and demonstrates how structured revenue mechanisms can support broader global objectives beyond administrative costs. The 'Multiannual Financial Framework' (MFF) is another essential aspect of EU budgetary policy, setting spending limits for a period of five to seven years. This long-term approach ensures fiscal discipline, allowing the EU to allocate resources strategically across various policy areas, including regional development, sustainability initiatives, and crisis response. The 2020 reforms introduced additional financial flexibility, temporarily increasing the 'own resources' ceiling to allow for borrowing up to €750 billion as part of the EU's COVID-19 recovery strategy. These adjustments demonstrate the adaptability of the EU model in responding to global crises whilst maintaining a structured financial framework. Assured of a reliable income stream, like the EU, the UN could then borrow on more advantageous terms or issue fixed income financing instruments for which it could obtain a AAA credit rating, like the EU.[15]

To conclude, the EU model illustrates how a multilateral institution can integrate diverse national tax systems into a cohesive and equitable funding framework. For those few countries without well-developed systems of indirect taxation, one could use an alternative tax base, such as a share of taxes on corporate profits, assessed at levels that would achieve proportional burden-sharing across countries. Having agreed to pass on to the UN a share of VAT or indirect taxes, funding would not be subject to members' whims and discretion. As long as the UN was discharging its responsibilities as called for in the Second Charter and under the general supervision and oversight of the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly, funding would flow regularly, empowering the organization to frame its activities in a medium-term framework, free of the uncertainties and vagaries of the current system.

Overall, the EU's experience demonstrates that a well-regulated financial system, operating under principles of transparency, predictability, and burden-sharing, can provide the necessary stability for a multilateral institution to function effectively. A UN financing model inspired by components of the EU model could reduce reliance on voluntary contributions, depoliticize funding decisions, and create a sustainable fiscal framework that enables the organization to meet its expanding global mandates. By leveraging existing national tax infrastructures, the UN could implement a system without the need for a separate tax-collecting bureaucracy, ensuring both efficiency and accountability in financial governance.

[15] With contributions set at 0.1% of GNI, the United Nations would secure a stable and predictable income stream. Under a balanced budget rule, this revenue would fully cover regular expenditures, ensuring fiscal discipline. With conservative financial management in place, the UN could responsibly borrow to fund additional programs, including economic stability, crisis response, and investment. Repayment would be guaranteed through pre-agreed revenue sources, such as a global carbon or financial transaction tax, or through member state guarantees and supplementary contributions, providing investors with confidence in the UN's financial sustainability (see below).

6. Other potential sources of revenue

Beyond the above two proposals which do not require major structural changes in Member States' tax systems or in the way they collect revenues to finance a multiplicity of expenditures, it is also possible to put forth proposals that, independently of the issue at hand which remains how to better fund the UN system, generate new revenue streams a share of which could, in principle, boost UN funding. In this section we put forth one such option, namely, a tax on financial sector transactions.

In 1972 the American economist James Tobin proposed a tax on spot currency transactions. Originally designed to mitigate exchange rate volatility and deter speculative currency trading, Tobin proposed a small levy on short-term foreign exchange transactions to disincentivize destabilizing capital flows. Over time, the concept has evolved into a broader financial transactions tax applicable across asset classes, offering substantial fiscal revenue potential.

The core principle of Tobin's proposal was to "*throw sand in the well-greased wheels*" of international financial markets by penalizing short-horizon round-trip transactions, thus discouraging speculative activities that contribute to economic instability. By the mid-1990s, against the backdrop of recurrent financial crises, Tobin reinforced his argument that speculation-induced volatility imposed disproportionate economic costs on affected nations, forcing central banks to raise interest rates excessively, with adverse effects on employment and economic growth. Although Tobin's proposal initially targeted currency markets, subsequent adaptations, including the Robin Hood Tax initiative,[16] [17] have advocated for a broader financial transactions tax covering equities, bonds, derivatives, and commodities.

Empirical assessments underscore the revenue-generating potential of a Tobin-like tax. For example, as of early 2025, global foreign exchange markets saw an estimated $7 trillion in daily transactions; hence, a 0.025% levy could generate well in excess of $1 trillion annually (even assuming a reduction in trading volumes because of the tax) – a sum vastly exceeding total Official Development Assistance in 2024 which was US$212 billion, according to the OECD, a sum which includes all humanitarian aid and contributions to multilateral organizations.[18] Proponents argue that such a tax could finance UN and other multilateral development initiatives related to climate change adaptation, poverty alleviation, and public health interventions, creating a sustainable and independent funding stream. Importantly, such a system would align financial markets with social objectives by redistributing a fraction of speculative wealth towards public goods. Without doubt, the tax could also have a beneficial effect on helping redress disturbing income distribution trends, at least part of which can be explained by the rapid growth of financial markets in recent decades in relation to the size of the global economy.

However, critiques persist. Detractors illustrate risks such as reduced market liquidity, capital flight to low-tax jurisdictions, and potential distortions in trading behavior. Most prominently, critics point to the Swedish experience in the 1980s, where an equity trading tax led to capital migration to London and New

[16] The Robin Hood Tax is a proposed financial transaction tax (FTT) that aims to levy a small fee on trades of financial assets such as stocks, bonds, currencies, and derivatives. The revenue generated from this tax is intended to fund public services and initiatives addressing global challenges like poverty and climate change.

[17] Additionally, the Robin Hood tax as a package of FTTs was proposed by a campaigning group of civil society NGOs. Campaigners suggested the tax could be implemented globally, regionally or unilaterally by individual nations. The technical work is already done, with 10 countries in mainland Europe including Italy and Germany in talks for a number of years. The amounts expected to be collected initially are not especially large (up to some €20 billion annually) but setting up the administrative and logistical machinery would clearly be an early priority. However, the financial industry has been furiously lobbying for governments to drop the initiative. A final decision on the tax has been postponed twice.

[18] Of course, the daily turnover for all financial sector transactions, including stocks, bonds, commodities and derivatives is likely to be well in excess of US$10 trillion. A technical issue worth considering is whether the tax, however small, would depress trading volumes and whether, in its design, it could exempt certain kinds of transactions seen to be more sensitive to such a tax.

York. With tax revenues smaller than anticipated the authorities ultimately opted to reduce the taxes and finally eliminating them altogether. On the other hand, several major economies including Japan, Korea and Switzerland, have successfully implemented transaction levies without undermining market efficiency. Furthermore, tapping into a new revenue stream, countries could opt to lower other taxes, to reduce deficits, to ensure a more sustainable debt-servicing profile or to redress the effects of revenue losses linked to the globalized nature of the economy, with production and plant capacity much more mobile than had been the case at the turn of the twentieth century.

This could create positive incentives for countries to voluntarily agree to the introduction of the tax. Given the international nature of the tax, Tobin further thought that the IMF's' Articles of Agreement (which, unlike the UN Charter, have been amended multiple times) could be amended to make the introduction of the tax an obligation of IMF membership. This would imply that IMF members would not have access to its various financing windows and other benefits if they opted not to introduce the tax. Since a large share of foreign exchange transactions and other financial transactions are concentrated in a relatively small number of markets (e.g., London accounts for 38% of all foreign exchange trading in the world), some general agreement among a handful of financial centers would most likely suffice to capture a large share of the revenue.

Nevertheless, consideration of the tax would require the balancing of several objectives, from the desirability of generating additional revenue to promoting economic development objectives (and addressing intensifying global catastrophic risks) to ensuring that implementation of the tax is feasible, and that it involves appropriate levels of international coordination and cooperation to ensure its success. In any case, given the size of today's UN budget and the potential revenue to be collected through a Tobin tax, there is merit in Tobin's idea that countries could be presented with a menu of choices as to how to allocate the proceeds of the tax, including, of course, a substantial allocation to the UN. Indeed, in the long-term a Tobin-like tax or something similar, taking advantage of the substantial opportunities generated by economic globalization for government revenue generation, could be a promising avenue to provide funding to the UN, over and above the levels contributed from national treasuries linked to a fixed percentage of GNI.

Notwithstanding, political opposition has been strong, given powerful anti-tax sentiments in many countries such as the US, where even a carbon tax remains a distant prospect. Financial sector interests in many countries are powerful and it is not difficult to imagine armies of lobbyists pressuring (or intimidating) lawmakers not to support the tax. Schwartzberg further illuminates one obvious consideration, namely, that under existing chaotic financing arrangements, the UN does not have the capacity to spend in an efficient, value-creating way the large sums of money that could be collected through a Tobin-tax type of instrument. This is currently true, but it is not an argument against the tax itself; it is rather a commentary on the state of the UN, and the "benign neglect" it has suffered. Schwartzberg was also concerned that in the foreseeable future the UN would not have the administrative capacity to collect such a tax. This is not a persuasive argument because there would be no need for the UN itself to be involved in the collection of such a tax through the creation of some UN fiscal agency. The tax would be collected—as suggested by Tobin—by the tax authorities in the countries where the transactions would take place and simply passed on to the UN or other recipients, as EU members do with the share of VAT contributions and customs duties that go to the European Commission in Brussels.

Overall, although a Tobin-like tax alone may not replace traditional UN funding mechanisms, it represents a viable supplementary instrument that reduces reliance on discretionary government contributions. Given the post-2008 fiscal constraints on donor states – exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis and rising public debt levels – a global financial transactions tax could provide a stable, progressive, and counter-cyclical funding source for global governance. Nevertheless, realizing such a system would necessitate political will, institutional harmonization, and robust international agreements to balance national

interests with global developmental imperatives.

7. Short-term versus long-term options

In the short term, the most viable path towards a more stable and equitable funding mechanism for the United Nations is the adoption of a system based on fixed contributions tied to Gross National Income. A modest contribution rate, such as 0.1% of each country's GNI, would ensure a predictable and fair revenue stream whilst reinforcing the principle that financial support for the UN is an obligation of membership, not a discretionary political tool. As a result, beyond its immediate administrative advantages, a GNI-based contribution model would act to foster a greater sense of ownership and commitment of the organization across the membership, in a way that would have numerous long-term benefits for the United Nations' relevance and credibility. It would be transparent and easy to administer and would relieve the General Assembly from constantly having to come up with novel schemes that in the end violate the principle of even-handedness of treatment across members.

Furthermore, such a system would provide financial predictability, eliminating the need for *ad hoc* fundraising measures that often introduce inefficiencies and inequities in burden-sharing. By gradually removing the influence of voluntary contributions, this system would restore the financial autonomy of the General Assembly and, under the Second Charter, the Parliamentary Assembly, allowing the UN to allocate resources based on collective global priorities rather than the political preferences of dominant donor states. But a fundamental principle of this reform must be the reaffirmation from UN members to the principle that contributions to the budget are a non-negotiable obligation of membership, not a choice that members make based on other considerations, such as whether they like or support (or not) particular programs or activities. Using budget contributions as leverage (particularly by the larger countries) to demand particular reforms or extract concessions within the UN system is not consistent with the cooperative nature of the organization, where change should come as a result of deliberations and consultations amongst members and the forging of consensus for change.

At the outset a GNI-based framework could serve as the foundation for a more comprehensive and diversified UN revenue system later. This could be complemented by alternative global financing mechanisms, such as the more sophisticated funding system currently operating in the EU or a Tobin-like financial transactions tax, which would leverage global capital flows to generate substantial additional funding. As the UN establishes a track record of fiscal prudence and efficiency in the management of financial resources, members might be ready at some point to entrust it with a larger body of funding, particularly if by then all the members of the UN, not just its low-income members, can have access to its various programs and facilities. In this respect, the above proposals do not exclude the possibility that a high-level panel of experts could be convened to explore additional international revenue generation mechanisms, including an international carbon tax on fossil fuel consumption, a global tax on certain types of mineral resource extraction, an internationally tradable system of pollution permits, duties on alcohol and tobacco, or other workable ideas, whether based on effective existing international schemes (e.g., that of the International Maritime Organization) or otherwise.

A key component of strengthening the UN's financial stability lies in broadening its envelope resource availability and reducing the unpredictability of funding flows, a persistent challenge throughout its history. To achieve this, it is essential to demonstrate a commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency, ensuring that Member States trust the organization's ability to manage resources efficiently and equitably by building trust in the organization's capacity. These measures would reinforce the principle that financial contributions to the UN are an inherent obligation of membership, rather than a political bargaining tool wielded to advance national interests. Establishing a predictable and rules-based funding system would protect the organization from financial coercion and enable it to operate with greater autonomy and effectiveness in addressing global challenges. Alongside these financial

reforms, the UN must play a proactive role in tackling structural deficiencies in international taxation, particularly the "race to the bottom" driven by tax competition. Left unchecked, such practices will further erode governments' fiscal capacity, restricting their ability to finance essential public services and meet their multilateral commitments. Addressing these systemic issues is therefore crucial to ensuring both the financial sustainability of the UN and the broader stability of the global economic order.

Ultimately, securing a financially sustainable and politically independent United Nations requires a multi-pronged approach: establishing a fair and predictable GNI-based funding system, introducing innovative global revenue instruments, and ensuring transparent fiscal management. A reformed UN financing model built on these principles would not only restore the organization's financial credibility but also enable it to meet its expanding mandates in global governance, peacekeeping, development, and climate action. As a result, strengthening the financial autonomy of the UN is an indispensable step towards revitalizing its role as the cornerstone of a functional and cooperative international system.

While recent debates under the "United Nations at 80" initiative have rightly emphasized the need for greater efficiency, transparency, and value for money in the management of UN resources, this protocol's analysis approaches the question of financing from a different angle. There is no doubt that waste can and should be reduced, and that sound stewardship of public resources is essential to maintaining trust and legitimacy (see Article 6.1 below). However, to frame the UN's financial challenges primarily as a matter of cost-cutting is to misread the depth of the institution's current crisis. The more serious obstacles lie not in technical inefficiencies, but in structural and political deficits—above all, the failure to update the organization's mandate and architecture to match the realities of the 21st century. Overemphasis on doing more with less risks deflecting attention from the hard but necessary work of reforming global decision-making, revitalizing multilateralism, and ensuring that the UN is equipped to address existential threats through enhanced legitimacy, accountability, and collective capacity.

8. Proposed Articles for financing protocol

United Nations Protocol on Budget and Financing

Preamble

The Member States of the United Nations:

Reaffirming their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Second Charter of the United Nations;

Acknowledging the increasing complexity of global challenges and the need for a strong and effective United Nations capable of addressing them;

Recognizing the inherent responsibility of all Member States to provide the United Nations with the necessary financial resources to carry out its mission;

Expressing concern regarding the persistent challenges related to the financing of the United Nations, including the volatility and unpredictability of Member State's voluntary contributions and, in particular, the inflexible character of a large share of their Voluntary Earmarked Contributions, and the need for a more equitable and sustainable funding mechanism;

Recognizing the need to diversify the sources of funding for the United Nations, while maintaining the primacy of Mandatory Contributions from Member States;

Highlighting the importance of sound financial management, accountability, and transparency in the utilization of United Nations resources;

Determined to strengthen the multilateral system and enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations through a robust and sustainable financial framework;

Recognizing the value of increased democratic supervision of the UN budget, through oversight by the Parliamentary Assembly in addition to the General Assembly;

Provide as follows:

Article 1 – Purpose and Scope

1. The purpose of this Protocol is to establish a funding mechanism for the United Nations that is consistent with its multilateral decision-making autonomy and delivers financial resources in a manner that is efficient, transparent, predictable, and equitable.

2. This Protocol establishes the principles and practices governing the financing of the United Nations budget.

Article 2 – Definitions

For the purposes of this Protocol:

a) "Donor" shall refer to all lawful organizations, regardless of their legal nature, status or sector, as well as to all corporate organizations, states, sub or supranational units, or individuals who wish to contribute to the financing of the United Nations budget and its activities.

b) "Mandatory Contribution" shall mean the fixed assessed contribution required of every Member State in accordance with its membership obligations as prescribed by Article 4 paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Protocol.

c) "Voluntary Core Contributions" shall refer to contributions paid at the discretion of any Donor towards the general budget of the United Nations to be allocated based on the priorities and needs of the United Nations as determined by the General Assembly and approved by the Parliamentary Assembly. For Member States, these contributions are in addition to Mandatory Contributions.

d) "Voluntary Earmarked Contributions" shall refer to contributions paid by any Donor who wishes to support the financing of specific projects, programs or activities developed by the United Nations or its Specialized Agencies.

e) "Least Restrictive Contributions" shall refer to voluntary contributions by Member States to the United Nations that place the fewest constraints on the organization's discretion to employ the funds. For example, "soft" Voluntary Earmarked Contributions, which might include provisions for project directed funds to be spent flexibly in accordance with United Nations priorities, would place fewer constraints on the United Nation's discretion than "hard" Voluntary Earmarked Contributions that are highly prescriptive in conditioning the use of funds.

f) "Member State Funding Practice Objectives" shall refer collectively to the objectives specified in Article 4(6)(a)(i-iii) of this Protocol.

g) "United Nations Budget" shall refer to the general budget as well as to the budget of the Specialized Agencies that are part of the United Nations System and are not funded independently of the United Nations.

h) "GNI" shall be used to reference the Gross National Income of each Member State as determined in accordance with the provisions of Article 4(2) of this Protocol.

Article 3 – Fundamental Principles

This Protocol is intended to provide that the financing of the United Nations shall be in accordance with the following principles:

a) That the United Nations be financially autonomous;
b) That the Mandatory Contributions of all Member States of the United Nations be equitably assessed;
c) That the United Nations be empowered to draw from a diversity of funding sources;
d) That United Nations budgetary and financial management be transparent and executed in accord with best practices for sound financial management.

Article 4 – Funding by Member States

1. Consistent with Article 17 of the Second Charter, each Member State is required to make Mandatory Contributions to the United Nations budget. Such Mandatory Contributions shall be a fixed percentage of each Member State's GNI calculated in accordance with Paragraph 2 of this Article.

2. The initial Mandatory Contribution shall be assessed at a rate of 0.1% of each nation's GNI, and such Mandatory Contribution may be revised every 5 years by the requisite vote of the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly specified in Article 18(4) of the Second Charter. The determination of GNI shall be based upon the World Bank's publication of World Development Indicators as updated from time-to-time. Should the World Bank cease its World Development Indicators publication of GNI, the General Assembly shall specify another suitable method for determining GNI.

3. Member States may make Voluntary Core Contributions to the United Nations Budget on an ad hoc basis or as a multi-year commitment to contributing a greater percentage of their GNI annually than their assessed Mandatory Contribution rate.

4. To the extent not inconsistent with Paragraph 6 of this Article, Member States may make Voluntary Earmarked Contributions to the United Nations Budget.

5. Member States shall transfer to the United Nations their Mandatory Contributions in full and in hard and readily exchangeable currency on or before the date they are due. Member States shall disburse Voluntary Core and Voluntary Earmarked Contributions when agreed upon.

6. The Secretary General will charge the Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget or, in her/his discretion, other similar office ("Office") with reaching memorandums of understandings ("MOU's") with Member States memorializing their Voluntary contributions to the United Nations.

(a) In negotiating MOU's, the Office shall encourage Member States to channel their Voluntary contributions so as to maximize the following Member State Funding Practice Objectives:

(i) The Objective of Maximizing Funding Flexibility, holding that Voluntary Core Contributions are preferred to Voluntary Earmarked Contributions and that among Voluntary Earmarked Contributions, the Least Restrictive Contributions are preferred.

(ii) The Objective of Institutional Alignment and Coordination of Earmarked Contributions, holding that to minimize transaction costs and fragmentation, Voluntary Earmarked Contributions should, to the extent possible, be aligned with the goals of the United Nations as articulated in such instruments as the General Assembly's Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy

Review and the Member State specific, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, as well as relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Earth System Council.

(iii) The Objective of Maximizing Time-Critical Aid to Humanitarian and Other Emergencies, holding that in exigent circumstances the intention of dispersing aid in a timely and coordinated way should, to the extent necessary, take precedence over the above two Member State Funding Practice Objectives.

(b) In their negotiation of MOU's with the Office, Member States shall in good faith in accordance with their own funding priorities and strategies give full consideration to conforming their contributions to the Member State Funding Practice Objectives enumerated in the above Article 4(6)(a)(i-iii).

(c) The Secretary General will establish means to incentivize Member States to conform their funding practices to the Member State Funding Practice Objectives enumerated in the above Article 4(6)(a)(i-iii), including, but not limited to, provision for recognition of such contributions in United Nations burden-sharing metrics and the dissemination of other publications and pronouncements that enhance the visibility of such contributions.

(d) The Secretary General shall establish targets for the progressive transition to funding practices that conform to the objectives enumerated in the above Article 4(6)(a)(i-iii), and she/he shall issue periodic public reports assessing the Office's progress in promoting those targets that she/he may adjust from time to time.

(e) The General Assembly and Parliamentary Assembly will review the Secretary General's public reports identified in subparagraph (d) above.

Article 5 – Alternative Funding Mechanisms

1. To the extent not inconsistent with Paragraph 6 of Article 4 of this Protocol, Donors who are not Member States may make Voluntary Core Contributions and/or Voluntary Earmarked Contributions to the United Nations Budget.

2. The Secretary General and the Member States shall endeavor to work together to develop a plan for the eventual implementation of regulations supporting a New United Nations Revenue System to include alternative funding mechanisms such as: international trade import duties and fees collected from Member States; the collection of indirect taxes (e.g., VAT), or of specific special taxes from economic actors within Member States; taxes on financial sector transactions, the issuance by the United Nations of debt instruments of different classes and maturities, including long-term bonds and short-term bills.

3. Pursuant to Article 17(3) of the Second Charter, the New United Nations Revenue System will come into effect upon the approval of the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly.

4. Upon approval of the New United Nations Revenue System under Article 17(3), Member States in cooperation with the United Nations shall build their internal capacity to efficiently collect the duties, fees, taxes, and other charges that may be implemented pursuant to this Article.

Article 6 - Sound and Transparent Fiscal Management

1. The United Nations shall adopt and comply with the highest standards and best practices in international accounting and sound and transparent fiscal management.

2. Pursuant to their authority under Article 17(1), the General Assembly, with the approval of the Parliamentary Assembly, shall promulgate a multi-annual organizational budget to be in effect for periods of 5 to 7 years.

3. The General Assembly with the approval of the Parliamentary Assembly may make annual adjustments to the multi-annual organizational budget to the extent necessary.

Article 7 - Financial Oversight

1. The Secretary General shall be responsible for ensuring the proper implementation of the United Nations budget.

2. The Secretary General shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly assessing the implementation of the United Nations budget and the financial status of the organization.

Article 8 – Remedies for Late or Non-Payment of Mandatory Contribution

1. In addition to the remedy provided for in Article 19 of the Second Charter if the amount of a Member State's arrears equals or exceeds the amount of its Mandatory Contribution for the preceding two full years, the General Assembly may in its discretion suspend, condition, restrict, or cancel that Member State's access to development programs.

2. If a Member State fails to pay its Mandatory Contribution for a period of five consecutive years, the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly, may in their discretion terminate that Member State's membership in the United Nations.

Article 9 – Amendment and Entry into Force

1. This Protocol may be amended in accordance with the same terms and conditions as are provided in Paragraph 2 of this Article.

2. This Protocol shall enter into force upon ratification by two-thirds of the Member States of the United Nations, and upon entry into force, it shall be binding on all Member States of the United Nations as if it were incorporated into the Second Charter.

Percentage Contributions to the United Nations Budget That Each Member State is Currently Assessed (Budget Years 2025-2027)

Member State	%	Malaysia	0.326	Serbia	0.040	Papua New Guinea	0.009	Antigua & Barbuda	0.002
U.S.A	22.000	New Zealand	0.302	Sri Lanka	0.038	Cambodia	0.008	Djibouti	0.002
China	20.004	Greece	0.280	Kenya	0.037	Equatorial Guinea	0.008	Eswatini	0.002
Japan	6.930	South Africa	0.251	Turkmenistan	0.036	North Macedonia	0.008	Mozambique	0.002
Germany	5.692	Qatar	0.245	Cyprus	0.035	Sudan	0.008	Saint Lucia	0.002
U.K.	3.991	Hungary	0.223	Iceland	0.035	Armenia	0.007	San Marino	0.002
France	3.858	Kuwait	0.222	Azerbaijan	0.034	Barbados	0.007	Seychelles	0.002
Italy	2.813	Philippines	0.198	Trinidad & Tobago	0.033	Jamaica	0.007	Somalia	0.002
Canada	2.543	Colombia	0.197	Ghana	0.025	Namibia	0.007	Suriname	0.002
R. Korea	2.349	Egypt	0.182	Côte d'Ivoire	0.024	Senegal	0.007	Togo	0.002
Russia	2.094	Viet Nam	0.159	Uzbekistan	0.024	Zimbabwe	0.007	Belize	0.001
Australia	2.040	Nigeria	0.150	Paraguay	0.023	Haiti	0.006	Bhutan	0.001
Spain	1.895	Slovakia	0.149	Lebanon	0.022	Lao People's D.R.	0.006	Burundi	0.001
Brazil	1.411	Peru	0.145	Jordan	0.021	Moldova	0.006	Cabo Verde	0.001
Netherlands	1.298	Iraq	0.131	Malta	0.020	Syria	0.006	Central African R.	0.001
Saudi Arabia	1.217	Kazakhstan	0.131	Brunei Darussalam	0.019	Zambia	0.006	Comoros	0.001
Mexico	1.137	Pakistan	0.123	Bolivia	0.018	Afghanistan	0.005	Dominica	0.001
India	1.106	Cuba	0.122	Tunisia	0.018	Benin	0.005	Eritrea	0.001
Switzerland	1.029	Oman	0.115	Bahamas	0.015	Burkina Faso	0.005	Gambia	0.001
Poland	0.831	Croatia	0.088	Bosnia	0.014	Chad	0.005	Grenada	0.001
Sweden	0.822	Algeria	0.087	Cameroon	0.014	Congo	0.005	Guinea-Bissau	0.001
Belgium	0.773	Panama	0.086	Botswana	0.013	D. P. R. of Korea	0.005	Kiribati	0.001
Türkiye	0.685	Lithuania	0.081	El Salvador	0.013	Mali	0.005	Lesotho	0.001
Norway	0.653	Uruguay	0.079	Gabon	0.011	South Sudan	0.005	Liberia	0.001
Austria	0.626	Slovenia	0.077	Guyana	0.011	Andorra	0.004	Marshall Islands	0.001
Israel	0.609	Ukraine	0.074	Monaco	0.011	Guinea	0.004	Micronesia	0.001
Indonesia	0.579	Luxembourg	0.073	Albania	0.010	Madagascar	0.004	Nauru	0.001
U.A.E	0.574	Bulgaria	0.071	Angola	0.010	Maldives	0.004	Palau	0.001
Denmark	0.531	Dominican R.	0.069	Bangladesh	0.010	Mongolia	0.004	St.Kitts and Nevis	0.001
Argentina	0.490	Venezuela	0.069	D.R of the Congo	0.010	Montenegro	0.004	St.Vincent & the G.	0.001
Singapore	0.479	Ecuador	0.065	Ethiopia	0.010	Nicaragua	0.004	Samoa	0.001
Ireland	0.472	Costa Rica	0.063	Honduras	0.010	Niger	0.004	S.Tome and Principe	0.001
Finland	0.386	Morocco	0.059	Mauritius	0.010	Fiji	0.003	Sierra Leone	0.001
Iran	0.386	Bahrain	0.050	Myanmar	0.010	Kyrgyzstan	0.003	Solomon Islands	0.001
Chile	0.374	Latvia	0.050	Nepal	0.010	Malawi	0.003	Timor-Leste	0.001
Romania	0.358	Guatemala	0.046	Uganda	0.010	Mauritania	0.003	Tonga	0.001
Czechia	0.344	Estonia	0.045	Tanzania	0.010	Rwanda	0.003	Tuvalu	0.001
Thailand	0.341	Belarus	0.043	Georgia	0.009	Tajikistan	0.003	Vanuatu	0.001
Portugal	0.328	Libya	0.040	Liechtenstein	0.009	Yemen	0.003		

Data Source: UN General Assembly resolution 79/249 of 24 December 2024: The scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the regular budget of the United Nations for 2025, 2026 and 2027

On Inclusion of Non-State Stakeholders in Consultation on Matters of Policy and Process at the United Nations

1. Introduction

The role of Civil Society vis-a-vis the United Nations has changed dramatically in its 80-year history. Initially, the engagement of other organizations seeking to support the United Nations was mostly seen through the lens of the sharing of public information and the raising of awareness, and the Department of Public Information (now DGC - the Department of Global Communications) was established for that purpose.[19] Under Article 71 of the original United Nations Charter, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were only given the opportunity to formally contribute to the processes of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Over the years, different United Nations funds and agencies have established their own independent mechanisms for civil society participation –each with different processes for accreditation (UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNHABITAT, etc.). More can and should be learned from the benefits and drawbacks of the various avenues of Civil Society engagement.

2. Evolution of participation

After the end of the Cold War, a spirit of hope and optimism spread across the United Nations, bolstered by the world conferences of the 1990s, particularly the 1992 Earth Summit which set a new precedent for Civil Society participation at United Nations Conferences. The number of NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations ballooned, and a new standard for participation was articulated (ECOSOC resolution 1996/31), further fleshing out Article 71 of the United Nations Charter.

This formal evolution corresponded to an increase in the ways and means by which Civil Society was invited to contribute to United Nations Processes. Major conferences held dedicated civil society fora alongside intergovernmental negotiations. The NGO Millennium Forum in 2000 represented a watershed moment for engagement, with speakers from Civil Society addressing the audience from the rostrum in the General Assembly Hall. From 2012-2015, the negotiation processes for the Sustainable Development Goals relied upon notions of universal participation. However, not all processes of opening space have been met with agreement either by Member States or by non-governmental actors themselves.

3. Challenges of legitimacy

Those Member States that limit non-governmental participation within their borders are more reluctant to open spaces at the United Nations to dissenting voices. Nowhere is this truer than for human rights organizations, who face reprisals at an alarming rate. Often this is done in the name of limiting 'foreign intervention' or questioning the legitimacy of the organizations. In another development, the private sector has become an increasingly influential actor at the United Nations, especially as public funding continues to fall short relative to the needs of the organization. While there are some benefits to private sector participation, its lack of transparency at times in identifying for-profit affiliations give rise among the public to concern and even skepticism.

4. Civil society expertise

The most important advance in the engagement of non-state actors in United Nations deliberations has been their expert contributions. Government officials, parliamentarians, and diplomats have tremendous amounts of information at their fingertips, and they are well versed in articulating policy. Naturally, it is they who hold the exclusive power of voting at the United Nations. However, the breadth and depth of knowledge necessary to serve as a scientific foundation for good public policy is beyond the scope of

[19] See, e.g. GA Res 13(I) 1946 Annex I https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/13(I) and ECOSOC Res 1296 and 1297(XLIV) 1968: https://docs.un.org/en/e/res/1297(XLIV).

even the most capable of actors.

Civil society actors have become a source of vital information and experience, whether scientific or experiential, in many different venues around the world from local to global. They serve, in addition to governments, as an avenue of legitimacy and representation (especially for those who are marginalized and lack other opportunities to participate), and a well-functioning international order must strive to include these perspectives in order to assess them and articulate effective policy. Moreover, civil society can support the United Nations by disseminating information, operationalizing the implementation of decisions taken, and as a mechanism for accountability. The manner in which these diverse benefits can be leveraged, beyond mere symbolism, is explored in the principles below.

5. Indigenous peoples' rights

An important development in global governance is the growing recognition of Indigenous Peoples as distinct political and cultural communities with the right to self-determination, as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Unlike NGOs, which engage the United Nations through ECOSOC consultative status, Indigenous Peoples claim participation as rights-holders, not stakeholders.[20]

Despite operating within a system designed for states and accredited NGOs, they have successfully established dedicated mechanisms such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Current negotiations at the United Nations Human Rights Council aim to further this progress by creating an independent accreditation mechanism for Indigenous Peoples. This mechanism would reflect the UNDRIP principles by including representation from all seven socio-cultural regions and recognizing the unique status of Indigenous representative institutions – marking a broader shift toward inclusive, rights-based participation in global deliberations.

6. Scope of the Protocol

This Protocol does not apply to individuals but instead sets forth principles for the engagement of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholder/rights-holder groupings (collectively referred to in the Protocol as "Non-State Stakeholders"). This primary focus of the Protocol reflects the institutional scope and representational nature of United Nations deliberative processes and is consistent with the intent of the Second United Nations Charter, which recognizes the differentiated roles of organizations and individuals in global governance.

The Non-State Stakeholder principles of engagement in Article 3 are intended to give Non-State Stakeholders a well-defined and important role in the decision-making processes of the United Nations. Because the United Nations is a large and diverse organization that provides everything from training, to inspections, to conflict resolution, to law-making, and even aid for the hungry and the displaced, one set of engagement principles cannot be uniformly applied to all parts of the organization.

The Protocol, in Article 1, therefore, provides that every division of the United Nations (or "United Nations Body" in the parlance of the Protocol) establish its own policy on Stakeholder Access, incorporating the principles on Stakeholder Access (Article 3) and Responsibilities (Article 4) to the extent they "are not

[20] In United Nations practice, "stakeholders" are organizations or entities that contribute perspectives or expertise to intergovernmental processes, usually without inherent entitlement to participate (as in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 on NGO consultative status). By contrast, "rights-holders" are recognized under international law as possessing inherent rights that must be respected and upheld. For Indigenous Peoples, this derives principally from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), which affirms their collective rights to self-determination, lands, resources, and cultural integrity (see Articles 3, 18, and 19). Their participation in UN deliberations thus reflects the exercise of recognized rights, rather than the granting of consultative privileges.

fundamentally inconsistent with the purposes or reasonable functioning of the United Nations Body" (Article 1(3)(A)). To ensure that the individual policies are, in fact, deferential to the Non-State Stakeholder participation principles, Article 2 of the Protocol provides for oversight by a Joint Committee of the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly. The Joint Committee is charged under Article 1(3)(B) with approving each of the Non-State Stakeholder Policies, and under Article 2(2) it supervises a United Nations-wide common accreditation system.

In practice, this Protocol would strengthen Non-State Stakeholder participation by providing shared principles to ground the diversity of policies produced under the requirements of Article 3 and 4. For bodies that already provide for enhanced participation by Non-State Stakeholders, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Protocol would afford a more consistent and fairer environment for civil society voices. For certain new bodies, such as the New Earth System Council, it would prescribe an extensive role for Non-State Stakeholders to share their substantial reservoir of knowledge and to participate extensively in the creation of global norms.

For other United Nations Bodies, however, the application of the principles would present greater complexity. For instance, Non-State Stakeholders would not be expected to play a similar role at the International Court of Justice as they would in the above two bodies. As many such stakeholders would likely themselves agree, participation in judges' conferences, for example, would not align with the conventional understanding of how judicial institutions are meant to function. Rather, the Court's Non-State Stakeholder policy would likely reflect the kinds of innovations that are already enshrined in our Revised Statute of the International Court of Justice (included in this publication), such as those formalizing greater acceptance of *amicus curiae* briefs and judicial interventions from Non-State Stakeholders.

Likewise, the role of Non-State Stakeholder in the Security Council would depend on the meeting format. It is expected that their participation will be at least somewhat enhanced in public meetings (such as open debates and briefings) and dialogues with non-Council members and United Nations bodies (such as informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings). However, their role in diplomats' private meetings and informal consultations involving Council members are likely to be more limited. This reflects the reality that in the Security Council representatives of Member States often meet in the midst of global military crises where strict instructions from their national capitals leave little room for actual negotiations and by strategic design, meetings that do take place often transpire behind closed doors.

An understanding of the potential role of Non-State Stakeholders in the Second Charter's new United Nations Parliamentary Assembly is perhaps most illustrative of the need for a diversity of approaches to incorporating Article 3 and Article 4 Principles to the multiplicity of United Nations bodies. Because the Parliamentary Assembly is intended to function much like established domestic parliaments, the primary mode of Non-State Stakeholder participation, consistent with the Parliamentary Assembly's structure and purpose, would involve supporting the elections of Members of the Parliamentary Assembly and lobbying them after they were elected. Article 3 principles would, for example, probably not provide a basis for Non-State Stakeholders to participate amongst the parliamentarians in debates on the floor of the Assembly.

We believe that the presumption behind the Protocol – that more Non-State Stakeholder engagement will improve the functioning of the United Nations, and correspondingly the wellbeing of populations around the world – is well-founded. Civil Society's influential role in the world conferences of the 1990s helped secure major global advances, from disarmament treaties to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet areas of concern persist, particularly regarding the extent to which organizations may be clandestine fronts for interests that lurk out of public view. The Protocol's answer to this concern is to provide transparency. Article 2(3)(B) accreditation disclosure requirements and more generally

Article 4 Principles of Non-State Stakeholder Responsibilities provide the United Nations, other Non-State Stakeholders, and the public at large with a window into the extent to which an organization's funding sources may be compromising its independence.

While the Protocol might help overcome many of the challenges hampering a more effective partnership between the United Nations and Non-State Stakeholders, the Protocol is not a panacea, nor is it the final word at a time when both the United Nations and Non-State Stakeholders are confronted with rapidly evolving challenges and opportunities. To help further continuous improvement, therefore, Article 5 of the Protocol establishes mechanisms for the ongoing evaluation and assessment of the Non-State Stakeholder policies. With the knowledge coming out of such assessments, the Joint Committee of the General and Parliamentary Assemblies is charged under Article 6 with continuing to "progressively advance the role of Non-State Stakeholders" in the United Nations system. It is to consider proposals such as the institutionalization of regularly held civil society fora, the permanent appointment of a Non-State Stakeholder envoy, and the creation of financial mechanisms to support Non-State Stakeholders with financial challenges.

The Protocol constitutes an ambitious undertaking to continue expanding Non-State Stakeholder engagement beyond that of the original United Nations Charter, which limited participation to engagement at ECOSOC. In that sense, it is complementary to the far-reaching effort we have embarked upon with the creation of the Second United Nations Charter and the other companion protocols. As with those other documents, we offer what follows not as the definitive answer to all that ails the United Nations-Non-State Stakeholder partnership, but in the spirit of opening a discussion on how to best move the partnership forward.

7. Protocol Articles

To be adopted by the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly Pursuant to Article 8 (2) of the Second United Nations Charter

Recognizing that the Second United Nations Charter is written in the name of "We the People of the World";

Acknowledging that civil society and other non-state actors in the international system (including Indigenous Peoples, the private sector, and local authorities among many others) vitally contribute as Non-State Stakeholders to advancing the purposes and principles of the United Nations;

Affirming that a just, free, and peaceful world, where humanity and nature thrive in harmony, can only be achieved by inclusive, participatory, and transparent governance;

Acknowledging that the participation of Non-State Stakeholders is vital to building trust in the United Nations and that their engagement deepens understanding and generates a sense of ownership in the United Nations and its actions among the people of the world;

Recognizing that numerous different groupings of Non-State Stakeholder organization have been created since the establishment of the United Nations, including NGO Committees, Social Movements, and Major Groups;

Respecting the diverse approaches to Non-State Stakeholder engagement, the principle of Non-State Stakeholder self-organization, and understanding that Non-State Stakeholder organizations will continue to evolve;

Determined to ensure and institutionalize close engagement with Non-State Stakeholders across United Nations Bodies and processes;

We hereby proclaim the following principles and commitments to guide United Nations Bodies and processes in their engagement with Non-State Stakeholders in the spirit of partnership and inclusive global governance:

Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies

Article 1

1. The United Nations acknowledges that all non-state participants in the global system including civil society (encompassing a broad array of citizen associations, comprising non-governmental organizations dedicated to diverse missions) and other Non-State Actors, including Indigenous Peoples, the private sector, and local authorities, among others (referred to collectively as "Non-State Stakeholders") are legitimate actors in the United Nations System and indispensable partners in the work of the United Nations, and it further recognizes the value of their specialized knowledge and experience on issues of concern as well as the legitimacy of their claim to represent diverse voices within the global community.

2. Each organ, subsidiary body, programme, fund, office, research and training institute, regional commission, tribunal, conference or other like entity within the United Nations system, that is not a specialized agency of the United Nations, ("United Nations Body" or in the plural "United Nations Bodies") shall establish a written policy ("Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy" or in the plural "Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies").

3. Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies shall provide for the manner in which, and extent to which, Non-State Stakeholders who have secured Accreditation under the provisions of Article 2 of this Protocol shall have access to processes of United Nations Bodies that impact upon the public's reasonable interests ("Process Access").

A. Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies shall incorporate the principles set forth in Article 3 and Article 4 of this Protocol to the extent such principles are not fundamentally inconsistent with the purposes or reasonable functioning of the United Nations Body.

B. Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies must be submitted to, and approved by, a joint committee of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly established for the purpose of overseeing policy related to Non-State Stakeholders ("Joint Committee").

C. Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies shall be published by the United Nations Secretariat and be publicly disseminated.

D. Each United Nations Body shall establish an institutional mechanism for ensuring the transparent implementation of its Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy. Such mechanisms shall include the establishment of a panel to which a Non-State Stakeholder may lodge a confidential complaint, alleging a violation of the United Nations Body's Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy, appeals from whose determination shall be reviewed by an independent board established by the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly.

4. Each specialized agency of the United Nations is encouraged to produce a written policy establishing the rules and procedures providing for Non-State Stakeholders access to its processes that impact upon the public's reasonable interest in accordance with the provisions laid out in Paragraphs A-D above.

Accreditation

Article 2

1. The granting of Non-State Stakeholders institutional access to United Nations Bodies in accordance with paragraphs 2-5 of this Article ("Accreditation"), shall confer upon recipients of such Accreditation all the rights afforded, and it shall obligate them to observe all of the standards imposed, under the various Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies of the United Nations Bodies.

2. The General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly in accordance with their respective procedures shall adopt rules defining the criteria for determining, and process for administering, Accreditation to United Nations Bodies ("Accreditation Rules"), except for those criteria and process that may be established by United Nations Bodies under Paragraph 7 of this Article.

3. The Accreditation Rules established under Paragraph 2 of this Article shall be formulated in accordance with the following principles:

A. The process of Accreditation shall be transparent, simple, accessible, non-discriminatory and operate under clear and expedient timelines.

B. Non-State Stakeholders shall be required to make reasonable disclosures at the time of application and on a quadrennial basis thereafter, including those related to the nature of their institutional character (public or private and profit or non-profit), policy mission, legal status and structure of governance, principal location, key administrative personnel, conflicts of interest, sources of funding, and financial resources, as well as to make declarations accepting the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

C. Applications for Accreditation by Non-State Stakeholders shall have a presumption of approval.

D. The presumption of approval for Accreditation shall be overcome if the reasonable disclosures provided for in Subparagraph B above are incomplete or intentionally misleading, and Accreditation shall be suspended or revoked in the event the quadrennial disclosures provided for in Subparagraph B above are incomplete or intentionally misleading or in the event of a serious breach of a United Nations Body's Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy.

4. The Joint Committee shall oversee the United Nations Secretariat's administration of the Accreditation Rules, as established in accordance with Paragraph 2 of this Article, and the United Nations Secretariat shall have the power to approve, suspend and revoke accreditation in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 1 of this Article and Subparagraph D above.

5. A Non-State Stakeholder organization may appoint a reasonable number of designees of its own choosing on a long-term or temporary basis to be its representatives to the various United Nations Bodies.

6. In recognition of the distinct status and rights under international law of certain categories of Non-State Stakeholders, such as Indigenous Peoples, consistent with UN procedures and mandates, the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly may develop, as appropriate, alternative accreditation mechanisms in consultation with the Non-State Stakeholders concerned. These mechanisms shall be transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory.

7. Non-State Stakeholders who do not secure Accreditation under the provisions established in this Article may nevertheless secure the rights and obligations afforded by the Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy of a United Nations Body by that body on a long-term or *ad hoc* basis under such terms and in accordance with such process as determined by that body.

Principles of Non-State Stakeholder Access

Article 3

In accordance with the terms of Article 1(3)(A), United Nations Bodies shall, as appropriate, incorporate the following principles in their Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies:

1. Non-State Stakeholders shall have physical and remote access to United Nations Bodies and meaningful involvement in agenda setting for, planning of, and deliberations during (including speaking opportunities) United Nations Body processes that impact upon the public's reasonable interest.

2. Non-State Stakeholder access to United Nations Bodies shall be equitably provided.

3. Access to United Nations Bodies processes that impact upon the public's reasonable interest shall be inclusive, giving due regard to the involvement of organizations and individuals representing traditionally marginalized populations, including, but not limited to, those based upon geography, age, gender, and diversity within societies.

4. Such inclusivity shall include the making of reasonable accommodations to provide for the participation of Non-State Stakeholder representatives with disabilities and those who are not able to be in the vicinity of relevant processes, including through the use of digital and hybrid platforms and through the employment of visa facilitation services.

5. To the extent active participation in any process of a United Nations Body that impacts upon the public's reasonable interest cannot accommodate all accredited Non-State Stakeholders who wish to participate, the United Nations Body shall give deference to the process that the interested Non-State Stakeholders collectively choose for selecting participants. Any selection method chosen shall be transparent in operation as well as consistent with Paragraphs 3 of this Article and subject to rotational access to prevent gatekeeping and to promote fresh perspectives.

6. Non-State Stakeholders shall not be subject to discrimination or other reprisal, including, but not limited to, harassment or violence for availing themselves of their rights under any Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy.

Principles of Non-State Stakeholder Responsibilities

Article 4

In accordance with the terms of Article 1(3)(A), United Nations Bodies shall, as appropriate, incorporate the following requirements of Non-State Stakeholders in their Non-State Stakeholder Access Policies:

1. Non-State Stakeholder representatives in their actions and statements shall align with the principles of the Second Charter of the United Nations of peace, human rights, and international cooperation.

2. Non-State Stakeholder representatives shall exercise decorum and respect the dignity of all participants in their involvement with United Nations Bodies, both on and off the grounds of the United Nations, recognizing that a robust and effective United Nations system is one that welcomes a diversity of views within the confines of mutual respect.

3. In particular, Non-State Stakeholder representatives shall not engage in threats or harassment in their involvement with United Nations Bodies, including, but not limited to, such threats or harassment directed towards other Non-State Stakeholder representatives, United Nations staff, or Member State delegates.

4. Non-State Stakeholders representatives shall not engage in racist, sexist, xenophobic or any other form of exclusionary behavior in their involvement with United Nations Bodies.

5. In their oral and written submissions, Non-State Stakeholder representatives shall be factually accurate and refrain from intentional misrepresentation of information.

6. Non-State Stakeholder representatives shall respect time limits, speaking protocols, and submission deadlines as determined by the relevant United Nations Body.

7. Any person who accepts appointment to a Member State delegation that engages with a United Nations Body shall disclose their affiliations and economic interests, if any, publicly at the time of their appointment.

Institutional Assessment

Article 5

1. Each United Nations Body shall establish an institutional assessment review mechanism that shall track the efficacy of Non-State Stakeholder involvement in its processes.

2. Based upon information gathered under the process established in Paragraph 1 above, each United Nations Body shall conduct a quadrennial review of the efficacy of Non-State Stakeholder involvement in its processes, together with recommendations for ways to improve the integration of Non-State Stakeholders into the processes of the United Nations Bodies ("Review and Recommendations").

3. A representative group of Non-State Stakeholders active with the United Nations Body shall be included in the conduct of the Review and Recommendations.

4. The Review and Recommendations shall be published, publicly disseminated, and submitted to the Joint Committee for examination and critique.

5. Upon approval of the Joint Committee, recommendations for amendment to the Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy of a United Nations Body shall be incorporated into a Non-State Stakeholder Access Policy.

Progressive Development

Article 6

In cooperation with the United Nations Bodies, the Joint Committee shall on an ongoing basis endeavor to progressively advance the role of Non-State Stakeholders in the operations of United Nations Bodies, by considering and securing funding for proposals, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Establishing an envoy for Non-State Stakeholder engagement with a mandate to help implement this Protocol, including by advancing and coordinating Non-State Stakeholder integration and by facilitating synergies and furthering common standards regarding the participation of Non-State Stakeholders within United Nations Bodies.

2. Initiating dedicated liaison units to manage Non-State Stakeholder engagement, within the United Nations Secretariat and, where appropriate, other United Nations Bodies.

3. Creating a financial mechanism to support the participation of organizations and individuals representing traditionally marginalized populations with financial challenges, including, but not limited to, those based upon geography, age, gender, and diversity within societies.

4. Implementing technology to better understand public opinion for the purpose of informing United Nations deliberations.

5. Promoting and helping facilitate regular Non-State Stakeholder forums in association with major United Nations conferences and events.

6. Founding other capacity-building programs to enhance Non-State Stakeholders' ability to engage with United Nations Bodies.

Amendment and Entry into Force

Article 7

1. This Protocol may be amended in accordance with the same terms and conditions as are provided in Paragraph 2 of this Article.

2. Pursuant to Article 8(2) of the Second United Nations Charter, this Protocol shall enter into force upon approval of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, and upon entry into force, it shall be applied by and within the United Nations as if it were incorporated into the Second Charter.

On the Composition of the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly

1. Introduction

Article 10(1) of the Second UN Charter prescribes that this Protocol provide for the method of allocating parliamentary seats among countries in the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly. Before explaining how this Protocol accomplishes this objective, this Introduction will first give the Expert Commission's reasoning on two matters that our panel of reviewers has indicated would provide helpful context additional to the Commentary in the Second UN Charter document for understanding the Protocol: 1) The rationale for including the Parliamentary Assembly in the Second UN Charter; and 2) How we navigate the challenge presented by Member States who would likely resist their citizens voting in popular elections.[21]

The Rationale for Including a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly in the Second UN Charter

When informed of the inclusion of the Parliamentary Assembly in the Second UN Charter, the first question that often arises is: "Isn't this new Parliamentary Assembly redundant of the existing General Assembly, and therefore, merely an impediment to efficient decision-making at the United Nations?" The answer is that the Parliamentary Assembly's basis in legitimacy (or reason that its determinations should be respected) is fundamentally different from that of the General Assembly, and this difference has significant implications for the Parliamentary Assembly's ability to make the entire United Nations system more effective.

The General Assembly's claim to legitimacy springs from its status as a body that represents all the Member States of the United Nations (as each State enjoys both a voice in the Assembly's deliberations and a vote in its decisions). The Parliamentary Assembly's legitimacy, by contrast, would stem from its status as an international body that gives representation, not to the Member States, but to their citizens, either directly through their popular vote, or indirectly through their parliaments choosing their representatives.[22]

Having a United Nations organ that transcends states to represent citizens directly holds the potential to transform global governance.[23] At the United Nations presently, states are the only source of the organization's power, and this makes it very difficult for the United Nations to act unless all states (or at least all-powerful states) agree, which often does not happen.

The United Nations' inability to act is one manifestation of the broader problem inherent in a global governance system that gives exclusive power to states rather than sharing it with citizens and their representatives: First, it is inequitable. Those states that are larger and wealthier can channel their resources into greater global diplomatic, economic, or military power, and they can use that power to force their will on weaker states. Second, it hinders effective solutions to collective action problems. Regardless of the dire consequences (especially resulting from existential challenges such as climate

[21] These are only two of the many topics the Expert Commission considered in configuring the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly. For further background reading on creating a transnational parliament, see Jo Leinen and Andreas Bummel, *A World Parliament: Governance and Democracy in the 21st Century, 2nd edition* (2024); Maja Brauer and Andreas Bummel, *A United Nations Parliamentary Assembly: A policy review of Democracy Without Borders*. (2020), and Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss, *Toward Global Parliament, Foreign Affairs* (2001).

[22] Under Article 10(3) of the Second UN Charter, this representation is to be realized either by way of citizens directly electing their delegates to the Assembly, or in states where governments are not ready to allow such elections, by national parliaments appointing such delegates (however, with a requirement of due representation for opposition political parties).

[23] Some observers have suggested that such an organ would be redundant of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an organization composed of parliamentarians from Member States, whose purpose is to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among the United Nations 181 member parliaments. The two bodies, however, are quite different. The IPU's resolutions lack institutional authority within the United Nations, while the Parliamentary Assembly is conceived as a formal principal organ of the UN and, therefore, as part of the decision-making architecture of the organization.

change), states, and especially powerful states, have the ability to undermine joint solutions to common problems by refusing to participate in those solutions. Finally, the current system institutionalizes war. Structured to give states the means (and often little alternative but) to use self-help to achieve their objectives in international relations, that self-help too often comes to involve the use of force, even when contrary to international law. The existence of weapons of mass destruction means we all live with the constant threat that such uses of force could spiral into apocalyptic war.

In contrast, the Second UN Charter's Parliamentary Assembly, which would answer to citizens rather than states, offers the potential for a new kind of global politics. In the Parliamentary Assembly, delegates would likely not vote (or at least not vote exclusively) along national lines.[24] Instead, they would tend to form shifting non-militarized political coalitions with parliamentarians from other countries based upon perceptions of interests, values, and ideology.

Due to the media and other attention surrounding parliamentary elections and the Parliamentary Assembly's unique legitimacy as the one United Nations organ representing citizens, this new parliamentary politics would likely become increasingly visible and important. While the Parliamentary Assembly's (along with the General Assembly's) initial powers under the Second UN Charter would be largely advisory,[25] its visibility and democratic imprimatur would mean that interest groups worldwide would seek resolutions of support for their positions on matters of global public policy.

As more of the world's political interests came into the orbit of the Parliamentary Assembly, and along with it, the General Assembly, as forums for reaching political accommodation, a new politics akin to what occurs in advanced democratic systems might come to transcend the current state-centric order. States are, after all, only collectives of real people, and if those people world-wide transcend their states to bring their political processes (and fealty to the results of those processes) to the United Nations, then it is possible to envision the emergence of a transnational democratic system that could be more equitable, effective, and peaceful.

In this way, a new United Nations politics centered around an empowered Parliamentary Assembly and General Assembly would help set the stage for the success of the Second UN Charter's ambitious innovations in disarmament[26] and the maintenance of global security,[27] environmental sustainability,[28] human rights, the creation of enforceable international law,[29] and effective dispute resolution,[30] as well as in other areas where progress has been elusive under the current global system.

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[24] The Second UN Charter requires that members of the Parliamentary Assembly act independently of their Member States. See Article 11(1) ("Members of the Parliamentary Assembly shall be independent from Member States. Member States and their representatives shall not give instructions to Members of the Parliamentary Assembly."), and Article 11(2) ("Any Member of the Parliamentary Assembly who receives and complies with such instructions [from Member States] or who holds an official position within an executive branch of a Member State, or within the United Nations, or any other public international organization shall not be accredited, or continue to be accredited, to the Parliamentary Assembly.").

[25] Under Article 12(1) the General Assembly would maintain the status of "the chief deliberative and policy making body of the United Nations." As with the General Assembly, most of the Parliamentary Assembly's powers are advisory, however, the Second UN Charter provides for two important exceptions. First, under Article 15, the two Assemblies may act concurrently by a four-fifths majority in each one to promulgate resolutions that are binding on states if they determine that there is an "exigent situation that threatens human species survival in whole or in part." To protect state and citizen rights, such resolutions are subject to significant procedural limitations, and (as is the case generally with provisions in the Second Charter) they are subject to judicial review by the International Court of Justice. Second, under Article 12(3), the two assemblies acting concurrently by two-thirds majorities may vote to override a Permanent Five Security Council veto.

In addition to the above powers, under Article 12 (2), the General Assembly and the Parliamentary share general oversight responsibilities over United Nations internal matters, including budget and spending (See Article 12(2) and Article 17), and when the two Assemblies direct recommendations to Member States, those Member States have new responsibilities to report to the two Assemblies on actions taken to implement those recommendations (See Article 14).

[26] See accompanying Roadmap Part I, on Disarmament and the Regulation of Armaments.

[27] See accompanying Roadmap Part II, on the establishment of a United Nations Peace Force.

[28] See Chapter XII and accompanying Commentary (on the Earth System Council).

[29] See supra note 3, discussing Article 12(3) and Article 15 and accompanying commentary (giving the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly additional powers to promote enforceable international law).

[30] See Article 93 and Article 35(1) of the Revised Statute of the International Court of Justice and accompanying commentary (giving the Court compulsory jurisdiction).

That the Parliamentary Assembly might develop in this way is not merely theoretical or speculative. What we have described above largely tracks the political trajectory of the world's most significant experiment in establishing a transnational parliament.[31] As the Second UN Charter allows,[32] the European Parliament traces its origins to 1952, when the European Parliamentary Assembly was established with members appointed by national parliaments of the states participating in the European treaty bodies that would later form the European Union.[33] However, it wasn't until 1979 that European governments became sufficiently comfortable with the parliamentary idea to allow their citizens to directly elect their representatives for the first time.[34]

The European Parliament followed a similar progression over the years toward accruing greater authority. Originally conceived as a largely advisory body, the European Parliament's powers have expanded markedly through a series of successive treaties, most notably the Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty, the Amsterdam Treaty, the Nice Treaty, and the Lisbon Treaty. As the European public became more comfortable with Parliament, and as the Parliament itself gained increased clout to advocate for its own empowerment as an answer to the European Union's lack of democracy, each treaty has incrementally strengthened its legislative, budgetary, and supervisory roles, transforming it into a co-legislator with the Council of the European Union.

Democracy is, of course, in retreat in many countries around the world, but as has been Europe's experience with the European Parliament, we still believe that the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly's status as the one United Nations organ representing citizens would be a robust engine of empowerment, and with its empowerment, that the entire United Nations could become far more effective.

2. How We Navigate the Challenge Presented by Member States Who Would Likely Resist Their Citizens Voting in Popular Elections

Perhaps the most difficult challenge we faced in drafting the Second UN Charter's Chapter IV provisions establishing the Parliamentary Assembly was how to provide for a popularly elected parliamentary body when many of the United Nations Member States are not committed (or are not unqualifiedly committed) to allowing free and fair elections to national parliaments. Not only would those Member States be unlikely to support including such an innovation as part of the Charter, but even if it was included, it is difficult to imagine most of them facilitating popular elections within their territories.

Our best, though imperfect, response to this challenge is to provide Member States with the option (included in Second UN Charter Article 10(3)) of allowing Member States to substitute elections by their national parliaments for popular elections to the Parliamentary Assembly (emulating the early European Parliament's above described delegate selection method).[35] To help ameliorate the negative impact of

[31] While the European Parliament is the only transnational parliament that currently provides for citizens to elect representatives in direct elections, there are several other important international organizations with transnational parliaments. Among the most important is the Pan-African Parliament of the African Union, whose founding protocol references the aspiration that the parliament eventually move towards direct elections by citizens (see Article 5(3) of the Protocol of the Constitutive Act of the African Union relating to the Pan-African Parliament, June, 2014). Other noteworthy transnational parliaments of international bodies include: the Parliament of South American regional trade integration organization Mercosur, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Arab Parliament of the Arab League, the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) , the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA).

[32] See supra note 2.

[33] It began as the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, pursuant to the first of the treaties that eventually led to the European Union. The Assembly met for the first time in Strasbourg in 1958.

[34] For a brief overview of this evolution, see Fact Sheets on the European Union, The European Parliament: Historical Background.

[35] See supra note 2.

this provision on the Parliamentary Assembly's claim to democratic legitimacy, Article 10(3) requires that if Member States choose elections by their national parliaments, then "the election [to the Parliament] shall reflect as well as possible the proportional representation of different political groupings within the legislative branch." At least among the delegations elected by parliaments from partially democratic countries, where opposition parties manage to secure parliamentary representation, the implementation of this provision would ensure some diversity of perspective.[36]

Regardless of this provision for inclusion of opposition parliamentarians, however, it is admittedly the case that if our goal is to provide for a parliamentary body that truly reflects the popular will, then that goal is undermined by placing delegate selection in the hands of national parliamentarians whose own democratic credentials may be questionable and who in the most authoritarian countries may be minimally distinguishable from the governing regime. Nevertheless, when weighed against the alternative of postponing the establishment of the Assembly until all the Member States of the United Nations become democratic (which may never happen), we felt it best to move forward with the most democratic parliament now possible.

Viewed optimistically, the contradiction of having some less-than-democratically selected representatives in a democratic assembly will generate a tension between the imperfect reality of the Parliamentary Assembly and its democratic ideals. Our expectation is that this tension would provide a continual impetus for reform that can be seized upon when world conditions allow. If states—perhaps those in Europe with experience of popular elections to the European Parliament—lead initially by holding popular elections and over time more countries were to follow suit, one can imagine a critical mass of states coming to allow popular elections to the Parliamentary Assembly. Pressure might then build both inside and outside of holdout states for their citizens to no longer be among the dwindling minority denied their right to select their representatives.

If this were to happen, the view that democracy must begin at the state level before the United Nations can implement a democratic assembly might be turned on its head. Rather than wait for domestic democratic practices to flow up to the international system, perhaps a growing familiarity and comfort with the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly can help encourage the adoption of such practices within Member States themselves.

3. Explanation of the Protocol on the Composition of the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly

Article 10(1) of the Second UN Charter provides that the sole purpose of this Protocol shall be to prescribe the composition of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) consistent with the principle of degressive proportionality. In accordance with Article 21(1) of the Second UN Charter, more specific directives to implement this Protocol (as well as other matters that are necessary to establish the proper procedural workings of the Parliamentary Assembly but are not provided for in the Second UN Charter) will be incorporated into the Parliamentary Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

As the Parliamentary Assembly develops in the future other changes to the composition of the Assembly could be established either by amendment to this Protocol or to the Second UN Charter itself. For example, the Parliamentary Assembly could in the future provide historically unrepresented populations with meaningful opportunities to be heard within the UN. While the initial allocation of seats in the Parliamentary Assembly is based on recognized Member States, future institutional developments could incorporate mechanisms that transcend state-centric frameworks for the allocation of seats.

The principle of degressive proportionality and An Indicative Scenario for Parliamentary Assembly

[36] The Pan African Parliament has had some success implementing a similar provision prescribed by the Protocol to the Constitutive Act of the African Union Relating to the Pan African Parliament (see Article 5.1(b)).

representation set forth in the Commentary to Chapter IV of the Second UN Charter provide an overview of how the concept of degressive proportionality applies to the potential allocation of PA seats among United Nations Member States. To demonstrate proof of concept, this Protocol provides one among many examples of such an allocation of seats that would be available to Member States. Our work is for illustrative purposes, and we do not wish to take a political position on the substantive question of what would be the best allocation of seats.

Following the European Union's example of the decisions taken on the composition of the European Parliament,[37] the Protocol could identify the number of seats allocated to each Member State without (at least initially) including the formula used to allocate those seats. This would give Member States more flexibility, particularly in dealing with rounding effects. The formula producing the allocation of seats provided for in the Protocol is described below, and the accompanying Table summarizes the numerical computations resulting from the application of the formula.

Numerous different formulas are conceivable to achieve an allocation of seats that are aligned with the requirements set down in the Second UN Charter: two seats per country as a minimum, degressive proportionality with population size as the relevant metric, a total of no more than 600 seats in the first ten years, and no more than 800 thereafter, and no more than 10% of total seats for any single country.

The requirement of allocating a minimum number of two seats to each country already implies a system of degressive proportionality. For instance, if the 128 least populous UN Member States accounting for 8.4% of the world's population are allocated among them 256 seats, as the Second UN Charter requires, this would be equivalent to 42.7% of the initial maximum total number of 600 seats.

At the same time, a suitable model needs to strike a balance between the two largest Member States, China and India (who together make up around 36% of the world's population), and the rest of the membership.

Possible approaches involve:

a) First allocating the minimum number of two seats to Member States (193 x 2 = 386) and then using a formula to allocate the remaining seats among them (214 in the initial stage: 386 + 214 = 600); or

b) Using a formula to allocate a number of seats across Member States and then allocate 1 or 2 seats to those states that under the formula do not receive the required number of two seats, as could well happen given the great variance in the populations of Member States ranging from over 1.4 billion in China and India to under 15,000 in the case of some of the small Pacific Island States.

In terms of formula specifics, some of the options available are:

c) Direct proportional allocation according to population size or,

d) Using the nth root of a Member States' population size, where n can be a non-integer number, a technique otherwise known in the relevant literature as the Penrose method (which uses the square root). Of course, only whole numbers can be allocated so there would be rounding effects in any formula.

The scenario used in this document combines the features b) and d) above and the results are presented in summary fashion in Table 1. This method might be characterized as using a "strong" application of the

[37] Cf. European Parliament resolution A9-0214/2023 of 15 June 2023 and European Council decision 2023/2061 of 22 September 2023.

principle of degressive proportionality, since it allocates 2 seats to a large number of Member States and a proportionally smaller number to the most populous states. For instance, Pakistan, Indonesia, the United States, China and India, the 5 countries with the largest populations in the world, accounting for 46.5% of the world's population, are allocated a total of 60 seats, or 10% of the 600 seats in the first PA.

While the square root has often been suggested in the literature on degressive proportionality, any other root can achieve the same effect of degressively proportional allocation. In this particular case, the root of 2.5 has been chosen to give a slightly higher rate of degressivity, and a scaling factor of approximately 0.0037 applied to achieve the desired 600 seats.

The formula would look like this for any given Member State:

$$Seats = 0.0037\ x\ \sqrt[2.5]{Population}$$

rounded to the nearest whole number of seats, subject to a minimum of 2 seats per Member State.

Table: A Parliamentary Assembly Member Distribution

Seats per nation	No. of nations	%	No. of seats	%	Pop. in millions	%	Avg. pop. per seat (M)
2	114	59.07%	228	38.00%	450.82	5.70%	1.98
3–4	50	25.91%	174	29.00%	1,373.98	17.38%	7.90
5–6	20	10.36%	108	18.00%	1,659.76	20.99%	15.37
7–10	7	3.63%	56	9.33%	1,593.89	20.16%	28.46
11–17	2	1.04%	34	5.67%	2,829.35	35.78%	83.22
Total	**193**	**100%**	**600**	**100%**	**7,907.80**	**100%**	**13.18**

Article 3 of the draft Protocol enables the General Assembly and Parliamentary Assembly to make adjustments "if and when" they deem appropriate (para. 1) but no later than ten years after the entry into force of the Second UN Charter (para. 2). Such adjustments could entail implementing entirely new approaches and formulas or simply updating the allocation figures based on new population data. The underlying data could be provided by the UN Population Division based on their official estimates.

4. Protocol Articles

The Member States of the United Nations:

Recognizing in accordance with Article 10 Paragraph 1 of the Second UN Charter of the United Nations that:

The composition of the Parliamentary Assembly shall be established by a Protocol to be adopted by Member States;

The membership in the Parliamentary Assembly shall be allocated degressively proportional to the population of the Member States;

Each Member State shall be allocated a minimum of two representatives and no Member State shall be allocated more than 10 percent of seats;

The total number of members of the Parliamentary Assembly shall not exceed 800 nor fall below 400;

In the first ten years following the entry into force of this Second UN Charter, the total number of members shall not exceed 600.

Provide as follows:

Article 1

Each Member State of the United Nations shall be allocated two seats in the Parliamentary Assembly.

Article 2

The following Member States shall be allocated additional seats:

1. One additional seat: Bolivia, Tunisia, Burundi, Benin, Rwanda, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Senegal, Guatemala, Somalia, Netherlands, Chad, Ecuador, Romania, Chile, Kazakhstan, Zambia, Malawi, Syria, Sri Lanka, Mali, Burkina Faso, Australia, Korea (North), Niger;

2. Two additional seats: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Venezuela, Madagascar, Nepal, Mozambique, Ghana, Yemen, Malaysia, Peru, Angola, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Morocco, Ukraine, Canada, Afghanistan, Iraq, Algeria, Argentina, Sudan, Uganda, Spain;

3. Three additional seats: Korea (South), Colombia, Kenya, Myanmar, Italy, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, France, Thailand, Germany, Turkey;

4. Four additional seats: Iran, Vietnam, Congo (Brazzaville), Egypt, Philippines, Ethiopia, Japan, Mexico;

5. Five additional seats: Russian Federation and Bangladesh;

6. Six additional seats: Brazil, Nigeria, Pakistan;

7. Seven additional seats: Indonesia and United States of America;

8. Fifteen additional seats: China and India.

Article 3

1. Taking notice of Article 10 (2) of the Second UN Charter, the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly shall review the composition of the Parliamentary Assembly determined by this Protocol and put amendments to a vote upon their initiative if and when they deem adjustments appropriate.

2. Taking notice of Article 10 (1) d. of the Second UN Charter, this Protocol and the composition of the Parliamentary Assembly shall be reviewed by the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly after ten years following the entry into force of the Second UN Charter in consideration of increasing the total number of members of the Parliamentary Assembly.

3. Taking notice of Article 10 (3) of the Second UN Charter, upon the inception of the Parliamentary Assembly, Member States are encouraged to avail themselves of the option to allocate their seats in that body by way of popular vote in free, fair, and competitive elections based upon the principle of proportional representation, and that those states that do not avail themselves of that option upon the inception of the Parliamentary Assembly, are encouraged to continue to consider transitioning to that option in future years.

Introduction—A Practical Roadmap

The international system is drifting toward a perilous future. Arms control agreements have frayed or collapsed, global military spending has climbed to historic highs, and new technologies are outpacing the rules meant to restrain them. Nuclear arsenals are being modernized; conventional weapons continue to devastate civilians in dense urban conflicts; and the governance of emerging domains such as outer space remains fragmented across institutions with mismatched mandates. In this environment, disarmament and collective security are not sequenced luxuries for calmer times; they are prerequisites for preventing catastrophe and building a livable future.

This Roadmap proposes a dual framework under a Second United Nations Charter:

1. A Disarmament and Regulation Framework that clarifies scope ("the disarmament set"), integrates weapons of mass destruction with destabilizing conventional and space-related systems, establishes a comprehensive global inventory, sequences verifiable reductions, embeds adjudication and compliance mechanisms with graduated consequences, and plans the political economy of conversion from military to civilian production.

2. A United Nations Peace Force Framework that provides a limited, law-bound protective capacity under UN authority, focused on deterring aggression, protecting civilians, stabilizing ceasefires, and upholding the legal architecture that makes disarmament credible. Its legitimacy derives from narrow mandates, strict oversight, time-limited authorizations, and a clear subsidiarity principle that preserves internal public-order functions for states.

These two tracks are mutually enabling. Disarmament without credible protection can devolve into symbolism; protection without disarmament risks institutionalizing militarism. Together, they reduce the means of mass violence and create assurance that agreements will be honored and populations protected. The case for this dual approach rests on five pillars elaborated here:

- *Humanitarian*: indiscriminate and disproportionate effects—especially of nuclear weapons—are fundamentally incompatible with international humanitarian law and human dignity;
- *Legal*: overlapping bodies of international humanitarian, human rights, and environmental law, combined with the Charter's purposes, constrain both the possession and the use of the most destructive weapons;
- *Ethical*: doctrines premised on the credible threat of annihilation are morally incoherent and corrosive of global trust;
- *Security*: arms racing, compressed decision-times, cyber manipulation, and automation raise the odds of miscalculation; prudence now favors verifiable restraint, not maximalist deterrence;
- *Economic–environmental*: militarization is a structural misallocation of resources and a significant emitter; conversion releases capital and talent for climate resilience, health, education, and shared prosperity.

The Second United Nations Charter is the constitutional hinge. Article 12.4 mandates that the General Assembly, in consultation with a Parliamentary Assembly, adopt a Protocol on Disarmament and ensure state compliance. This Roadmap does not publish treaty Articles. Instead, it outlines the design of the future legal instruments: it defines categories and thresholds, details inventory, verification, and dispute-resolution functions; it integrates governance across nuclear, chemical, biological, conventional, cyber, and space-relevant systems; and specifies how conversion proceeds without destabilizing jobs, regions, or national budgets—drawing on comparative experience (e.g., Germany's industrial transition, Costa Rica's demilitarization).

A recurring lesson from seven decades of practice is that fragmentation—across UN organs (First vs. Fourth Committee), across treaty regimes, and between norm-setting and enforcement—has blunted progress. The design proposed here connects what are too often separate: different technical agencies are nested in a common compliance spine; export-control regimes are aligned to disarmament goals; and space governance is brought within the same framework of transparency, limits, and protection against coercive misuse.

This document is a blueprint to orient negotiations and institutional reforms within the larger publication that also contains three full protocols with Articles. For consistency: in this Roadmap we refer to the two strands as "frameworks/tracks", reserving "Protocol" for the future, Article-based instruments to be developed and published in parallel.

A word of clarification on the scope and emphasis of what follows. The title of the future Protocol refers to both *disarmament* and the *regulation of armaments*. In this Roadmap we focus intentionally on disarmament because it is the end-state and compass of the Second UN Charter. Arms control and non-proliferation are treated as enabling instruments—risk-reduction, transparency, ceilings, and safeguards that create baselines, buy time, and build verification capacity for subsequent reductions. We support and build upon existing regimes (e.g., NPT, BWC, CWC, CCW, ATT and export-control arrangements), but the purpose here is to design the pathway, institutions, and incentives that convert such measures into irreversible reductions and, where feasible, elimination. Readers should therefore understand the "regulation" elements in this document as means to a disarmament end, not substitutes for it.

What follows is both a warning against drifting into deeper militarized insecurity and a commitment to practical steps that align law, ethics, security, economics and institutions. Disarmament lowers the temperature of conflict; collective security keeps the thermostat from being reset. Advancing both, together, is how the promise of the Charter becomes practice.

On Disarmament and the Regulation of Armaments — Articulating A Promise in the UN Charter: Key Principles and Priorities

1. A toxic disarmament environment today

The current climate for disarmament debates, a combination of escalating nuclear tensions and diplomatic stalemates, has grown increasingly toxic, polarized and paralyzed, despite the escalating risks posed by both conventional and weapons of mass destruction. There is also the rapid development of new and disruptive technologies such as AI, cyber, and hypersonic weapons. We are, in many ways, further from genuine disarmament processes today than at any point since the end of the Cold War. Perhaps even further than in the immediate post-WWII era when the idea of banning weapons of mass destruction, arguably, had broader traction.

Several interlocking factors have contributed to this bleak scenario. Disarmament at the global level requires dialogue, mutual trust and verification, all of which presuppose functioning multilateral institutions and a degree of shared purpose. But great power rivalry has increasingly undermined multilateral diplomacy, especially between the U.S., Russia, and China. The world is experiencing a resurgence of nuclear competition reminiscent of the Cold War era, but with many more actors. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) notes that nuclear arms control and disarmament diplomacy suffered significant setbacks in 2023,[38] with Russia suspending its participation in the New START treaty and withdrawing its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). These developments compounded earlier reversals, including India and Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998, the United States' failure to ratify the CTBT in 1998, the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2002, and the mutual U.S.–Russian withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019.

These actions—coupled with threats of nuclear use in the context of the Ukraine conflict, recurrent India–Pakistan crises, and increasingly belligerent behavior by North Korea—have sharply exacerbated global tensions. As the Doomsday Clock edges perilously closer to midnight, the risk of conflict, including nuclear escalation, is rising, while the global system built to manage and reduce those risks no longer appears fit for purpose.

Meanwhile, nuclear nonproliferation efforts are increasingly undermined by the insistence by nuclear-armed states that they require nuclear weapons for their security while not showing any readiness to move toward disarmament. This signals a creeping Kriegsraison—the notion that military necessity trumps legal obligation—where even states that traditionally uphold international law begin to treat it as contingent on battlefield calculations. If disregard by some prompts the compliant to exit or suspend key instruments, the cumulative effect is to hollow out the very legal architecture that constrains escalation and protects civilians.

At the same time, Iran's nuclear program, despite some recent setbacks, continues to cause concern while North Korea accelerates its ballistic missile testing and nuclear warhead production. Simultaneously, a new generation of arms race dynamics is emerging, driven by the integration of artificial intelligence, hypersonic missiles, and autonomous drone technologies into military systems, raising the risks of destabilization and escalation. Established disarmament treaties are also coming under threat. Some EU countries (e.g., Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland) are in the process of withdrawing from the Antipersonnel Landmines Treaty (the Ottawa Convention), citing concerns about Russia.

Key bilateral arms control treaties have collapsed or been abandoned: the Intermediate-Range

[38] SIPRI Yearbook 2024.

Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is gone and the New START Treaty is set to expire by February 2026 with no successor agreement in sight. The Open Skies Treaty has unraveled. Efforts to advance disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation through existing treaties face significant hurdles. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has struggled to make progress, with recent review conferences failing to produce consensus outcomes amid deep divisions. In 2024, a group of 69 states declared that nuclear-armed NPT members were in breach of their legal obligations under the treaty.[39] Multilateral forums such as the UN Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission remain deadlocked, with consensus rules weaponized to block any progress. The new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is gaining broad international recognition and acceptance, while nuclear armed and 'umbrella' states remain at a distance.

While China's rapid expansion of its nuclear arsenal further complicates the situation—its stockpile is projected to grow from roughly 500 warheads today to around 1,500 by 2035[40]—this development must be viewed against the backdrop of the much larger arsenals already held by the United States and Russia, each maintaining more than 5,000 nuclear warheads. Together, these dynamics raise concerns about a new nuclear arms race, as all nuclear-armed states continue to modernize their forces or that, in fact, we are already in a qualitative and increasingly also quantitative nuclear arms race.

The integration of AI into military systems introduces further complexities to disarmament and arms control. AI tools that help commanders make decisions and cyber capabilities could destabilize nuclear command-and-control—compressing warning times, amplifying false positives, and heightening the risk of accidental or unauthorized use.[41] Beyond the nuclear realm, AI also magnifies chemical and biological risks by accelerating design, optimization, and delivery pathways for prohibited agents, while autonomous weapons systems lower engagement thresholds and complicate accountability. The United Nations has acknowledged these challenges across multiple fora, underscoring the urgent need for governance frameworks that can keep pace with technological change.

Eroding trust and accelerating arms races

This erosion of trust leads some states to retreat into nationalist and militarized postures, dismissing disarmament proposals as naive or strategically reckless. The post-Cold War optimism that supported significant progress in disarmament and arms control diplomacy in the 1990s has been replaced by an intensifying militarization of foreign policy. For example, the war in Ukraine has led to massive military buildups in Europe and has led to a renewed emphasis on nuclear deterrence as a security doctrine which causes further challenges for global efforts to curb nuclear proliferation. The U.S.-China rivalry, especially over Taiwan and in the Indo-Pacific, is driving a new arms race, including hypersonic weapons, AI-enhanced systems, and space militarization. Regional tensions—India-Pakistan, Iran-Israel, North Korea-South Korea/Japan—have hardened positions.

In this environment, many governments see a disarmament focus as naïve, not as a moral imperative or in the interest of their own as well as global security, but as a geopolitical concession. New technologies are outpacing governance: autonomous weapons systems (killer robots) are being developed despite calls for preemptive bans. Cyberwarfare capabilities are rapidly expanding but lack regulation. Weaponization of outer space is no longer theoretical; military satellites and anti-satellite tests are already a reality. AI and quantum computing will make nuclear command and control even more complex and fragile. An increasing number of governments focus on maintaining "strategic advantage"

[39] TPNW 2MSP (Second Meeting of States Parties) Declaration (adopted 1 December 2023), paragraph 24: "Unquestionably, this represents a failure to meet their legally-binding obligations under Article VI of the NPT…". See UN doc. TPNW/MSP/2023/14 (final report/annexed declaration) and UN doc. TPNW/MSP/2023/CRP.4 (draft declaration reflecting agreed text). Paragraph 5 notes "the Treaty… with 69 States Parties."

[40] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2022. Such claims are denied by China.

[41] Lethal autonomous weapons systems, UN General Assembly, 2024

rather than collective restraint which contributes to making traditional disarmament frameworks appear obsolete and accelerates arms race dynamics.

Nationalism, identity and the militarization of politics

In many countries, military strength is equated with national pride and political legitimacy. This is particularly evident in authoritarian states, where the military often underpins regime stability, and in some democracies shaped by nationalist or populist currents. These movements may emphasize sovereignty and self-reliance while expressing skepticism toward international cooperation, sometimes casting disarmament as an elite-driven agenda. Such narratives often draw on deeply gendered notions of power, where toughness and domination are valorized as masculine virtues, while diplomacy, restraint, and multilateralism are dismissed as signs of weakness or feminized compromise. In this climate, disarmament can be framed not just as a security risk, but as a betrayal of national identity or strength. Politicians, in turn, are incentivized to project resolve, boost military spending, and portray arms control as obsolete, as weakness or even dangerous.

The defense industry has grown in power and reach. It is a major employer, funder of political campaigns, and influencer of policy through lobbying and think tanks. The military-industrial complex creates a feedback loop where threats are exaggerated to justify spending[42] —as was very much the case during the Cold War—and spending increases the political influence of those benefiting from it. Weapons exports are major sources of income and geopolitical leverage for many countries, making disarmament contrary to perceived economic and diplomatic interests. This entrenched ecosystem financially and institutionally opposes disarmament, even when the strategic rationale for certain weapons is weak or obsolete.

During the Cold War, anti-nuclear movements, religious leaders, scientists, and civil-society coalitions played a strong moral role in pushing for disarmament. Today, the public discourse is quieter, often drowned out by other urgent crises such as climate change, migration, or pandemics. In official settings, disarmament—nuclear and conventional—has grown technocratic and abstract, losing the moral and human-centered framing that once galvanized public action. Yet the case is not merely moral: it rests on the five pillars outlined above and developed in the pages that follow—humanitarian, legal, ethical, security, and economic-environmental—which together show why disarmament is necessary, feasible, and urgent. Youth movements are highly active on climate justice but have yet to fully integrate disarmament into their platforms, despite these clear interlinkages. Without a strong, visible civil-society voice, disarmament loses political urgency and moral clarity.

Political actors and media outlets often amplify fear: of terrorism, of foreign domination, of technological inferiority. This fear is a powerful political tool and it drives people to accept militarization as necessary, even when it is ineffective or counterproductive.

Civil society, new norms, and the path forward

Recognizing the deteriorating security environment, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has urged nuclear-armed states to reengage in nuclear disarmament dialogues. He has emphasized the importance of reaffirming commitments to no-first-use policies, halting nuclear saber-rattling, and to extending treaties such as New START. Numerous civil society organizations, including the Arms Control Association, ICAN, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), continue to promote forward-looking strategies for nuclear disarmament and arms control, emphasizing inclusive diplomacy between nuclear and non-nuclear states. These initiatives aim to overcome diplomatic impasses and reinvigorate global efforts to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear risks.

[42] Gregory Hooks and James Rice, *"The Military-Industrial Complex,"* Dædalus 140, 2021

Conventional arms—ranging from small arms and light weapons to anti-personnel landmines and new classes of autonomous and "smart" weapons—fuel conflict, prolong wars, and inflict devastating humanitarian consequences. Arms control and nonproliferation are essential complements to disarmament: they slow the spread of dangerous capabilities, impose transparency and limits, and build the verification habits and trust needed for deeper reductions. Addressing these challenges requires a parallel but complementary agenda: stronger international norms, practical measures for arms reduction, and effective regulation of emerging military technologies. Taken together, nuclear and conventional disarmament represent two interdependent tracks of the same global imperative: reducing the means of mass violence and strengthening collective security. The path forward will be arduous, but the alternative: an international system drifting toward recurring conflict and catastrophic escalation is untenable.

This is why the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2017 with the support of 122 countries, represents a major breakthrough for nuclear disarmament after decades of stagnation. The Treaty marks a paradigm shift from "military security" to "human security." The TPNW comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons and builds on Article 6 of the NPT by offering a time-bound, verifiable disarmament pathway under international law. It is also the first treaty to address justice for those affected by nuclear weapons use and testing, providing for victim assistance and environmental remediation. Equally important, the TPNW embeds a clear theory of change: by grounding its prohibitions in scientific evidence on humanitarian consequences and systemic risk, it equips States Parties to frame their *legitimate security concerns* in human-security terms and to press, through legal and political argument, for a shift in doctrine and behavior—even absent the participation of nuclear-armed states. In this sense, the treaty functions as discursive, legal, and political leverage to move the normative baseline.

TPNW states have highlighted the staggering opportunity costs of nuclear weapons—over US$100 billion annually—diverted from urgent social and environmental needs, contributing to intergenerational injustice. They have also condemned the dangerous behavior of nuclear-armed states and their allies. In their 2023 declaration, TPNW states affirmed:

"…The threat of inflicting mass destruction runs counter to the legitimate security interests of humanity as a whole. This is a dangerous, misguided and unacceptable approach to security…"

Rather than preserving peace, nuclear weapons are tools of coercion, intimidation, and rising tension. The continued promotion of nuclear deterrence as a legitimate doctrine falsely elevates their security value and dangerously accelerates both horizontal and vertical proliferation. Even so, the TPNW's strategy is to change the incentives by changing the conversation: establishing a bright-line legal norm, mobilizing humanitarian evidence, and creating cumulative political and moral pressure that can, over time, induce compliance, reshape alliance policies, and enable practical disarmament steps.

Although we are facing a deep regression in the discourse and politics of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, this setback is not irreversible. The same forces that now block progress are being challenged: rebuilding trust in multilateral institutions, amplifying awareness of the humanitarian, ethical, and economic costs of both nuclear deterrence and conventional militarism, and linking disarmament more clearly to climate action, human rights, and sustainable development. Crucially, new generations of activists and thought leaders are integrating both nuclear disarmament and conventional arms control into wider struggles for justice, equity, and planetary survival.

2. The case for disarmament

The strongest case for disarmament—of both weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and conventional

weapons—is built on an interlocking set of humanitarian, economic, environmental, security, and moral arguments. As global conflicts intensify and new technologies exacerbate risks, the urgency for disarmament becomes not only a moral imperative but a practical necessity for common security, human survival and sustainable development.

Humanitarian arguments

Nuclear weapons are uniquely and indiscriminately destructive. There is extensive literature on the consequences of their use and testing, with broad scientific consensus on the catastrophic and wide-ranging effects of nuclear explosions. A single detonation over a densely populated urban area would cause immediate and large-scale devastation: tens or hundreds of thousands of deaths from the initial blast, thermal radiation capable of igniting firestorms and incinerating human bodies, shock waves that would flatten infrastructure over large areas, and intense ionizing radiation causing acute fatalities in the surrounding zones. If such an attack were to escalate into a broader nuclear conflict involving multiple detonations, the scale of destruction would increase exponentially—potentially resulting in hundreds of millions of deaths, both immediate and over time.[43] Mass displacement would trigger cascading humanitarian, health, socioeconomic, and food-security crises. Entire regions could become uninhabitable, and the long-term global consequences—from climate disruption to economic destabilization—would affect even those far from the conflict zones.

Even a "limited" regional nuclear war could result in blocking sunlight, a disruption in weather patterns, and a nuclear winter and famine, potentially killing over a billion people. Long-term effects for survivors could include mutations, cancers, birth defects, generational health problems and a significantly degraded environment.

There would also be significant ecological effects including environmental collapse, such as the destruction of ecosystems, with forests, oceans, and rivers poisoned or burned. This could lead to global famine and agricultural collapse even in areas far from blast zones. Food systems would break down due to climate disruptions, radioactive contamination, and infrastructure destruction. Soils could be irradiated rendering large swaths of farmland unusable. Livestock and crops would die or become too toxic to consume.[44]

And a "limited" nuclear war could provoke worldwide economic collapse. Survivors would face mass psychological trauma: grief, PTSD, existential despair. The destruction of political and social structures could result in anarchy or totalitarian responses. The above has led many thinkers to state that nuclear war threatens not just millions of lives, but the very future of humanity: if the conditions of Earth become too hostile, human extinction is a real possibility. Even if a few survive, they may live in a permanently degraded, hostile environment that cannot support civilization.[45] Chemical and biological weapons, though banned under international law, still pose grave threats if used—leading to indiscriminate suffering and long-term contamination.

Short of nuclear war, conventional weapons, particularly in protracted conflicts, remain the primary cause of war-related casualties, disproportionately affecting civilians. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) alone are estimated to kill more than 500,000 people each year.[46] The urbanization of armed conflict has magnified the humanitarian toll, with densely populated areas becoming battlefields where civilians bear

[43] See Annie Jacobsen's 2024 book *Nuclear War* and the excellent paper by Daniel Deudney "Nuclear One-Worldisms, Planetary Vulnerability and Whole Earth Security", in *Global Governance and International Cooperation: Managing Global Catastrophic Risks in the 21st Century*, Routledge, 2024.

[44] Henriksen, Hans M., and Matt Korda. "*The Devastating Effects of Nuclear Weapons—and Nuclear War*." The MIT Press Reader, April 17, 2024.

[45] Jonathan Schell, The Fate of the Earth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

[46] https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/

the brunt of indiscriminate violence, bombardment, and siege tactics. Simultaneously, respect for international humanitarian law is eroding, leading to systematic attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Uncontrolled arms transfers and the concentration of SALW in post-conflict settings fuel cycles of violence, exacerbate instability, and impede recovery. Armed conflict overwhelms healthcare systems, destroys infrastructure, and diverts critical resources from disease prevention and treatment. Humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) underscore how prolonged warfare systematically impedes access to clean water, food, shelter, and medical care—triggering chronic crises that persist long after the fighting ends.

Looking ahead, the emergence of new and disruptive military technologies, especially autonomous weapons systems powered by artificial intelligence, raises profound ethical and legal concerns. Experts warn that delegating life-and-death decisions to machines could lower the threshold for initiating conflict, increase the speed and opacity of warfare, and erode accountability. The risk of civilian casualties may rise significantly as targeting decisions become more detached from human judgment and moral responsibility. These developments threaten to further destabilize already fragile conflict zones and undermine efforts to enforce international humanitarian law.

Economic and environmental implications

In 2024 global military spending reached an all-time high of $2.7 trillion (SIPRI).[47] This sum stands in sharp contrast with the urgent investments needed in climate resilience, healthcare, education, poverty alleviation, and the achievement of the SDGs more broadly. A fraction of military spending could end extreme poverty (estimated cost: $175 billion/year) and allow progress to be made in the elimination of malnutrition (which still affects around 800 million people[48]), ensure universal access to education and clean water, accelerate the transition to renewable energy sources, or provide dozens of countries in the developing world with debt relief to set a more sustainable basis for economic growth and development.

War leaves a heavy economic legacy. Rebuilding infrastructure, repatriating refugees, and addressing psychological trauma are costly endeavors, often financed through debt that burdens future generations. Armed conflicts also deter foreign investment, destroy livelihoods, and create regional instability that spreads economic hardship. The case against militarism as a misallocation of resources is especially compelling today, as major donors divert funds from development to defense. Recent cuts to USAID programs in the United States, coupled with reductions in official development assistance by several European countries to finance expanded military budgets, highlight the growing trade-off between investment in human security and preparation for war. This comes at a time when the world urgently needs resources to confront poverty, inequality, climate breakdown, public health crises, and education gaps. The International Monetary Fund's earlier use of the term "unproductive expenditures" for military spending was a telling euphemism: it recognized, implicitly, that this form of expenditure yields little or no return in terms of social development or economic growth and may in fact undermine them.

Comparative studies demonstrate that investments in education or renewable energy generate several times more jobs per dollar than defense spending, which is capital-intensive, skewed toward elite interests (e.g., defense contractors), and lacking in spillover benefits that promote inclusive development. Numerous studies, including by the World Bank and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, have shown that military expenditure tends to crowd out productive investment, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Higher military budgets are correlated with higher debt burdens and lower human development outcomes. Numerous studies, including by the World Bank and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, have shown that military expenditure tends to crowd out

[47] Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2024, SIPRI.
[48] The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024.

productive investment, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Higher military budgets are correlated with higher debt burdens and lower human development outcomes.[49]

As former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower—a five-star general—famously stated: *"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies… a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."* [50]

Military establishments often become deeply embedded in the political economy of a nation,[51] absorbing elite loyalties and resources, diverting funds from democratic governance, oversight, and civilian innovation. They are often used to suppress internal dissent rather than protect against external threats. This "internal militarism" prioritizes regime security over human security, leading sometimes to surveillance and police militarization instead of community investment, repression of civil liberties and, even in peacetime, enduring cultures of fear.

A heavily militarized state does not automatically produce security. In fact, the militarization of societies often escalates arms races, creates adversarial postures that increase the risk of war through miscalculation, and neglects the real causes of insecurity: poverty, exclusion, inequality, and environmental degradation. In contrast, the UN Human Development Reports consistently argue that "human security"—freedom from want, fear, and indignity—must be based on development, not weapons.[52]

Militarism is sustained not only by political inertia and national prestige, the lobbying power of the defense industry (the "military–industrial complex" Eisenhower warned against), and the constant invocation of external threats—often exaggerated—but also by the absence of a credible collective-security system. Each state will cite legitimate security concerns and insist it would rather spend elsewhere, yet in the vacuum of Article 43–style arrangements—where states were to place forces at the UN's disposal—governments default to self-help and overspend on defense. This politico-economic ecosystem shields military budgets from the scrutiny applied to other public expenditures and crowds out productive investment. Precisely for this reason, later we argue for a UN Peace Force: a law-bound, limited protective capacity that can reduce unilateral threat perceptions and allow countries to redirect resources to more urgent, socially valuable ends.

The environmental costs of war and militarism add a further dimension. Modern warfare inflicts lasting ecological damage: deforestation, desertification, oil spills, and contamination of water systems are recurring consequences of armed conflict. The urbanization of warfare magnifies these impacts, with bombardments of cities leaving toxic rubble, chemical contamination, and infrastructure collapse that poison air, soil, and water for decades. Beyond active conflict, the global military sector is one of the largest institutional sources of greenhouse gas emissions owing to its massive use of fossil fuels, weapons testing, and the worldwide network of military bases and logistics chains. Yet military emissions are largely exempt from international climate reporting requirements under the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement, masking their true scale.

This environmental footprint compounds the global security dilemma: while military establishments consume vast resources and drive ecological harm, climate change itself is a multiplier of conflict, fueling displacement, resource scarcity, and instability. Funding military expansion while underfunding climate

[49] Global Peace Index 2024, IEP

[50] Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 1953. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960. pp. 179–188.

[51] Yezid Sayigh and Hamza Meddeb, "The Military and Private Business Actors in the Global South: The Politics of Market Access," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024

[52] Human Development Report 2025

resilience is therefore irrational and self-defeating, especially for vulnerable states already facing climate-induced insecurity.

Militarism is therefore a systemic mis-investment, anchored in fear, inertia, and vested interests, at odds with the true security needs of human beings in the 21st century. A fundamental reallocation of resources is needed, from destructive capacity to constructive potential. Disarmament and demilitarization are not just peace strategies; they are economic and environmental imperatives. A reordering of global priorities would allow the global community to fund universal healthcare, education, and clean water, tackle the climate crisis with the urgency it requires, and promote inclusive, just, democratic societies where the dignity of every person is upheld, not by force, but by fairness and opportunity. Ultimately, the moral, economic, and ecological costs of sustaining militarism in an age of existential global challenges are not just unsustainable, they are indefensible.

The security case for disarmament

Contrary to conventional assumptions, the accumulation of increasingly lethal weaponry does not enhance security, it erodes it. This is particularly poignant in the case of nuclear weapons. Nuclear arms races heighten geopolitical tensions, foster mistrust, and increase the probability of miscalculation, accidental escalation, or unauthorized use. The Cuban Missile Crisis, near-misses during the Cold War, and recent incidents involving nuclear signaling in the context of the Ukraine conflict underscore how fragile the so-called "strategic stability" based on nuclear deterrence can be. In today's multipolar and highly volatile security environment nuclear risks are growing, not diminishing.

Modern weapons systems embody a paradox: they are more precise, with the potential to reduce unintended casualties, yet at the same time they are more destructive, faster, increasingly automated, and more difficult to control, thereby amplifying the risks of miscalculation and escalation. The rapid development of autonomous weapons and AI-enabled, command-and-control systems introduces profound risks: the loss of human judgment in high-stakes decision-making, increased susceptibility to cyber intrusion, and compressed decision timelines that leave little room for de-escalation. These technologies create what analysts describe as a "use-it-or-lose-it" dynamic, especially in the nuclear realm, where states may feel compelled to strike first for fear of losing retaliatory capacity in a surprise attack.[53]

Moreover, the spread of sophisticated and increasingly accessible weaponry—ranging from stockpiles of nuclear materials and chemical agents to emerging lethal autonomous weapons systems (including drones)—heightens the risk of proliferation to non-state actors, rogue regimes, or terrorist networks Even well-guarded arsenals cannot be made entirely immune to diversion or theft, and the more such systems exist, the greater the statistical certainty that some will eventually fall into dangerous hands. Disarmament, robust arms control and nonproliferation are therefore essential for preventing the diffusion of these catastrophic weapons and technologies beyond responsible state control.

The dangers are further compounded by the presence of highly centralized political systems in which critical decisions about the use of force—including potentially catastrophic weapons, including nuclear weapons—are concentrated in the hands of a single leader or a narrow inner circle, as is the case with nuclear weapons. In the absence of democratic checks and balances, independent oversight, or meaningful public accountability, the threshold for escalation may depend less on rational deterrence calculations and more on regime survival, personal legacy, or internal political dynamics. In such contexts, the risk of miscalculation or deliberate provocation increases dramatically, as does the possibility that leaders may resort to brinkmanship in moments of domestic vulnerability or perceived external threat. This added layer of unpredictability underscores the urgency of reducing reliance on

[53] This point is eloquently made by Anne Jacobsen in her book *Nuclear War*, referenced earlier.

doctrines and arsenals that place disproportionate destructive power in the hands of a few individuals.

It is critically important that disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, not be seen as a simplistic or futuristic ideal contingent on the emergence of a perfectly peaceful world. It is a pragmatic security strategy aimed at reducing known risks, minimizing pathways to conflict, and creating predictability and restraint in international affairs. Historical evidence, from the success of strategic arms limitation agreements during the Cold War to the landmine and cluster munitions treaties, demonstrates that well-designed disarmament frameworks increase trust, build confidence and hence increase security.

In a world increasingly defined by asymmetry, complexity, and technological disruption, the traditional model of deterrence based on overwhelming firepower is no longer sufficient, and in some cases, dangerously obsolete. It fuels multiple arms race dynamics due to the perceived need to address ever more complex security imbalances and deterrence requirements. These dynamics undermine trust and cooperation and result in greater accumulations of armaments leading to a vicious cycle of increasing tensions and further arms racing. Rather than decreasing risks of conflict, the quest for full deterrence exacerbates these risks. True security in the 21st century will depend not on the perpetual expansion of arsenals, but on credible, verifiable, and sustained disarmament and arms control efforts that build trust and cooperation and reduce the chance of catastrophe for all.

Critics often point to aggressive or unpredictable actors as reasons why disarmament is unrealistic. Yet it is precisely these situations that highlight the dangers of relying solely on military deterrence. Threat perceptions are mutually reinforcing: one state's pursuit of security through greater arsenals is seen by others as a threat, prompting countermeasures and fueling a cycle of mistrust and escalation. Breaking this cycle requires a gradual but deliberate shift away from nuclear deterrence as the cornerstone of security. This does not mean abandoning deterrence altogether but broadening it to include non-military dimensions: economic resilience, diplomatic coalitions, normative constraints, and cooperative security arrangements. Most importantly, it demands sustained diplomacy, confidence-building, and trust-building measures that reduce the salience of weapons in international relations. Only by reframing security as something achieved through cooperation rather than armament can states begin to escape the vicious cycle of fear that aggressive actors exploit.

While some argue that nuclear disarmament is an aspirational goal best deferred until a more peaceful international order emerges, this view underestimates the evolving nature of risk and overestimates the sustainability of nuclear deterrence. Realist doctrines that prioritize strength, deterrence, and military dominance have shaped security policy for decades. Unlike conventional forces, however, nuclear weapons do not allow for graduated responses, reversibility, or recovery from error. Their use is instantaneous and irreversible, and the assumptions on which nuclear strategy rests are increasingly fragile: that adversaries will always act rationally; that nuclear command-and-control systems will never fail; that technological superiority ensures security; and that the nuclear status quo can indefinitely hold. In an age of rapid technological disruption, geopolitical volatility, cyber vulnerability, and autocratic unpredictability, these premises are no longer safe bets, but rather liabilities. Nuclear disarmament is not the abandonment of realism, but its evolution: a recognition that true security in our time requires reducing the number and destructiveness of tools that can annihilate humanity within hours. It is not naive to seek disarmament; it is dangerously complacent to imagine we can avoid catastrophe without it.

Legal arguments

Nuclear weapons, by their nature, cannot distinguish between combatants and civilians. Their wide-area effects, immense blast radii, radiation fallout, and long-term environmental contamination make them inherently indiscriminate. This directly contravenes the principle of distinction under international humanitarian law (IHL), which obliges parties to a conflict to distinguish at all times between combatants and civilians, and to direct attacks only against lawful military targets. The ICRC has consistently held that

it is "difficult to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the requirements of IHL," particularly given the scale and persistence of harm they inflict on civilian populations and ecosystems. In addition, the principle of proportionality, which prohibits attacks expected to cause excessive civilian harm in relation to the anticipated military advantage, is virtually impossible to satisfy in the case of nuclear weapons or other WMD. Biological and chemical weapons have already been prohibited on similar grounds: their effects are indiscriminate, disproportionate, and enduring.

These weapons also violate widely shared ethical and legal norms: the right to life, human dignity, and the duty to protect future generations from irreversible harm. Human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), reinforces prohibitions on arbitrary deprivation of life, while international environmental law underscores states' obligations to prevent severe, transboundary, and long-term damage to ecosystems. Global health protections, such as the International Health Regulations (IHR), reflect the imperative to prevent the risk of pandemics that the use of biological weapons would intentionally unleash. Together, these overlapping legal frameworks strengthen the case that weapons of mass destruction are fundamentally incompatible with the obligations states already bear under multiple branches of international law.

The treaty architecture reflects this unevenly. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) establish comprehensive prohibitions, banning development, stockpiling, and use, and thus functioning as true disarmament treaties. By contrast, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) does not outlaw the use of nuclear weapons, permits their possession by a handful of states, and contains only a general and contested commitment to eventual disarmament. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), though not yet universally accepted, represents an attempt to close that gap, placing nuclear weapons on the same legal and normative footing as chemical and biological weapons: fundamentally illegitimate and incompatible with humanitarian, legal, and environmental imperatives.

Legal arguments also extend beyond WMDs to conventional weapons. International humanitarian law prohibits means and methods of warfare that cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering. On this basis, specific treaties have banned or restricted particularly inhumane conventional weapons, including anti-personnel landmines (Ottawa Treaty), cluster munitions (Convention on Cluster Munitions), and blinding laser weapons (Protocol IV of the CCW). These prohibitions reflect the principle that legality is not determined solely by whether a weapon is "conventional" or "nuclear," but by its humanitarian consequences. At the same time, broader regulation of the conventional arms trade remains insufficient: while the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) sets standards for responsible conventional arms transfers, its implementation is inconsistent, and the unregulated flow of small arms and light weapons continues to drive armed violence, organized crime, and state fragility.

Emerging technologies and new domains of warfare pose additional legal challenges. Autonomous weapons systems, cyber capabilities, and other disruptive technologies remain largely unregulated despite their potential for indiscriminate or disproportionate effects. Outer space, long considered a global commons, is being increasingly weaponized. Yet the legal regime governing it, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, is outdated and insufficient to address today's security and technological realities. The absence of robust legal norms in these areas threatens to replicate, and even magnify, the humanitarian crises that earlier weapons prohibitions sought to prevent. Moreover, the continued prioritization of militarization and arms development, especially of WMDs, undermines democratic governance, transparency, and civil liberties. In many contexts, excessive military spending empowers authoritarian regimes and diverts resources away from essential human needs. In fragile or post-colonial states, the unchecked inflow of conventional weapons frequently enables the escalation of political tensions into violent conflict. Disarmament, by contrast, strengthens legal norms, reinforces human rights, reduces strategic instability, and upholds the values enshrined in the UN Charter and international law.

The ethical case for disarmament [54]

The ethical, moral, and spiritual case for disarmament (nuclear, other WMD and conventional) is perhaps the most profound and compelling of all—because it touches the essence of what it means to be human, how we relate to each other, and the values we claim to hold sacred. It calls into question the very foundations of our civilizations and exposes the deep contradictions between our stated moral convictions and the realities of our national behaviors.

The development, possession, and potential use of weapons of mass destruction—and even the large-scale use of conventional arms—pose a stark moral contradiction. In virtually every ethical tradition, the intentional and indiscriminate destruction of life, especially civilian life, is not only prohibited but condemned. Yet the logic of deterrence and strategic dominance requires exactly that: the credible threat of mass killing.

Jonathan Schell, in *The Fate of the Earth*, argued that nuclear weapons ushered in a fundamentally new ethical dilemma. They introduced the possibility of "species suicide," the capacity of humankind to destroy itself completely. This changes the moral calculus entirely: it is no longer about winning or losing wars but about the moral legitimacy of risking the existence of humanity itself. This ethical recognition echoed the warning of the Russell–Einstein Manifesto of 1955, in which some of the greatest scientific minds of the 20th century urged humanity to "remember your humanity, and forget the rest." That statement framed disarmament not merely as a strategic choice but as a moral imperative for survival. Pope Francis has echoed this ethical stance, declaring that "the use of nuclear weapons, as well as their mere possession, is to be firmly condemned."[55] He has warned that these weapons create "a false sense of security" and that "peace and international stability cannot be founded on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation."[56]

Proponents of nuclear deterrence sometimes present it as a moral stance—purely defensive, meant to prevent war. But a strategy that rests on the credible threat of mass, indiscriminate destruction cannot be reconciled with protecting non-combatants or with a duty to avoid catastrophic risk; it normalizes holding civilian populations hostage and makes human survival contingent on perfect rationality and error-free technology. In that light, deterrence is not a moral substitute for disarmament but a fragile stopgap that the law and ethics require us to transcend.

This possibility renders any justification for the maintenance or use of nuclear weapons ethically void, regardless of strategic calculations. To claim that the only way to deter immoral weapons and irresponsible actors is by threatening their use in return is itself both immoral and irresponsible. It perpetuates the very logic it seeks to restrain. Their very existence is an affront to the moral responsibility we bear toward future generations.

Nearly all the world's major religions teach nonviolence, compassion, the sanctity of life, and the pursuit of peace. Yet most states that profess adherence to these faiths are also heavily militarized. Christianity (especially in its foundational teachings in the New Testament) emphasizes turning the other cheek, loving one's enemies, and the blessedness of peacemakers. Christ's Sermon on the Mount is a manifesto of radical nonviolence. Yet many heavily armed nations identify as majority Christian. Islam calls for peace (the very word "Islam" shares the root with *salaam*, or peace). While it permits defensive struggle, the Qur'an condemns aggression and the killing of innocents. The pursuit of weapons of mass destruction

[54] United Nations General Assembly, *Ethical Imperatives for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World,* A/RES/79/36, adopted December 2, 2024. UN Digital Library, A_RES_79_36; see also GA verbatim record A/79/PV.43.

[55] Pope Francis, *Address at the International Symposium "Prospects for a World Free from Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament"*, Vatican City, November 10, 2017.

[56] Pope Francis, *Message to the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination*, March 23, 2017.

and militarized regional rivalries defy these teachings. Judaism, rooted in a history of suffering and exile, emphasizes *tikkun olam*—the healing of the world. The preservation of life (*pikuach nefesh*) overrides almost all other commandments.[57] Yet policies of deterrence and occupation continue in its name. Buddhism teaches non-harming (*ahimsa*), mindfulness, and compassion for all sentient beings.[58] The pursuit of weapons, especially those designed for mass killing, is in stark opposition to these principles. Hinduism holds the concept of *dharma*,[59] or righteous living, at its core—yet war is justified only as a last resort, and the Bhagavad Gita's context is allegorical, often misused in justifying violence. Indigenous spiritualities around the world teach deep respect for life and the interconnectedness of all beings—values directly undermined by modern warfare and militarism. In this same spirit, ʿAbdu'l-Bahá, then head of the Bahá'í community, told an audience at Stanford University in 1912 that universal peace was both the highest spiritual duty and the most urgent practical necessity, warning that humanity could not prosper so long as nations armed themselves for mutual destruction.

Despite this, the geopolitical reality is one where nations governed by adherents of these faiths are not only arming themselves but often leading in arms production and export or promoting regional rivalries and militarization. This reveals a deep dissonance—between spiritual self-identity and political action.

If war is incompatible with the highest aspirations of spiritual belief, then disarmament becomes not just a political goal but a moral and spiritual duty. It is the concrete manifestation of peace, compassion, and justice. To pursue disarmament is to affirm the sanctity of human life over ideologies or national pride, to choose cooperation over domination, to live in integrity with the values of one's faith or conscience, and to break the cycles of fear and vengeance that perpetuate conflict.

The doctrine of nuclear deterrence relies on the threat of total destruction—a threat we must be prepared to carry out in order for it to be credible. This leads to a deeply paradoxical position: to prevent war, we must be willing to commit mass murder. This posture is ethically incoherent. It is akin to saying we will commit evil in the hope that it will prevent evil, or more absurdly, that the risk of apocalypse is a guarantor of peace. No religious or moral tradition condones threatening innocent life as a strategy for security.

If disarmament is to move from aspiration to action, it will require more than diplomacy, it will require moral courage and spiritual leadership. Religious institutions, spiritual communities, and ethical thinkers must speak clearly and consistently: to denounce the idolatry of military power, to advocate for reconciliation, not revenge, and to insist that national security cannot come at the cost of global annihilation.

The abolition of nuclear weapons—and the broader goal of global disarmament—is a moral frontier as significant as the abolition of slavery or the recognition of universal human rights. It challenges us to invent new forms of politics, ones that are rooted not in domination but in our shared vulnerability and shared humanity.

The strongest case for disarmament lies not only in its logic, but in its alignment with the deepest values of civilization. It is a test of whether we truly believe in the sanctity of life, the unity of humanity, and the moral ideals we teach our children. To continue to live under the threat of annihilation, to devote our finest minds and greatest resources to the art of killing, is to betray the spiritual inheritance of humankind. Disarmament is not just a technical process. It is an act of collective spiritual awakening.

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[57] Sacks, Jonathan. *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility*. Schocken Books, 2005.

[58] Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[59] Zaehner, R. C. *The Bhagavad Gita: With a Commentary Based on the Original Sources*. Oxford University Press, 1969.

The case for leadership and vision

The case for disarmament is not utopian, it is existential. The current trajectory of arms development, driven by fear, competition, and profit, is neither sustainable nor secure. Humanitarian needs, economic priorities, and global stability are all imperiled by the unchecked proliferation of both WMDs and conventional weapons. As is occurring with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), for example, disarmament must be reframed as a global security imperative, not an idealistic goal but a strategic necessity. As an investment in humanity, redirecting resources toward survival, dignity, and prosperity, and a path toward justice and equity, limiting the power disparities that weapons systems exacerbate. In an interconnected world facing global challenges like pandemics, climate change, and inequality, militarization is an outdated paradigm. The future demands common security, not mutual destruction.

To translate this rationale into durable change, architecture must match ambition. Reductions in the salience and number of weapons will only be credible if accompanied by transparent inventories, staged and verifiable drawdowns, adjudication and compliance mechanisms, and a limited protective capacity that deters backsliding and protects civilians. This Roadmap sets out the first three elements. The fourth, namely a law-bound capability under UN authority, is the necessary complement that ensures restraint is not merely promised but protected.

3. Designing a disarmament protocol under the Second United Nations Charter

One important aim of the Second United Nations Charter is to significantly strengthen the collective security and disarmament provisions included in the original UN Charter, many of which fell victim to the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s and the resulting arms race, important features of which remain today deeply embedded in the geopolitical landscape. In the area of disarmament, in particular, the key reference in the Second United Nations Charter is included in Article 12.4, in Chapter IV on the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly. It states: "In order to promote the establishment and of international peace and security and implement the goal of general and complete disarmament, the General Assembly in consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly shall adopt a Protocol on Disarmament and ensure that the Member States of the United Nations observe all its provisions."

Proposed revisions proceed on twin tracks. One track codifies scope, timelines, verification, compliance, and dispute settlement under the Disarmament Protocol. The other, by using a separate instrument establishes a UN protective capacity with narrow mandates for Charter enforcement and civilian protection.

The sections that follow will provide a brief overview and historical background on the evolution of the concept of disarmament and its associated institutions within the UN system. They will lay out some desirable principles to underpin the design of a disarmament protocol, including the following:

1. a careful review of the issues underlying the integration of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) into the disarmament process;

2. a clear stipulation of the armaments which would be included in disarmament provisions;

3. an inventory of Member States' military capabilities to establish a baseline with respect to which the disarmament process would be benchmarked;

4. a credible system of verification of Member States' compliance with respect to the agreed disarmament provisions, to prevent the emergence of a system (as in the 2015 Paris Agreement on

Climate Change) where non-binding commitments derail the process and fatally undermine its credibility[60];

5. an envisaged timeframe for the disarmament process and the need to strike a balance between the many current geopolitical challenges and;

6. the recognition that future global peace and security are inconsistent with continued weapons building and ever greater arsenals fueled by technological innovations, among others.

Verification cannot rely on reporting alone. The regime should combine baseline declarations, inspections, and technical monitoring with graduated, Charter-consistent consequences—from remedial action plans and targeted sanctions to, in extremis, protective operations under UN authority to prevent imminent mass harm. Properly designed, such measures operationalize the Charter's collective security clause without militarizing the UN.

A process of disarmament, however long it may stretch into the future, would necessarily involve a transformation in key features of the global economy, from one in which the military industrial complex makes a significant contribution to economic output and employment, to one in which trillions of dollars of resources now allocated to defense would be redirected to other activities more closely linked to human development. This document will, therefore, present some case studies, focused on two countries in which such economic restructuring has taken place in an orderly and ultimately successful manner, without creating the economic disruptions that might have been expected at the outset.

4. Historical and institutional background: disarmament at the UN

The founding principle of the United Nations, and an enduring objective of the organization ever since, is the establishment and maintenance of durable international peace. The Second UN Charter reaffirmed the centrality of peace not only to human flourishing but also to the preservation of our species and the planet. International disarmament has been seen as a vital ingredient in this equation and the UN has accordingly set up several organizations, committees, and bodies to tackle various elements regarding disarmament. Notwithstanding some successes, these efforts have largely been ineffective and plagued by consensus failures, convoluted bureaucratic processes, and strong-arming by great powers. While the organization's Charter laid out a framework to achieve global disarmament 80 years ago, military expenditures have continued to rise, and astonishing acts of violence and destruction continue to occur daily. It is thus clear that we require a new approach.

Precedent

The pursuit of disarmament has a long history in international discourse and is a fundamental pillar of the UN Charter. For instance, Article 11 of the UN Charter bestows on the UNGA the power to consider "the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments" and to make recommendations concerning these issues to Member States and the UN Security Council. Article 39 defines the core mandates of the Security Council as, first, to determine "any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression"; and second, to make recommendations or to decide "what measures shall be taken… to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Following the entry into force of the 1945 Charter, the very first UNGA resolution in January 1946 addressed the abolition of nuclear weapons and established the Atomic Energy Commission. In 1952, the General Assembly created the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). At a 1955 session of the UNDC, the Soviet

[60] As demonstrated by the fact that, contrary to the aims of the Paris Agreement, CO2 emissions have continued to rise, and the scientific community regards its temperature targets as being out of reach.

Union proposed a draft resolution to ban unconditionally WMDs, require all permanent members of the Security Council to substantially reduce their conventional military equipment and personnel within a year, and abolish all military installations on foreign territories.[61] At the same time, the United Kingdom and France jointly proposed a three-step disarmament plan. Despite countries from both Cold War blocs expressing a desire for disarmament, great power politics prevented the actualization of this goal.

Today, the disarmament discourse remains important in the international community, as evidenced by Secretary-General António Guterres' 2018 Agenda for Disarmament[62] and the 2024 Pact for the Future. While contemporary discourse primarily focuses on nuclear weapons and other WMDs, the primary causes of death in armed conflict remain conventional small arms and light weapons. The Agenda for Disarmament recognizes this, but the broader disarmament discourse must be shifted to reflect the fact that, even though the prohibition and elimination of WMDs is crucial for the preservation of the human species, true peace can only be reached with the disarmament of all types of weapons and military equipment.

The role of the UNGA

In a typical year, the UNGA adopts 70 to 80 resolutions related to disarmament by majority vote or consensus, typically through the UNGA's First Committee on Disarmament and International Security. The First Committee is a forum in which Member States can discuss their positions on various disarmament issues, allowing them to articulate common understandings and principles that can shape norms and behaviors and form the basis of negotiations in other UN disarmament fora.[63]

The First Committee regularly addresses the most urgent and complex disarmament challenges, including WMD, the weaponization of outer space, the risks posed by emerging technologies, and regional security arrangements, such as nuclear-weapon-free zones. In 2024, the General Assembly adopted 72 resolutions on the Committee's recommendation, including measures reaffirming the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction in outer space,[64] condemning the recent use of chemical weapons,[65] expressing concern over lethal autonomous weapons systems,[66] and supporting the long-standing goal of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions of tension, notably the Middle East[67] and Northeast Asia.[68] These actions reflect the Committee's evolving role in navigating the intersection of new threats and enduring disarmament priorities.

However, these apparent successes mask growing polarization and fragmentation within the First Committee. A striking trend in recent years has been the sharp decline in the number of resolutions adopted without a vote—long considered a hallmark of consensus on disarmament norms. In 2024, an unprecedented number of resolutions required recorded votes, with many traditionally noncontroversial

[61] "Disarmament Commission," *International Organization* 9, no. 1 (1955): 158–59.

[62] "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament," United Nations, November 5, 2021.

[63] "UN General Assembly First Committee," Reaching Critical Will, accessed December 15, 2024.

[64] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/230 (2024), "Prevention of an arms race in outer space." This resolution affirms that the use of or threat to use of weapons of mass destruction in outer space is contrary to the UN Charter and the Outer Space Treaty (1967).

[65] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/239 (2024), "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction." The resolution condemns the use of chemical weapons and reaffirms the obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

[66] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/241 (2024), "Lethal autonomous weapon systems." This resolution expresses concern over the potential use of autonomous weapons systems incompatible with international humanitarian law.

[67] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/34 (2024), "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East." This resolution reiterates support for a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, a longstanding but unrealized goal of international diplomacy.

[68] While no official NWFZ currently exists in Northeast Asia, various Track II and governmental initiatives have explored the concept. See: Morton H. Halperin, Thomas Pickering, and Leon Sigal, "A Proposal for a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone," Nautilus Institute (2015).

texts subjected to extensive debate, explanations of position, and rights of reply. This pattern underscores deepening divisions among Member States, even on issues once seen as areas of broad agreement, reflecting a more fractured and confrontational international disarmament environment.[69]

In practice, the First Committee has become largely static and ineffective, in part due to the failure of Member States to engage meaningfully with one another's perspectives. As national interests increasingly eclipse a commitment to multilateralism, many states have grown entrenched in their positions, rejecting language supported by the majority and undermining the normative value of consensus. Yet paradoxically, because the First Committee is the only global disarmament forum in which Member States can formally vote, it has become a key platform for governments to signal their individual views, even when this comes at the expense of unity. The result is a proliferation of repetitive and often redundant resolutions, many of which are adopted without genuine consensus or practical impact.[70]

The current state of disarmament debates

Some of the most significant multilateral efforts for disarmament involving UN members have yielded treaties that limit the use, testing, and proliferation of both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms.

International efforts to stem the use, testing, and spread of nuclear weapons have produced several major multilateral treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT, 190 parties), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT, 187 signatories), and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW, 93 signatories). The TPNW, which entered into force in 2021, represents a significant normative advance and continues to gain ratifications, reflecting the growing frustration of non-nuclear-weapon states with the lack of progress of nuclear disarmament. However, the efficacy of the global nonproliferation and disarmament regime remains constrained since the nuclear-armed states have thus far rejected the TPNW, and the CTBT has not entered into force due to the failure of nine key states, including the United States, China, and Russia, to ratify it.[71]

For its part, the NPT has faced persistent challenges since entering into force in 1970. Notably, three nuclear-armed states, India, Pakistan, and Israel, have never signed the Treaty, and North Korea withdrew in 2003. The most recent NPT Review Conference, held in 2022, highlighted deep divisions even among State Parties, preventing consensus on a final outcome document.[72] These difficulties underscore a broader vulnerability: the stability of the nuclear order depends heavily on the restraint of individual states, and the actions of even a single non-compliant nuclear-armed country could trigger a chain reaction of escalation, heightening the risk of nuclear conflict.

Looking ahead, the 2026 Review Conference faces significant hurdles. The expiration of key arms control agreements, such as the New START treaty, and the lack of dialogue among major powers exacerbate uncertainties. Experts emphasize the need for bridge-building states to facilitate dialogue and propose pragmatic steps to revitalize the treaty's objectives. In summary, while the NPT purports to remain a

[69] See United Nations General Assembly, First Committee 2024 Session Summary, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/firstcommittee-2024-summary/ (accessed June 2025). The report highlights that in 2024, 72 draft resolutions were adopted, with a significant rise in recorded votes and contested language.

[70] "UN General Assembly First Committee," Reaching Critical Will, accessed December 15, 2024.

[71] "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, July 8, 2024,; Shannon Bugos and Mohammadreza Giveh, "Russia Withdraws Ratification of Nuclear Test Ban Treaty," Arms Control Association, 2023.

[72] Final Document of the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, UN Document NPT/CONF.2020/CRP.1/Rev.2 (26 August 2022). The conference ended without consensus due to objections raised over language related to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and other geopolitical disputes. See: United Nations, "Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1–26 August 2022)".

cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, its future effectiveness depends on renewed commitment, constructive dialogue, and the willingness of states to address both traditional and emerging challenges collaboratively, including the threats to non-proliferation, and the longstanding failure of Nuclear Weapon States to pursue negotiations for nuclear disarmament in good faith as required by Article VI of the NPT. In the meantime, however, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) continues to gain international recognition and acceptance. The TPNW's first Review Conference will be held in November-December of 2026, after the NPT Review Conference. It will be of interest to directly compare progress under both treaties.

Beyond nuclear weapons, most of the international community has cooperated to prohibit the use and development of other WMDs like biological and chemical weapons. Notably, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC, 187 parties and 4 signatories) requires its signatories to eliminate all existing biological weapons and abstain from developing new ones.[73] As of July 2024, 10 states had neither signed nor ratified the BWC, and there remains no formal verification mechanism. The Convention's impotence is heightened by the potential proliferation of biological weapons among non-state actors, who could obtain such weapons through theft, transfers from a sympathetic government, purchases, or other tactics. In 2016, for example, some government officials believed that the Islamic State might have been covertly experimenting with bioweapons.[74]

Similar to the BWC, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC, 193 parties and 1 non-party signatory) requires its signatories to destroy their chemical weapon stockpiles and abstain from developing new ones.[75] Fortunately, the CWC defines clear verification and compliance measures and assigns them to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). However, the abolition of chemical weapons has been far from complete, as several states and non-state actors, including Syria and the Islamic State, have been accused of violating the CWC in recent years.[76] Looking ahead, one of the greatest challenges facing both the BWC and the CWC is the accelerating potential of artificial intelligence to facilitate the design and development of novel biological and chemical weapons, thereby undermining the spirit of both treaties and testing the effectiveness of existing verification regimes.

In the realm of conventional weapons, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is a key legal instrument aimed at balancing military necessity with the principles of international humanitarian law (IHL). It prohibits or restricts the use of specific types of weapons deemed to cause unnecessary suffering or to have indiscriminate effects, including blinding laser weapons and weapons with undetectable fragments. Additional protocols address the use of landmines, booby-traps, incendiary weapons, and explosive remnants of war. Though the CCW has 120 High Contracting Parties as of July 2024, it lacks verification, compliance, or enforcement mechanisms.[77] Importantly, the CCW has served as the principal forum for discussions on emerging technologies, including through a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), which has met regularly since 2017 to assess the implications of autonomy in weapons systems under IHL.

Other major international instruments address conventional arms with greater specificity and scope. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) both ban entire categories of weapons and include verification mechanisms. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) regulates the international transfer of conventional arms to prevent their diversion to illicit use or violations of IHL and human rights law. In parallel, the politically binding Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) seeks to curb the illicit trade in small arms through national

[73] "Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, July 12, 2024.
[74] "Module 3: Bioterrorism," Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed July 23, 2024.
[75] "Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, April 8, 2024.
[76] "Chemical Weapons: Frequently Asked Questions," Arms Control Association, January 2022.
[77] United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Status of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, July 2024.

implementation and international cooperation frameworks.

In addition to regulating and prohibiting categories of weapons, several multilateral instruments focus on specific delivery mechanisms. The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC), with 145 subscribing states, is not a treaty but a politically binding transparency and confidence-building instrument aimed at curbing the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. It encourages voluntary restraint in the development and testing of such missiles and promotes the exchange of pre-launch notifications and annual declarations of missile policies. However, the HCOC was never intended to include an enforcement mechanism or legal obligations. Its effectiveness has been limited by the continued expansion of ballistic missile programs by several states, including North Korea, Iran, and Russia, which, despite being an HCOC subscriber, has continued to develop and deploy advanced missile systems.[78]

Regulating space

A forward-looking disarmament protocol must also address space-based weapons systems. Outer space has largely been a venue for exploration, scientific discovery, and the deployment of cutting-edge communications and imaging technologies. However, these technologies are increasingly utilized to assist in combat. For example, Ukraine has relied on Starlink, a private satellite internet company, to conduct drone attacks.[79] Moreover, Chinese researchers have warned that anti-satellite capabilities might become crucial for their country's national security interests, and the US has accused Russia of planning to put an anti-satellite nuclear weapon into low earth orbit.[80] The increasing view of space as a realm for combat necessitates its inclusion in the process of disarmament.

Several mechanisms already exist to govern the use and exploration of outer space, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST), the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). The OST, which has 115 signatories, bans the use of space as a site for WMDs and prohibits military activities there.[81] Although it repeatedly emphasizes that space will be a peaceful domain, the Treaty does not explicitly ban WMD-capable ballistic missiles from traveling through space. UNOOSA helps countries leverage the benefits of outer space for sustainable development and helps develop a coordinated law and policy framework for space. COPUOS is broadly meant to govern the exploration and use of space to promote its benefits for peace, security, and development.

To strengthen and modernize global space governance, the UN General Assembly established a second Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) in 2023 (via Resolution 78/20) and, in 2024, merged two OEWGs into a single new OEWG on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (2024–2028). It was tasked with producing concrete recommendations on norms, responsible behavior, and threat reduction in space.

However, burdensome bureaucracy hinders the coordination of these three bodies. While COPUOS reports to the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly, Special Political and Decolonization, security-related space issues are discussed in the First Committee, Disarmament and International Security. This bifurcated reporting system and interdepartmental fracturing between the Fourth and First Committees creates disunity in international space policy and prevents intersectional approaches from ensuring that outer space remains a realm of peace.

With seats at the disarmament table, UNOOSA and COPUOS would necessarily have much broader

[78] See Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. For background on its status and limitations, see Reut Institute, Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC), and UNODA, Fact Sheet: Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. For evidence of recent missile developments, see reports by SIPRI and the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea.

[79] Kurt Vinion, "How Elon Musk's Starlink Became Invaluable To Ukraine's War Effort," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, October 20, 2022.

[80] Stephen Chen, "China Military Must Be Able to Destroy Elon Musk's Starlink Satellites If They Threaten National Security: Scientists," South China Morning Post, May 25, 2022; Theresa Hitchens, "New Details Emerge of Russia's Potential Nuclear Space Weapon," Breaking Defense, May 3, 2024.

[81] Ben Rusek, "The Outerspace Treaty at a Glance," Arms Control Association.

mandates to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and promote the exploration and exploitation of outer space for the common benefit of all humanity. Most space-related technologies that could be used to support terrestrial combat or wage war in space, such as certain rockets and ballistic missiles, must either be destroyed or turned over to UNOOSA. UNOOSA would be responsible for monitoring all remaining nationally owned space-based technologies to ensure compliance with disarmament, and it would possess its own stockpile of rockets, satellites, and other spacecraft for peaceful uses aligned with its mandate and ensuring compliance with the disarmament protocol in extreme cases.

Outer space governance should mirror the core logic of this Roadmap, thus reducing risks through transparent limits and verification, and protecting those limits through legitimate, rules-bound capacity. The Roadmap sets out how we will list, check, and safely scale back or repurpose space-related technologies that can be used for both civilian and military purposes, including those that could target satellites. The companion protective concept allows, in exceptional cases, non-violent steps under the UN Charter—focused on monitoring, de-escalation, and rapid technical assistance—rather than putting weapons in space.

Summary

Since the inception of the United Nations, disarmament has been a cornerstone of its global governance mission. The UN system has developed a complex and interrelated institutional architecture for disarmament and non-proliferation, including the General Assembly's First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD)—a multilateral negotiating body based in Geneva—and the UN (UNDC), which serves as a deliberative body offering consensus-based recommendations. While earlier UN negotiating bodies such as the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee were able to produce landmark agreements like the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the CD in its current form, established in 1979, is best known for negotiating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Yet these successes are exceptions: more often, the UN disarmament machinery has been characterized by institutional stagnation and political deadlock, especially within the CD, which has not been able to agree on a programme of work, let alone produced a substantive treaty since the 1996 CTBT. Complementing this framework are the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), responsible for safeguarding peaceful nuclear activities and preventing diversion to military use, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), which has established a global monitoring system for nuclear test detection and promotes compliance with the CTBT, though the treaty itself has not yet entered into force.

Additionally, a number of politically binding export control regimes, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Australia Group, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), play a central role in limiting the spread of weapons-related technologies. These frameworks focus primarily on non-proliferation, rather than disarmament, and are often criticized for their lack of inclusivity and legal force. Despite the existence of this broad institutional machinery, fragmentation, redundancy, and politicization continue to hamper progress. Time and again, promising opportunities for substantive disarmament are derailed by competing national interests and procedural inertia, reinforcing the need for profound systemic reform if the United Nations is to play a credible and effective role in advancing global disarmament.[82]

[82] For reasons of length, this Roadmap does not reproduce in full a detailed annex that was prepared for the draft Disarmament Protocol, mapping the UN's principal disarmament machinery since 1945. That compendium provides a consolidated overview of the institutions, forums, and treaties that have shaped multilateral disarmament efforts, including the UN General Assembly's First Committee, the series of Special Sessions on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. It also covers the work of related advisory and research bodies, such as the Secretary-General's Advisory Board and the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), implementation agencies (notably the IAEA and UNMAS), and the full spectrum of treaty regimes and frameworks, from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions to humanitarian instruments like the Ottawa Treaty, the Cluster Munitions Convention, the Programme of Action on Small Arms, and the Arms Trade Treaty. Together, these mechanisms form the backbone of the UN's disarmament architecture—an architecture that is extensive but often underperforming, fragmented, or in need of reform. The annex is available to interested readers upon request.

5. Key disarmament provisions and principles

Defining the disarmament set

The process of disarmament is often described as a practice of trust. Nations holding a majority of the world's weapons of mass destruction and military capacity have variously professed a willingness and desire to demilitarize. In 1933, for instance, Franklin Roosevelt called for the complete elimination of all offensive weapons as the core goal of the Conference on Disarmament.[83] However, deep-seated mistrust of other countries' intentions to adhere to disarmament agreements and fears that adversaries would gain an upper hand impeded the realization of disarmament goals. Thus, the central role of the UN in the disarmament process must be to facilitate trust. But trust alone is not sufficient. Disarmament also requires robust verification, together with technical, legal, and political measures that ensure commitments are honored in practice. Without these supporting mechanisms, even the best intentions risk being undermined.

The first step in the disarmament process must be to clarify the concept and to specify what it refers to specifically to ensure effective and accurate policymaking in service of the objective. Evolving technologies continually equip countries with new war tools, making the task of elaborating an exhaustive list of banned weapons a challenging task. For many disarmament advocates, the creation of an international peace that is long-lasting, credibly sustainable, and not easily reversed by new conflicts would likely require not only the destruction of existing stocks of weapons and the disbanding of national military forces but also the reduction of the capacity to create such arms and weapons in the future. This would necessitate the adaptation—or even decommissioning—of certain manufacturing plants and research and development facilities. In disarmament debates, this standard is often referred to as "CVID": comprehensive, verifiable, and irreversible disarmament.[84] CVID underscores that real progress demands more than declarations: it requires eliminating weapons in their entirety, ensuring transparency and verification at every step, and preventing any backsliding that could reconstitute arsenals in the future.

On the other hand, even strong advocates of what is called "general and complete disarmament" have recognized the need for the existence of national police forces to maintain internal order and to have a deterrence capacity at a time when many countries confront international crime syndicates, well-armed and financed drug cartels, private armies of mercenaries and, therefore, understandably feel that adequate national forces are necessary to confront these domestic dangers. An important challenge, therefore, is likely to be how to strike a middle ground between maintaining an effective national police force, ready to meet the internal security needs of states, but that cannot easily mutate into a threat to other UN members by being turned into a force for international aggression.

Given the enormous amount of work already done in the context of various international treaties, an important area of focus in this Protocol will be in incorporating the disarmament provisions contained in such treaties, many of which have been endorsed by large shares of the UN membership. To take one example, Article 4 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons already envisages in some detail the key features of how that disarmament process would unfold. Such provisions also exist for biological weapons, chemical weapons, land mines and cluster munitions. None of these treaties were in place as recently as 1966, when Clark and Sohn made a first attempt at developing a credible conceptual framework for disarmament.

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[83] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Appeal for World Peace by Disarmament and for Relief from Economic Chaos." The American Presidency Project. This is a different Conference on Disarmament than the body established in Geneva referred to earlier.

[84] The terminology of *comprehensive, verifiable,* and *irreversible disarmament* (CVID) emerged prominently in the context of negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program in the early 2000s. It was used by the United States and its partners in the Six-Party Talks (2003–2009) to emphasize that any denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula must not only be total in scope but also subject to rigorous verification and designed to prevent any reversal. Since then, CVID has been invoked more broadly as a benchmark for meaningful disarmament across different domains.

Disarmament as an asymmetrical but achievable process.

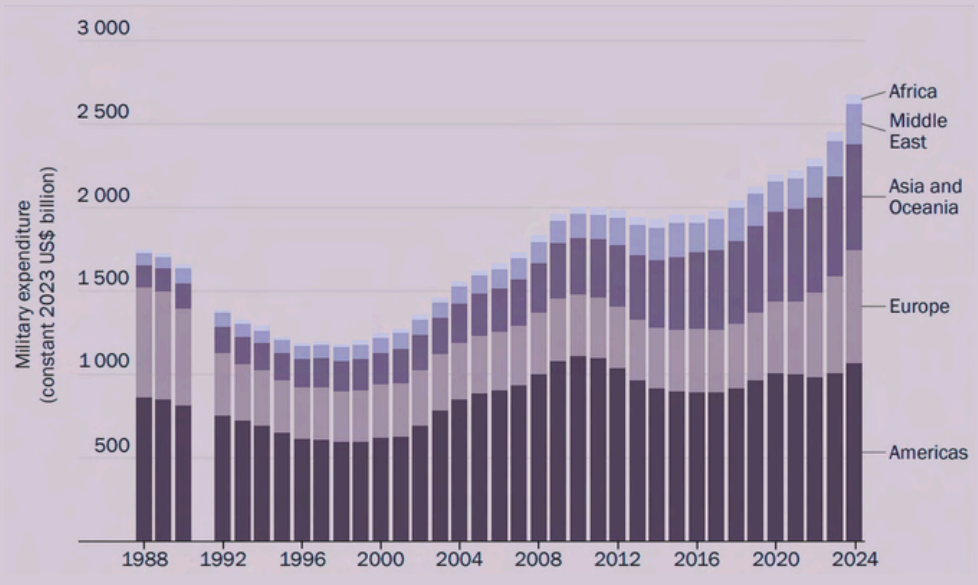
A second important feature of the disarmament process is the current asymmetry in the world as regards the concentration of military capabilities. The UN has 193 members but 3 countries according to SIPRI's Yearbook —the United States, China and Russia—accounted for 54.5% of total world military spending in 2024. The top 10 countries accounted for 73%, the top 15 for 80.5%.

Table 1: The 15 countries with the highest military expenditure in 2024[85]

Rank 2024	Rank 2023	Country	Spending ($ bn), 2024	Change in spending (%) 2023–24	Change in spending (%) 2015–24	Spending as a share of GDP (%) 2024	Spending as a share of GDP (%) 2015	Share of world spending (%) 2024
1	1	United States	997	5.7	19	3.4	3.5	37
2	2	China	314	7	59	1.7	1.8	12
3	3	Russia	149	38	100	7.1	4.9	5.5
4	7	Germany	88.5	28	89	1.9	1.1	3.3
5	4	India	86.1	1.6	42	2.3	2.5	3.2
Subtotal top 5			**1 635**					60
6	6	United Kingdom	81.8	2.8	23	2.3	2	3
7	5	Saudi Arabia	80.3	1.5	-20	7.3	13	3
8	8	Ukraine	64.7	2.9	1 251	34	3.8	2.4
9	9	France	64.7	6.1	21	2.1	1.9	2.4
10	10	Japan	55.3	21	49	1.4	0.9	2
Subtotal of 10			**1 981**					73
11	11	South Korea	47.6	1.4	30	2.6	2.4	1.8
12	14	Israel	46.5	65	135	8.8	5.4	1.7
13	16	Poland	38	31	159	4.2	2.1	1.4
14	12	Italy	38	1.4	45	1.6	1.2	1.4
15	13	Australia	33.8	1.9	25	1.9	2	1.2

Source: SIPRI. Trends in world military expenditure, 2024. (April 2025)

Figure 1: World military expenditure, by region, 1988–2024



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, Apr. 2025.
Note: The absence of data for the Soviet Union in 1991 means that no total can be calculated for that year.

[85] Spending figures and GDP are in US dollars, at current prices and exchange rates. Changes are in real terms, based on constant (2023) US dollars. Percentages below 10 are rounded to 1 decimal place; those over 10 are rounded to whole numbers. Figures and percentage shares may not add up to stated totals or subtotals due to the conventions of rounding.

A common misconception about global disarmament is that it requires equal action from all states, as though every country contributes equally to global militarization. In reality, disarmament is, and must be recognized as, an inherently asymmetrical process. This means that the overwhelming burden of rethinking military posture and redirecting military budgets falls on a relatively small group of nations.

By contrast, the vast majority of United Nations Member States such as countries like Uruguay, Bhutan, Djibouti, Namibia, or Malta, maintain only modest armed forces. These are often oriented not toward external warfare, but rather toward internal security, peacekeeping, or border control. Many of these states have neither offensive military capability nor geopolitical ambitions that threaten global peace. Their participation in any global disarmament framework would be largely normative or symbolic, rather than material.

This distribution of military power has several important implications. First, it gives disarmament an air of feasibility. Disarmament becomes more administratively and politically manageable when it is acknowledged that a small number of states control the vast bulk of global armaments. A global agreement need not involve a radical restructuring of defense postures in every corner of the world, but rather a phased and verifiable scaling down among the principal military powers. Second, it confers added moral legitimacy since calling for disarmament is not an imposition on all states equally; rather it is a call to accountability for those states whose military expenditures far exceed any plausible need for self-defense, and whose weapons stockpiles have global ramifications. Third, asymmetry confers strategic focus since international negotiations and confidence-building measures can be streamlined by prioritizing multilateral frameworks among the top 15–20 military spenders. This would not only be more efficient but would also reflect the real strategic dynamics of the current international order. Finally, most UN Member States are natural allies in the cause of disarmament. They have little to lose from global arms reduction and much to gain, particularly in the form of greater stability, less proliferation, and the possibility of reallocating global resources toward sustainable development; thus, asymmetry creates a supportive majority.

Thus, framing disarmament as a global responsibility does not imply an equal burden for all. Rather, it recognizes the asymmetry of power and weaponry in the international system and calls on those with the greatest capabilities—and therefore the greatest responsibilities—to lead the way. This approach is not only fair and realistic, but essential if we are to make real progress toward global peace and human-centered development.

Integrating weapons of mass destruction into the disarmament process[86]

Global governance concerning weapons of mass destruction (WMD) has undergone significant transformations since the early disarmament efforts of the mid-20th century. Initially centered around the nuclear threat that emerged from the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, disarmament frameworks have expanded, albeit unevenly, to address chemical and biological weapons, as well as new technological threats such as cyber capabilities and dual-use technologies. In very recent times, the unprecedented sophistication of artificial intelligence also poses serious risks in the context of automatized technology in armed conflicts. The evolution of these threats demands an integrated and dynamic approach to disarmament, capable of addressing not only nuclear weapons but the full spectrum of WMD that pose catastrophic risks to humanity.

The historical trajectory of WMD governance illustrates both progress and persistent gaps. Early efforts,

[86] This section owes much to the work done by Richard Lennane. In particular, the article he contributed to the book edited by Richard Falk and Augusto Lopez-Claros titled "Lessons from Existing WMD Multilateral Programmes and Platforms" in *Global Governance and International Cooperation: Managing Global Catastrophic Risks in the 21st Century* (Routledge, 2024).

such as the Geneva Protocol of 1925, sought to prohibit the use of chemical and biological weapons, reflecting the international community's horror at the widespread use of chemical agents during World War I. However, these agreements were limited in scope, focusing on the prohibition of use rather than the development, stockpiling, or transfer of such weapons. The advent of the nuclear age following World War II fundamentally shifted the disarmament agenda, leading to the establishment of the United Nations and the adoption of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. The NPT sought to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and committing nuclear-armed states to pursue disarmament. However, the NPT's architecture creates a normative ambivalence by recognizing—on a strictly transitional basis pending fulfillment of Article VI—the possession of nuclear weapons by five states. Non-nuclear-weapon states have never "permitted" such possession as a permanent entitlement; the treaty's logic is explicitly discriminatory-but-temporary, conditioned on good-faith negotiations toward disarmament. This dual stance complicates disarmament efforts. The more recent, complementary Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) seeks to resolve the contradiction by establishing an unequivocal global norm against nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, for now it lacks broad adoption and therefore practical effects (see further below).

Despite its foundational role, the NPT reflects a fragmented approach to disarmament. It operates alongside the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) of 1972 and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of 1993, each addressing distinct categories of WMD with varying degrees of legal robustness and enforcement mechanisms. This separation has resulted in a disjointed framework that struggles to adapt to the complex, interconnected nature of contemporary WMD threats. For example, while the Chemical Weapons Convention benefits from a robust verification regime managed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Biological Weapons Convention lacks any formal verification measures, undermining its effectiveness. As a case of success of the CWC, it is important to recall that at the time of the first alleged use of chemical weapons in the war, Syria was not a party to the treaty. Despite this, the international response was—by the admittedly modest standards of multilateral disarmament action—robust and decisive: an ad hoc UN-OPCW investigation was conducted in the midst of an active conflict, and Syria was strong-armed into joining the CWC.

Integrating chemical and biological weapons into a comprehensive disarmament process requires addressing several critical challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the disparity in verification and compliance mechanisms across different Weapons of Mass Destruction regimes. Nuclear disarmament treaties, such as those under the Non-Proliferation Treaty framework, include stringent verification protocols administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In contrast, the Biological Weapons Convention relies primarily on voluntary confidence-building measures, which are insufficient to ensure compliance in an era of rapid biotechnological advancement. To bridge this gap, there is a need to strengthen verification mechanisms for biological weapons. This could involve establishing an independent verification body akin to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, capable of conducting on-site inspections, monitoring dual-use research facilities, and investigating allegations of non-compliance. The inclusion of modern technological tools, such as satellite imagery, environmental sampling, and data analytics, would enhance the capacity to detect and deter violations. Additionally, fostering greater transparency through mandatory reporting and peer review processes could build trust among states parties and reinforce the norm against biological weapons.

Another significant challenge in integrating chemical and biological weapons is the dual-use nature of many technologies. Advances in synthetic biology, genetic engineering, and chemical synthesis have blurred the lines between civilian and military applications. While these technologies hold immense potential for medical, agricultural, and industrial innovation, they also present risks of misuse for the

development of novel biological and chemical agents. Disarmament frameworks must evolve to address these dual-use concerns without stifling scientific progress. A comprehensive approach to managing dual-use risks requires a multi-faceted strategy. This includes enhancing export control regimes, promoting the best practices in laboratory biosecurity, and fostering a culture of responsibility within the scientific community. International cooperation is essential, with states collaborating to develop harmonized guidelines and provide technical assistance to countries with limited regulatory capacities. Public-private partnerships can also play a crucial role, engaging industry stakeholders in efforts to secure supply chains and prevent the diversion of sensitive materials.

In addition, new technological developments, such as autonomous weapons, artificial intelligence in nuclear command systems, and the rise of cyberattacks, pose unprecedented challenges for the international legal framework governing WMD. In the chemical and biological domains, AI can accelerate design exploration, laboratory automation, and optimization of delivery systems, potentially lowering barriers to misuse and complicating verification and attribution. These advancements raise critical concerns about human control, potential system failures, and legal accountability, which have not yet been fully addressed in WMD treaties. The risk of cyber manipulation, including false nuclear attack alerts or sabotaging biological labs, highlights vulnerabilities beyond the weapons themselves. Additionally, the proliferation of these technologies among both state and non-state actors, including private corporations and cybercriminal organizations, complicates governance, as existing treaties are ill-equipped to manage threats arising from technologies outside traditional state control.

Legal harmonization is a critical aspect of integrating chemical and biological weapons into the disarmament process. The current legal landscape is fragmented, with distinct treaties governing different categories of WMD. This fragmentation hampers efforts to develop a cohesive disarmament strategy and creates opportunities for exploitation by actors seeking to evade regulatory scrutiny. A unified legal framework that bridges the gaps between the NPT, BWC, CWC, and upcoming technologies could enhance coherence and facilitate more effective implementation. Such a framework should be grounded in common principles, including the prohibition of development, production, acquisition, transfer, and use of all WMD, as well as robust verification, monitoring, control, and enforcement mechanisms.

It should also address the full spectrum of WMD-related activities, from state-level programs to the actions of non-state actors such as scientific institutions, private corporations, and civil society. Moreover, integrating disarmament obligations into broader international legal instruments regarding human rights law, environmental law, and international humanitarian law would further strengthen the normative foundation for WMD prohibition. The humanitarian approach, which is very much focused and based on scientific evidence regarding the humanitarian consequences and risks of certain weapons categories, offers a powerful tool for delegitimizing WMD possession and use. This approach can be the foundation of a unified protocol, with harmonized norms, standards, and instruments that reject WMD as incompatible with human dignity and security and progressively lead to their control and disarmament.

An inventory of weapons and military capabilities

Clark and Sohn, in *World Peace Through World Law* (1966, 3rd edition) laid out several important principles which they thought were essential for a credible disarmament protocol, including developing a comprehensive international weapons inventory. Such an inventory would inform a global understanding of the scale of the disarmament process needed and cast light on appropriate approaches to its achievement. This inventory would need to be verified and accepted by the body leading the disarmament process and be carried out by unbiased sources willing to check both reported armaments and investigate the existence of unreported military equipment and processing capacity.

The inventory would not only vitally inform the starting position of the disarmament process but also represent the first exercise toward compliance with the process. Compliance with the inventory would serve as a signal to other countries of a state's willingness to pursue disarmament and their adherence to the disarmament Protocol. Annex I presents an example of what such an inventory might look like in the case of Japan and Uruguay. The information collated in the Annex has been obtained from publicly available sources and taps into the significant work already done within the UN system to gain a better understanding of current global military capacities.

A verified inventory is more than a baseline; it is the assurance mechanism linking reductions to enforcement. Shared situational awareness enables proportionate responses—from remedial plans and targeted sanctions to, only in extremis, protective UN operations—when serious violations threaten the regime.

A gradual process

To maintain trust among nations and increase the willingness of states to comply, disarmament must proceed in carefully planned phases, each culminating in rigorous, transparent verification. This phased approach allows countries to gauge and confirm the reciprocal actions of others, thereby ensuring that no state gains a strategic advantage through noncompliance. Without such reassurances, mutual suspicion will undermine even the best-intentioned initiatives. The duration of each phase must strike a careful balance: long enough to permit the development and deployment of effective verification mechanisms but not so protracted as to erode political momentum or public engagement.

Importantly, a phased strategy also provides the necessary time and institutional scaffolding to support economic restructuring, including the conversion of military industries and the reallocation of resources toward sustainable development. These structural shifts will be essential to anchor disarmament in broader processes of social and economic renewal. A successful transition away from militarized security must be accompanied by visible gains in human security, employment, and infrastructure. This economic dimension is so critical that it is addressed in more detail in Section 6 below.

Phasing of disarmament should be twin-tracked: (1) staged reductions with verification and conversion milestones; and (2) the carefully sequenced stand-up of limited UN protective capacity (doctrine, oversight, logistics) with sunset and review clauses to prevent institutional creep. As disarmament deepens, reliance on protection declines by design.

Institutional enforcement and administration of the disarmament regime

A viable and enduring process of disarmament depends not only on the agreement to reduce or eliminate weapons but on the robust administration and enforceability of such commitments. Just as verification is essential for monitoring compliance, enforceability provides the legal and institutional scaffolding needed to deter violations and respond effectively when they occur. Without credible mechanisms for enforcement, disarmament risks being perceived as aspirational rather than binding—inviting strategic defection, undermining trust among states, and weakening the integrity of the entire regime.

The administration of the disarmament framework must therefore be anchored in institutions that possess both legitimacy and operational capacity. At the global level, this responsibility would fall to a newly created or significantly reformed UN body mandated to oversee and enforce the provisions of the disarmament protocol. Its legitimacy would derive from a careful balance: securing the essential participation of major military powers while also representing the interests of smaller and less militarized states, thereby avoiding perceptions of political imbalance or coercive dominance.

In the specific case of nuclear disarmament, a revitalized and reformed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could play a central role.[87] While the Agency's day-to-day work has centered on safeguards and non-proliferation rather than general disarmament, its Statute does envisage supporting international arrangements for safeguarded nuclear disarmament, and it has already performed disarmament-type verification—most notably certifying the dismantlement of South Africa's nuclear weapons program (and contributing to dismantlement verification in Iraq and Libya). In the specific case of nuclear disarmament, a revitalized and reformed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could play a central role. While the Agency's day-to-day work has centered on safeguards and non-proliferation rather than general disarmament, its Statute does envisage supporting international arrangements for safeguarded nuclear disarmament, and it has already performed disarmament-type verification—most notably certifying the dismantlement of South Africa's nuclear weapons program (and contributing to dismantlement verification in Iraq and Libya). Building on that technical pedigree and credibility, the IAEA —working in close cooperation with the United Nations—could be tasked with supervising the disclosure, verification, and destruction of nuclear stockpiles and weapons-related infrastructure under future agreements, ensuring rigorous, trusted standards throughout the transition.[88]

To make this administration meaningful, the UN must be endowed with sufficient authority and resources. Its expanded mandate would need to include the power to conduct thorough inspections—of both declared and suspected stockpiles—issue binding compliance reports and apply sanctions or penalties where necessary. These enforcement mechanisms should incorporate procedural safeguards, including the right of states to appeal inspection findings or contest sanctions, ensuring that the system remains fair and transparent.

A clear division of labor avoids militarizing the UN. A Disarmament Authority (under GA/Parliamentary oversight) manages declarations, inspections, findings, and sanctions proposals, working with relevant specialized agencies. Only when imminent mass harm or systematic, verified violation takes place would narrow UN protective operations be authorized: rule-of-engagement constrained, civilian-protection focused, time-limited, and reviewable.

Diplomatic channels should be the first recourse in the face of non-compliance, with sanctions, either economic or diplomatic and reserved for continued or serious violations. In extreme cases, particularly those involving threats to international peace or violations by non-state actors, the deployment of a UN Peace Force may be warranted to preserve the integrity of the disarmament regime (see below).

Ultimately, enforceability and institutional administration are not peripheral concerns but foundational principles. They are the connective tissue that turns legal commitments into operational realities and transforms the disarmament process from an ideal into a durable structure of international order.

Integrating principles and institutions for a lasting disarmament regime

The principles outlined thus far provide an essential foundation for any credible disarmament effort, but they must be understood as part of a broader, interconnected strategy to build lasting peace. This strategy must be ambitious, learning from the shortcomings of earlier disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation agreements that too often lacked enforcement, transparency, or sufficient political commitment. At its core, this new path toward global disarmament must rest on shared trust and mutual responsibility, elements that only a legitimate, empowered international authority like the United Nations can cultivate and sustain. This protocol envisions disarmament in its full scope, including not only

[87] "International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, July 17, 2024.

[88] Additionally, under the umbrella of peaceful purposes, the IAEA would promote nuclear energy for scientific and commercial uses. It would build and operate the necessary infrastructure for its own laboratories, research facilities, and test sites and assist nations and private organizations in developing their own sound and stable nuclear infrastructure.

weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, biological—but also the vast arsenal of conventional weapons, which continue to inflict devastation in armed conflict around the world. Both categories must be addressed in parallel to ensure that disarmament is comprehensive, equitable, and truly stabilizing.

Clearly, the transition from armament to peace need not be an endless, linear ladder. Disarmament advances through a coordinated blend of legal, political, and technical measures—some immediate, others phased. Certain steps can and should be taken now as matters of doctrine and policy: no-first-use and negative security assurances; de-alerting and separation of warheads from delivery systems; transparency and data exchanges; and clear political commitments anchored in timelines. In parallel, phased reductions and verification build-outs can proceed to deepen trust, while more complex technical dismantlement follows as legal commitments and inspection authorities mature. To prevent perpetual "preconditions," interim arrangements should include binding milestones, sunset clauses for interim measures, and public reporting, so that arms control and nonproliferation function as "accelerators, not barriers" to elimination. In short, some elements of disarmament are immediately actionable, others are sequenced, and the technical work is "enabled, not delayed" by early legal and political commitments.

Achieving such a transformation requires more than technical steps; it demands a governance framework grounded in the rule of law and democratic participation. Disarmament must be pursued through clear, universally applicable legal norms, not the discretionary power of the most heavily armed states. Inclusive political processes—both national and global—ensure that disarmament is not seen as an imposition from above but as a collectively shaped and publicly accountable project. Legitimacy, in turn, reinforces sustainability: societies that participate in shaping their security policies are more likely to support and uphold the outcomes over the long term. Just as verification and phased reduction are technical necessities, the rule of law and democratic engagement are political imperatives for a durable disarmament regime.

Finally, as disarmament unfolds, it is imperative to avoid the emergence of a security vacuum—a condition in which the rapid drawdown of arms outpaces the development of alternative institutions for managing peace and conflict. Without robust and reliable mechanisms to deter aggression and uphold international order, disarmament could inadvertently create openings for instability, opportunistic rearmament, or renewed violence. This means that disarmament must be accompanied by parallel investments in international security architecture, such as binding dispute-resolution mechanisms, strengthened mediation and arbitration capacities, and above all, professional and impartial peace enforcement structures. Peacekeeping in its traditional sense—lightly armed forces deployed with the consent of parties—will not suffice in a world moving beyond national militaries. What is needed is a credible guarantor of international security, one that can reassure states that disarmament will not leave them vulnerable.

To prevent such risks and to anchor the transition toward a peaceful global order, this document strongly endorses the creation of a United Nations Peace Force. Empowered by international legitimacy and equipped with professional, impartial capabilities, the UN Peace Force would serve not only as a guarantor of the disarmament process but as the cornerstone of a reimagined global security architecture. It would provide the necessary enforcement capacity to ensure compliance, deter violations, and respond to breaches of peace without reliance on national militaries. In practice, such a force would need clear rules of engagement, sustainable financing, and democratic oversight to maintain its impartiality and credibility. Its role would extend beyond policing disarmament treaties to include rapid deployment in cases of aggression, protection of civilians, and upholding of international humanitarian law. The establishment and operational framework of this Peace Force will be the focus of the next chapter.

6. Economic conversion of the military industrial complex

Redirecting resources

The vast resources dedicated to the military-industrial complex represent a fundamental misalignment with the social, environmental, and economic needs of humanity.[89] Militarization fosters cultures of fear and violence that impede development, while military activity often destroys ecosystems, poisons water supplies, and vastly increases public health risks. In 2024, global military expenditure reached $2.7 trillion,[90] while the economic impact of violence was estimated at $19.1 trillion,[91] a stark contrast with the $8.3 billion received by the World Food Programme in 2023, far short of its $22.8 billion operational needs.[92]

Meanwhile, the estimated cost to end global hunger by 2030—around $330 billion—is a fraction of current military spending. The case for reallocating military resources to development is not only moral but pragmatic. Modern conflicts yield diminishing returns: the U.S. spent $8 trillion on the War on Terror, culminating in the Taliban's return to power. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has now cost Russia an estimated US$250 billion in direct military spending through mid-2024, supplemented by over $200 billion in off-budget financing, while Ukraine has received at least €149 billion (about $174 billion) in direct military aid from Western and allied nations as of mid-2025.

The financial and human toll of war far outweighs its benefits. Advocates of nuclear deterrence sometimes argue that nuclear weapons prevent major wars and thereby reduce this toll. But this logic ignores the staggering costs of maintaining nuclear deterrence, the reality of repeated near-misses that brought the world to the brink of catastrophe, and the immorality of a security strategy premised on threatening mass annihilation. Far from providing stability, deterrence entrenches permanent insecurity and diverts vast resources from the real foundations of peace: food security, climate resilience, education, and health. In an interconnected world where economic and political stability are closely linked, investing in peace and human development is a more viable—and more sustainable—path to security and prosperity.

The challenge of conversion

Talk of a "peace dividend" often oversimplifies the process of disarmament and economic transition. The shift from military to civilian production is not automatic, it requires robust public policy, significant investment, and active support for affected industries and workers. Governments play a central role as both regulators and primary consumers of military goods.

Effective conversion strategies must redirect defense-related technological and industrial capabilities toward socially beneficial purposes, such as education, healthcare, clean energy, and civilian infrastructure. The goal is not to dismantle existing expertise but to rechannel it toward a peaceful economy, minimizing harm to employment and productivity.

While not directly from the defense sector, large-scale industrial transitions elsewhere offer valuable lessons. Germany's phase-out of its coal industry, driven by economic and environmental imperatives, offers a compelling example of how structured policies, social protections, and public investment can mitigate disruption and foster renewal. The German example is presented in the section below, followed by the arguably more compelling case of Costa Rica.

[89] "Disarmament and development," Reaching Critical Will.

[90] "Global military spending surges amid war, rising tensions and insecurity," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 22, 2024.

[91] "Global Peace Index 2024: Measuring Peace in a Complex World," Institute for Economics & Peace, June 2024.

[92] UNFP Budget 2023.

[93] Kaamil Ahmed, "Ending world hunger by 2030 would cost $330bn, study finds," The Guardian, October 13, 2020.

Germany's transition from coal (1970s–1990s)

Germany's Ruhr Valley was once the heart of its coal-driven industrial economy. By the 1970s, however, a confluence of economic and technological pressures—cheaper imported energy, environmental concerns, and global market shifts—triggered the gradual decline of domestic coal mining. The cost of extracting coal in Germany was significantly higher than imports from the U.S. or Australia. By the early 1980s, imported coal was up to 40% cheaper.

Subsidies kept the sector afloat, peaking at nearly 3% of GDP in the late 1980s (Deutscher Bundestag, 1991). But this was unsustainable. The 1986 Hard Coal Financing Law and the 1997 Coal Compromise set a long-term framework to phase out hard coal mining while protecting affected communities.

The government consolidated mining operations into Ruhrkohle AG, a state-controlled entity, to better manage downsizing. It introduced early retirement packages, retraining programs, and employment incentives to transition workers into new sectors, especially renewables, IT, and advanced manufacturing. More than 150,000 workers retired early, while over 50,000 underwent retraining (Wehnert et al., 2017).

At the same time, Germany invested heavily in regional redevelopment. Programs like the Ruhr Structural Plan and IBA Emscher Park transformed the industrial landscape, promoting tourism, cultural initiatives, and green spaces. Innovation hubs and research centers helped reposition the Ruhr Valley as a hub for renewable energy and technology, with over 500 firms in the sector by the late 1990s. By 2000, unemployment in the Ruhr Valley had dropped to 9.5%, and Germany's renewable energy sector employed over 250,000 people (European Energy Agency, 2003).

Costa Rica's Demilitarization and Economic Conversion

In the wake of a brief but consequential civil war in 1948, Costa Rica undertook a structural transformation with few analogues in modern history: it abolished its standing army and reoriented national resources toward human development. Enshrined in Article 12 of the 1949 Constitution, the decision prohibited a permanent military except under civilian authority in exceptional circumstances. From that point onward, Costa Rica lived without an army, navy, air force, or heavy weapons systems ("disarming the men and arming the institutions," as José Figueres Ferrer put it), recasting security as a function of law, democracy, and social investment rather than militarized deterrence.

Political and institutional reset

The abolition was not a utopian gesture in the abstract; it emerged from concrete political calculations about how to prevent future coups and recentralization of coercive power. Following victory in the 1948 conflict, the Founding Junta of the Second Republic—led by Figueres—paired demilitarization with a slate of democratic and economic reforms: women's suffrage; nationalization of the banking sector; and creation of an independent Supreme Electoral Tribunal. These moves redistributed authority away from barracks and toward civilian institutions, helping to normalize political pluralism and strengthen rule-of-law guardrails that would outlast the personalities of the moment.

Security functions did not disappear but were rather re-allocated to civilian institutions and narrowed in scope. For nearly half a century after abolition, internal security was handled by three corps—the Civil Guard, Border Security Police, and Rural Guard—comprising roughly 8,400 officials. In 1996, these components were consolidated into the Public Force (Fuerza Pública), a nationwide law-enforcement body with a mandate for public safety and limited border tasks. Specialized capabilities exist but remain

explicitly civilian: an Air Vigilance Service for aerial patrol and a small Special Intervention Unit (UEI) of about 70 personnel for high-risk operations such as counterterrorism, hostage rescue, and drug interdiction. Consistent with the constitutional settlement, Costa Rica maintains no separate line item for "defense" in its national budget.

The peace dividend as a budgetary strategy

Demilitarization unlocked a durable "peace dividend" that Costa Rica deliberately channeled into education, health, social protection, and environmental stewardship. Over time, budgetary priorities shifted decisively toward human capital. Education accounts for nearly 6.9% of the national budget; literacy is approximately 98%, above the regional average. Investments in universal health care and social services translated into rapid gains in human development: between 1970 and 1980, the under-five mortality rate fell by roughly 59%, a testament to expanded primary care, vaccination, and maternal-child health programs. Environmental allocations—especially for national parks and conservation—seeded a globally recognized eco-tourism sector and a sustainability brand that differentiates Costa Rican exports and services.

This sequencing matters for conversion design. Rather than treating demobilization as a one-off cut, Costa Rica structured it as a sustained reallocation program in which social sectors received predictable resources to build capacity year after year. The peace dividend thus became a compounding investment in human security, with cumulative effects on productivity and institutional legitimacy.

Growth, diversification, and stability

Macroeconomic performance reinforces the development story. In the two decades after the abolition of the military (1950-1970), GDP per capita grew at 2.8% annually or around 1.5 percentage points above pre-abolition rates. Over the longer period 1951–2010, Costa Rica's per-capita growth averaged about 2.5% annually; a synthetic counterfactual ("Costa Rica without abolition") is estimated at roughly 1.4%. The implication is stark: with abolition, income per head could double in about 28 years, versus 48 years under the counterfactual trajectory.

Growth quality also changed. A country once anchored in primary commodities diversified into services, tourism, electronics, medical devices, R&D, and corporate services—sectors that benefit disproportionately from sustained investments in education, health, and institutional stability. By 2024, GDP per capita is estimated at about $18,587 (nominal) and $30,062 (PPP). On composite measures, Costa Rica consistently ranks among Latin America's top performers: an HDI (Human Development Index) of 0.833 (2023) places it 62nd globally and 5th regionally, with lower inequality than many peers at similar income levels.

Political stability is part cause and consequence. In a region historically marked by conflict and coups, Costa Rica's demilitarization helped establish democratic norms and lower the temperature of political competition. The absence of a military veto reduced the risk of extra-constitutional disruption; the presence of empowered civilian institutions created routine channels for contestation. The result is an enabling environment for long-horizon investments by households, firms, and the state.

Security without an army

Skeptics often ask how a country in a rough neighborhood can survive without an army. Costa Rica's answer combines internal policing, diplomacy, regional cooperation, and strategic restraint about what security tasks it will and will not shoulder. The Public Force focuses on law enforcement and internal order; niche capabilities handle specialized threats. Where traditional militaries might invite arms races or accidental escalation, Costa Rica leans on norms, treaties, and multilateral venues. The model is not about denying risks but managing them through institutions that are less likely to metastasize into existential threats—or to capture budgetary politics at the expense of human development.

Several features of Costa Rica's pathway are directly relevant to broader disarmament conversion:

1. *Legal lock-in* to anchor expectations. Constitutional abolition established clarity about the end state, reducing policy uncertainty and preventing backsliding when security narratives heat up.
2. *Security in the hands of civilians with limited scope*. Folding residual coercive functions into a disciplined, rights-based policing model avoided the vacuum that might have followed wholesale dismantling. Specialized units were kept small and purpose-built.
3. *Budgetary re-prioritization as an explicit policy*. Redirected funds went to sectors with high social returns—education, health, social protection, and conservation—creating visible benefits that, in turn, built public support for the non-militarized settlement.
4. *Human capital as the growth engine*. The peace dividend did not simply "save money"; it financed capabilities that spur productivity and attract private investment in higher-value activities.
5. *Narrative and legitimacy*. The shift was framed not only as cost savings but as a redefinition of national identity and purpose. Leaders articulated the dividends of peace and tied them to tangible services which citizens valued.
6. *Administrative consolidation*. The 1996 creation of the Public Force rationalized fragmented security bodies, improving accountability and efficiency—an analogue to what defense-to-civil conversion would require elsewhere (mergers, re-skilling, and clarified mandates).

Relevance for global disarmament conversion

Costa Rica is a small state; scaling lessons to major military powers demands care. Yet the case offers a credible counternarrative to the claim that "security first, development later" is the only feasible sequence. It shows how demilitarization can be a growth and governance strategy when paired with institutional reform, legal clarity, and disciplined budget redirection. For a global roadmap, three implications stand out.

- *Sequencing over shock therapy.* Costa Rica combined a decisive end state (no army) with gradual institution-building and steady social investment. Disarmament conversion similarly benefits from a clear destination and staged implementation that protects livelihoods and public order.
- *From deterrence to resilience.* By investing in education, health, and environmental assets, Costa Rica built forms of security—human, social, ecological—that reduce the incidence and costs of non-military risks while making society more cohesive and adaptive.
- *Make the dividend visible early.* Early gains (e.g., sharp reductions in child mortality) created political capital to sustain the project. Disarmament conversion should prioritize demonstrable, near-term improvements in everyday welfare to inoculate against backsliding.

Costa Rica's experience does not prove that every society can or should abolish its army tomorrow.

Nor does it suggest that many of the challenges of effective governance, such as the need to have a stable macroeconomic environment with sustainable levels of public debt, will necessarily disappear. It does demonstrate that profound reallocations away from militarization are possible and that, when carefully designed, they can yield higher, more inclusive, and more sustainable development. For a collective-security and disarmament roadmap that seeks to facilitate the transition from global military capacity into human flourishing, there could hardly be a clearer proof of concept.

Lessons for disarmament conversion

Germany's coal transition demonstrates how targeted public intervention can enable a socially just and economically viable phase-out of a large, entrenched industrial sector. For disarmament to succeed, similar strategies will be needed: strong policy coordination, investment in skills and innovation, and social protections are needed to ensure that no one is left behind.

The military-industrial complex is deeply embedded in many economies. Defense industries provide jobs, tax revenues, and political influence. But just as Germany responded to the long-term unsustainability of coal, a peaceful future demands that we begin planning the economic and social transition away from militarization.

Governments must incentivize defense contractors to pivot toward civilian uses such as green technologies, public health, and disaster preparedness. Workers must be reskilled and supported into emerging sectors. Universities and research institutions should partner in this process, developing the next generation of engineers, scientists, and innovators for peaceful applications.

Disarmament cannot be only about dismantling weapons, it must be about building new structures that support peace, development, and human security. A strategic, compassionate, and well-funded approach to economic conversion will be essential in making the vision of a demilitarized world not only desirable, but achievable.[94]

7. Conclusion

The preceding sections have outlined the foundational principles and strategic priorities that will guide the final phase in the drafting of a *Protocol on Disarmament and the Regulation of Armaments*, a vital complement to the *Second United Nations Charter*. This disarmament protocol seeks to articulate a long-term, actionable vision for how disarmament efforts might unfold over time, not as a utopian aspiration, but as a practical imperative. Whether the current geopolitical climate is sufficiently receptive to renewed commitments—many of which have been made repeatedly in the original UN Charter and a host of subsequent treaties—remains uncertain. Yet the stakes are too high for hesitation. Delaying serious engagement with disarmament until after a major conflict or global crisis would be not only irresponsible but potentially catastrophic. The world can no longer afford to treat disarmament as a post-conflict priority. It must be approached as a preemptive necessity, grounded in foresight rather than reaction.

Crucially, however, disarmament cannot stand alone. It is not a self-contained objective to be pursued in isolation from other core dimensions of global security. To reduce the role of force in international affairs, the international community must not only reduce the *means* of violence but concomitantly build up the *institutions* capable of preventing and resolving conflict. Without a credible, impartial mechanism for maintaining international peace and security, the incentives for rearmament will persist, and the legitimacy of disarmament efforts will remain fragile.

[94] A longer version of this case study is available from the Global Governance Forum upon request. A similar case study on industrial reconversion in Spain in the 1980s is also part of this documentation, not included in this Roadmap but otherwise available to interested readers.

This is where the establishment of a *United Nations Peace Force* becomes indispensable—not as a distant ideal, but as a foundational pillar of the same architecture of peace to which disarmament belongs. These two elements are not merely complementary; they are interdependent. Disarmament without a Peace Force risks creating power vacuums and undermining deterrence. A Peace Force without disarmament risks perpetuating the militarization of international life under a different banner. Taken together, they form the dual strategy of responsible security: the reduction of destructive capabilities, and the strengthening of cooperative enforcement under shared, accountable global institutions.

To be "for disarmament" but dismissive of the Peace Force is to misunderstand the political and institutional scaffolding that makes disarmament sustainable. Likewise, to support the creation of a UN Peace Force while resisting global disarmament is to envision enforcement in a world still armed for annihilation. Both are essential to any serious project of durable peace. They are not sequential phases to be tackled in different eras, but two sides of the same urgent endeavor.

Yet even with these institutional foundations, progress will remain fragile unless humanity overcomes the more destructive forms of nationalism that have fueled conflict for over a century. But disarmament cannot be made hostage to a future moral transformation. It must advance in the world as it is—contested, tense, and nationalistic—through enforceable legal commitments, verifiable reductions, and risk-reduction steps that work even amid rivalry. As Albert Einstein once observed, nationalism is an "infantile disease"—a stage in human development that must give way to a fuller recognition of our common humanity. Modern science, including the mapping of the human genome, underscores that all people belong to a single human family. Nationalisms, in their divisive and absolutist forms, reflect not destiny but immaturity: a failure to grasp our shared identity as citizens of one interdependent planet. The task, then, is not to abolish national cultures or legitimate forms of community pride, but to cultivate an awareness that solidarity across borders is no less real—and in an age of existential risks, no less necessary—than the loyalties we owe to our nations. Practical steps toward this shift already exist: the expansion of global education that emphasizes shared human heritage, the strengthening of cross-border institutions that nurture cooperation rather than rivalry, and the encouragement of civil society networks that build habits of trust across divides. Overcoming the destructive elements of nationalism is therefore not ancillary but central to the viability of both disarmament and a United Nations Peace Force.

The next chapter explores the nature, structure, and mandate of the proposed UN Peace Force. It is intended not as a replacement for national security mechanisms, but as a transformative evolution of collective security in a world where sovereignty and solidarity must coexist. Just as this chapter on disarmament lays the groundwork for reducing global armaments, the Peace Force is the means by which the international community can ensure that peace is not merely declared but defended—lawfully, credibly, and collectively.

Only through such an integrated vision, combining disarmament with legitimate, rules-based enforcement, can we hope to replace the anarchy of power with a peace that is principled, inclusive, and enduring.

Part I has shown how limits, verification, and conversion can reduce the salience of armed forces across domains—including outer space. Part II (see below) addresses the minimal protective capacity needed to sustain that progress in the face of aggression or systematic non-compliance. The aim is not a militarized UN, but a law-bound, legitimacy-rich capability that lowers the premium on offensive arms by raising the costs of rule-breaking.

On the Establishment and Operations of a United Nations Peace Force

Violence, always a mark of human failure and a bringer of sorrow, has now also become dysfunctional as a political instrument. Increasingly, it destroys the ends for which it is employed, killing the user as well as the victim. It has become the path to hell on earth and the end of the earth. This is the lesson of the Somme and Verdun, of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, of Vorkuta and Kolyma; and it is the lesson, beyond a shadow of a doubt, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

— Jonathan Schell – *The Unconquerable World* (2003)

1. Introduction

This Part presents the conceptual design of a United Nations Peace Force as the enforcement complement to the disarmament component of the Roadmap. In keeping with the purpose of the Roadmap, no draft treaty Articles are included here. Legal text for both protocols will be developed and published in parallel to ensure coherence across mandates, oversight, compliance, financing, and review.

The maintenance of international peace and security was the cardinal impulse motivating the 1945 creation of the UN as well as its organizing principle. The issue retains that primacy today despite rising concerns about the climate crisis. Going back at least as far as the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia ending the Thirty Years War, it has also proven the thorniest of public goods plaguing efforts at international cooperation.

The idea of a permanent international force under UN authority is not new. It is in fact *res judicata*—a thing already decided—and embedded in 1945 in the original United Nations Charter, reflecting a remarkable consensus at the time that the world needed a mechanism to enforce peace collectively. Under Article 43 of the Charter, Member States agreed to make their armed forces, assistance, and facilities available to the Security Council for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. A Military Staff Committee established under Article 47 was intended to provide strategic coordination and direction. However, though a few member states actually began initial planning, these provisions were never operationalized.[95] The rapid onset of the Cold War in the early 1950s shattered the fragile postwar consensus, resulting in decades of proxy conflict, arms races, and mutual suspicion. The 1945 decision for an UN-led enforcement capacity died a quiet death of neglect in the years that followed.

[95] In his 1995 *New York Review of Books* article, "A United Nations Peace Force," Brian Urquhart, the Under Secretary-General in charge of peacekeeping operations, reflected on how close the world came in the 1940s to creating a standing UN military capability—and how the moment was lost. He noted that the U.S. made serious, detailed plans in 1946 for fulfilling its Article 43 obligations, plans which would include a force of 300,000 troops, 2,000 aircraft, and 250 naval vessels. The level of planning suggested that the U.S. expected this to be a real commitment. However, the growing distrust between the Western powers and the Soviet Union made cooperation on a standing force politically impossible. Urquhart lamented that the failure to implement Article 43 left the UN with no permanent military capacity, relying instead on ad hoc contributions. He advocated for revisiting the idea of a UN standing force, arguing that the nature of global threats (like genocide, failed states, and regional wars) required it. He proposed a small, professional, permanently available UN force, under Security Council authority. with training, equipment, and rapid deployment capacity, a force which could prevent atrocities, maintain peace, and lend credibility to international law.

It may well be that a UN peace force is not the right solution to international threats at this time, and a critique to that effect is offered here. But this conclusion must flow from a contemporary collective assessment, rather than as a Cold War legacy. Even if the proposal appears ill-timed, Panglossian, or improbable in the current geopolitical climate, articulating it serves a critical function. It opens space for imagination, invites constructive critique, and allows policymakers and scholars to rethink the architecture of peace and security.

2. The costs of war

Though war and conflict have been constants in the modern era, the costs of warfare—economically, politically, and socially—have soared to unsustainable levels. The economic burden alone is staggering. The Watson Institute's Costs of War project now estimates that U.S. budgetary costs for post-9/11 wars—including Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and related operations—amounted to around $8 trillion through fiscal year 2022 *(*as no updated overall total has been published since then*)*. These expenditures have added to unsustainable debt, diverted resources from pressing domestic needs, and yielded little strategic gain. According to the 2024 Global Peace Index, the global economic impact of violence reached $19.1 trillion in 2023, equivalent to 13.5% of world GDP, with military spending accounting for 45%, internal security for 29%, and other costs making up the remainder. In countries caught in violent conflict—such as Syria, Sudan, and Yemen—spending on conflict-related expenses can exceed 50% of GDP, compared to under 3% in more peaceful nations.

These direct financial costs only compound the human toll: the millions displaced, injured, or killed; the psychological trauma experienced by civilians and veterans; and the destruction of civil institutions and infrastructure.[96] If war ultimately delivered peace, perhaps even these costs could be rationalized. But the statistics tell a different story. Major military interventions by powerful states have routinely failed to deliver long-term political solutions despite their overwhelming resources. Even successful tactical interventions frequently fail to deliver long-term human and social stability. Prolonged conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and now Ukraine have demonstrated the inability of military power to produce stable, durable peace. According to the *Global Peace Index*, produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), the share of conflicts resulting in a decisive victory fell from 49 percent in the 1970s to under 9 percent in the 2010s, while those ending through peace agreements fell from just under 23 percent to a bit over 4 percent during the same periods.[97]

Beyond the battlefield, the opportunity costs are immense. Public health systems, education, and climate resilience are consistently underfunded, while vast sums are committed to defense. COVID-19 revealed

[96] Armed conflicts have profound and multifaceted impacts on vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and marginalized groups. Additionally, these conflicts contribute significantly to environmental degradation and global warming. Women often face increased risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse during conflicts. Such acts are sometimes used systematically as weapons of war to instill fear and destabilize communities. The destruction of healthcare infrastructure severely limits women's access to essential services, including maternal and reproductive health care, leading to higher rates of maternal and infant mortality. In respect of children, exposure to violence, displacement, and the loss of loved ones can result in long-term psychological issues, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Conflicts often lead to the destruction of schools and make attendance unsafe, resulting in significant educational setbacks for children. Children are at risk of being forcibly recruited into armed groups, exposing them to violence and hindering their development. Conflicts can lead to mass displacement, with vulnerable populations losing their homes and livelihoods, increasing their susceptibility to exploitation and poverty. Displaced populations often face inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare, leading to outbreaks of diseases and heightened mortality rates. Armed conflicts significantly impact the environment, contributing to global warming through various mechanisms. Military activities are energy-intensive, with global military operations estimated to account for approximately 5.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Warfare can lead to deforestation, soil degradation, and contamination of water sources, reducing the planet's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide. The use of heavy metals and explosives contaminates land and water, disrupting ecosystems and contributing to environmental degradation. In summary, armed conflicts not only devastate human populations, especially the most vulnerable, but also have lasting detrimental effects on the environment, exacerbating global warming and ecological degradation.

[97] https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf

military arsenals to be sadly powerless against a virus that claimed millions of lives and overwhelmed unprepared health systems. The unrealized global peace dividend still offers the only real-scale opportunity to reallocate resources to global priorities that enhance human well-being and planetary resilience. It is still humanity's best chance at a better future.

The Peace Force is not an alternative to disarmament but a financing and risk-reduction complement to it: preventing escalation and shortening conflicts unlocks the peace dividend that the Disarmament Protocol redirects to health, education, climate resilience, and productive investment.

3. Why now?

If proliferating conflicts make reform seem unrealistic, they also make it unavoidable. The Roadmap's logic is parallelism: build the minimal, rules-bound protective capacity as disarmament gains traction, so that each step toward fewer weapons is backstopped against spoilers. Eighty years on, a moment of profound geopolitical instability seems an odd choice to resurface such a proposal. From protracted conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and Myanmar to the volatile security environments in the Sahel, the South China Sea, Kashmir, and the Taiwan Straits, the number and severity of armed confrontations are at their highest since the end of the Cold War. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) currently counts 56 conflicts,[98] the most since World War II, with 92 countries involved in conflicts outside their borders, the most since formal statistics began to be recorded. These conflicts are not isolated; they are symbiotic with great power rivalries, energy insecurity, and fragmented multilateral diplomacy. Cumulatively this has pushed global military spending to record levels, underlining both the enduring centrality of armed force in global affairs and the failures of the current peace enforcement architecture.

Beyond peace and security, a rapid transition toward a more multipolar and competitive international order is under way. The post-1991 dominance of a single global power has given way to a fragmented system where multiple states and regional blocs now vie for strategic influence. This diffusion of power has eroded consensus on basic international norms and made collective action within the UN Security Council even more difficult. Rising nationalism, ideological polarization, and a pervasive erosion of trust in global institutions have created an environment in which even modest multilateral reforms face resistance. Proposals that touch on national sovereignty or military capabilities, such as the establishment of a standing peace force, would seem especially difficult to advance.

Yet this is precisely why such a proposal is more urgent now. The proliferation of advanced technologies, the risks of autonomous weapons and cyberwarfare, the growing interlinkages between climate insecurity and violent conflict, and the continued threat posed by weapons of mass destruction all point to a new level of global systemic risk. Without credible and legitimate mechanisms to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict, the international system risks spiraling into deeper fragmentation and crisis. The current moment is certainly unwelcoming to grand institutional reform on peace and security. But the moment is one of such unprecedented need that it would be profoundly irresponsible not to insist on it.

4. Scope of the proposed Protocol

In keeping with the original 1945 framing, this protocol outlines a scheme for the creation of an international security force within the United Nations. The UNPF would be established in parallel with the disarmament of UN Member States and would be expected to ultimately—following a transition period of

[98] According to The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), an armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility between two parties—at least one being a government—that results in a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths in a given year. Conflicts are further categorized based on intensity: those with 25 to 999 battle-related deaths are termed 'minor armed conflicts,' while those with 1000 or more are labeled 'wars' or 'major armed conflicts.'

some years—have a monopoly on the legitimate use of military force in the relations between states.

The UNPF would derive its authority from the terms of a revised UN Charter, as envisaged in *A Second United Nations Charter* and implemented by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). It would exist in both standing and reserve capacities "for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and for ensuring compliance with the Charter and the laws and regulations enacted thereunder." The UNPF would be deployed as directed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) to conflict zones, engage in peace enforcement, and support post-conflict recovery efforts. Its core would be a standing force of 500,000 full-time personnel, complemented where necessary by a reserve component available for reinforcement in exceptional circumstances.[99]

Close coordination with UN agencies and humanitarian organizations would ensure its operations align with broader peacebuilding and development initiatives. In contrast to the current mandate and capabilities of UN peacekeeping troops, the UNPF would have clearer lines of authority, speed of response, flexibility, and capacity to deploy the needed force. Indeed, the proposed force would need to overcome the limitations that presently hamstring UN peacekeeping forces, including (1) the inability to deploy substantial force relative to state military actors and non-state militant groups; (2) a reluctance of Member States to commit troops, equipment, and resources to UN command; and (3) the lack of independence necessary to quickly and effectively restore and maintain peace.[100] Conceptually, a ten-year or longer transition period would be required to establish the UNPF in parallel with the disarmament of national militaries and military expenditures to the maximum degree needed to maintain internal state order.

The governance and accountability structures reflect the hard lessons learned in recent decades. Operational command would rest with a reformed and more representative Security Council, while strategic oversight, budgeting, and normative guidance would remain with the General Assembly and a proposed Parliamentary Assembly. Rules of engagement would be tightly governed by international humanitarian law and human rights law, and internal compliance mechanisms include criminal and disciplinary jurisdiction over peace force personnel. Provisions for transparency, regular reporting, independent auditing, and monitoring would also be incorporated to strengthen institutional legitimacy and global trust.

These features are of course provisional and invite critical evaluation, including the fact that the transitional process may be even more complex than the final arrangements. However, by attempting to visualize this pathway, the draft protocol seeks to contribute meaningfully to long-term thinking on global security.

Any movement toward a monopoly of force over inter-state violence must carry tight guardrails: subsidiarity preserving domestic public order for states; narrow mandates limited to Charter enforcement and civilian protection; time-limited authorizations with automatic review; and full transparency and audit.

5. The case for it: Why a Peace Force?

Perhaps it bears restating: though founded to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", the UN remains structurally unable to enforce peace in a multipolar, interdependent world. Today's conflicts

[99] The total estimated number of active-duty military personnel worldwide as of 2024 is 20 million. So, the standing force component would be equivalent to somewhere between 2.5 and 4 percent of the total number of active-duty personnel.

[100] The recommendations in this Protocol build upon earlier proposals to establish a rapid reaction force for the UN. See generally Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs, *Creating a Rapid Reaction UN Peace Force*; Sustainable Common Security, United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS).

are increasingly transnational, involving non-state actors, cyber capabilities, and proxy wars among major powers. These developments, combined with rising geopolitical fragmentation and arms proliferation, render the existing international security architecture inadequate. The UN's contemporary failure to fully carry out its peace and security responsibilities stems at least in part from a mismatch between global needs and expectations and UN capabilities. The proposed UNPF addresses this structural deficit.

As the reader will already have understood, this draft protocol is first and foremost an exercise of imagination. It seeks to envision a future where the international community is prepared to entrust the resolution of armed conflict to a standing, rules-based global mechanism. It rests on the premise that a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in inter-state relations should reside with a legitimate international authority, while allowing states to retain the use of force for internal public order, under a clearly delineated principle of subsidiarity.

Such a world may seem distant today, particularly as multilateralism faces deep setbacks and even its traditional champions turn inward. The United Nations itself faces challenges from within: its largest historical funder now questions the value of its institutions, and the principle of sovereign military autonomy remains jealously guarded. Nevertheless, the proposal recognizes that history has previously, and can again, shift rapidly and unpredictably.

Importantly, the protocol acknowledges the limits of subsidiarity, especially where internal atrocities, genocide, or state collapse pose clear threats to international peace. In such cases, the UNPF would be given an explicit mandate to intervene, aligning with evolving doctrines like the Responsibility to Protect. The protocol also seeks to reflect hard-earned lessons with respect to engagement with regional organizations, civilian-led operations, and local governance structures.

A standing international peace force of this size would clearly be expensive, an order of magnitude well beyond the $5.6 billion budget for peacekeeping in 2024. But the question of funding is tied to the wider business case. A global security force under UN auspices could provide a dramatically more cost-effective, equitable, and lawful mechanism for preventing conflict and restoring peace, one that frees up resources to invest in climate action, pandemic preparedness, education, and sustainable development. A hypothetical "all-in" $268 billion upper-limit rough estimate of a UNPF—including a professional standing force but excluding a reserve force—would still only constitute 10.7% of the current $2.7 trillion spent on global military expenditures and about 0.25% of the $110 trillion global economy.[101]

Above all, in a world where the risks of miscalculation, accidental escalation, and global catastrophe—especially following a limited nuclear war—are rising, the continued absence of a credible collective security instrument remains a deep threat to human survival and a systemic vulnerability that must be addressed. Along with disarmament, the UNPF proposal reflects the urgency of moving toward a global operational capacity to prevent conflict, protect human dignity, and secure the future of the planet. The

[101] To estimate the total cost of maintaining an international peace force of 500,000 soldiers, we examine two key factors: the percentage of military budgets allocated to personnel costs (salaries and benefits), and the average expenditure per active-duty service member. The share of military budgets dedicated to personnel pay and benefits varies among major military powers, from a high of approximately 50% of the U.S. Department of Defense budget to a more typical 23–30% for the defense budgets of other countries. The cost per active-duty service member therefore varies significantly across countries. In the United States, for example, in fiscal year 2024 the active-duty force numbered about 1.33 million personnel, with a budget of around $178 billion devoted to their pay and benefits, resulting in an average cost of about $134,000 per service member. If one were to take this number as an upper limit on the personnel costs of a 500,000-member Standing Force, this would imply a cost of about US$67 billion annually. Assuming that this would be 25% of the total cost of the Force—with the other 75% accounted for by equipment procurement, operations and maintenance, training, infrastructure, and research and development—this would entail a total annual commitment of about US$268 billion or roughly 10% of total world military spending. Additional resources would have to be provided for the Reserve component, but these outlays would be expected to be smaller, given the nature of this contingent, to be used in a time-bound fashion under exceptional circumstances.

proposal sets out a blueprint that can be picked up and refined if and when geopolitical conditions permit. This is contingency planning rather than utopian idealism: with threatening clouds gathering on the horizon, it simply can't hurt to have plans for a peace force on a shelf. To avoid cart-before-horse concerns, capacity growth should be contingent on disarmament benchmarks: inventory completion, verification milestones, and reductions by top spenders. Standing capacity scales with compliance; where reductions stall, expansion pauses pending review.

The foregoing discussion has made the strategic case for a United Nations Peace Force. But even the most compelling rationale must ultimately be anchored in practical design. For this reason, considerable effort has already gone into the drafting of detailed Articles for a future protocol, which will be published in full in due course. While this Roadmap does not reproduce them, it is important to note the range of issues they address, and to give readers a sense of the institutional seriousness of the proposal.

The draft Articles cover, among others, the following dimensions:

- *Formation and Transition*: How national forces gradually disarm and transfer personnel, equipment, and installations to the Peace Force, under international supervision.
- *Structure and Composition*: The balance between a standing force and a reserve component; recruitment rules to guarantee diversity of nationality; safeguards against dominance by any one state; and clear limits on scope, including a categorical ban on weapons of mass destruction.
- *Operational Mandates*: Criteria for deployment, such as responding to aggression, genocide, crimes against humanity, or state collapse; mechanisms for coordination with local authorities and regional organizations; and binding rules of engagement grounded in humanitarian law.
- *Oversight and Accountability*: Multi-layered systems of reporting to the General Assembly and Security Council; independent audit and review bodies; grievance mechanisms for states, personnel, and affected populations; and strict procedures for preventing misconduct or abuse.
- *Financing and Resources*: Equitable funding mechanisms, transparent budgeting, and provisions for emergency assessments, endowment funds, and independent auditing to ensure integrity and sustainability.
- *Legal and Ethical Frameworks*: Codified compliance with human rights and humanitarian law; jurisdictional arrangements for prosecuting serious violations; privileges and immunities balanced by accountability; and a comprehensive code of ethics with enforceable consequences.
- *Implementation Timeline*: A phased ten-year transition, administered by a dedicated authority, to move from today's fragmented system of national militaries to a functioning Peace Force with global reach and legitimacy.

Taken together, these provisions demonstrate that the Peace Force is not a utopian sketch but a carefully conceived institution. Its architecture has been drafted with lessons drawn from the failures of past UN operations, the demands of international law, and the realities of twenty-first-century conflict. When published in full, the Articles will provide the legal scaffolding required to make the Peace Force operational and credible.

This Roadmap is therefore both a conceptual bridge and a preview. The detailed legal text to come will transform principles into enforceable commitments, ensuring that the vision outlined here can be carried forward into practice.

6. The case against it: The need for alternative futures

Part of the exercise of imagination is to contemplate alternatives. The chief critique of this protocol is the view that the model remains rooted in a mid-20th century conception of security—militaristic, troop-heavy, and garrison-dependent—that is badly outdated. In an age of unprecedented space-based

satellite surveillance, drone warfare, automated weapons, cyber operations, and sophisticated forms of digital financial coercion, relying on tens of thousands of deployed troops, it could be argued, is simply outmoded. Technology has transformed the nature of conflict so that many forms of coercive power—sanctions, data disruption, cyber-attacks on electricity and communications—can be exerted without a single pair of boots hitting the ground. In this light, the proposed peace force appears less like a forward-looking tool for peace and more like an anachronistic vestige of the early Cold War era. (To be fair, it should be noted that the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia appears to have features of both, the use of high-tech innovations in the use of drones and human waves of soldiers sent to battle to a certain death, reminiscent of the most violent killing fields of the First World War.)

Second and similarly, by embedding a monopoly of force in a centralized authority in this particular way, the protocol leans uncomfortably toward ideas of world government prevalent in the 1950s. These are at odds with the rest of the Second UN Charter, which is instead clearly framed as a contemporary iteration of global governance and international cooperation drawing on the very rich experience of the post-World War II era (including at the regional levels in Europe, Africa and elsewhere). Alternative and more contemporary visions of collective security—putting force to the service of both peace and justice—could prioritize early warning, economic measures, cyber tools, and international legal accountability along other pathways. These approaches would emphasize deterrence, diplomacy, and resilience over intervention as well as shared or overlapping responsibilities between global, regional, and subregional actors. Even a rapid response capability—lightweight, accountable, and civilian-integrated to deal with very specific kinds of threats that do require boots on ground—finds more favor than the notion of a standing army under a central authority.

In fact, most recent UN and regional peace operations already reflect this lighter template. They rely on modular packages integrated with non-kinetic tools—intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)—satellite and cyber forensics, rapid logistics, targeted-sanctions enablement, and civilian-led stabilization. Heavy formations are rare and tightly review-constrained. This design de-emphasizes coercion and maximizes monitor–verify–protect functions that directly support disarmament compliance, suggesting that any future Peace Force would need to draw lessons from these contemporary practices.

Legitimacy and feasibility are further sources of concern. Entrusting operational control of anything like an international peace force to today's UN Security Council—beset by geopolitical paralysis and a deep legitimacy deficit—strikes many as implausible, even distasteful, and certainly unwise. To be fair, the proposal assumes a reformed Security Council. But can it guarantee one or promise that it would remain 'reformed'? The political climate for large-scale disarmament and supranational military control is arguably less favorable now than at any point since 1945, as was made clear at the outset in Part I of this document presented previously. More widely, instead of addressing the root causes of conflict such as inequality, underdevelopment, and political exclusion, critics fear that a UNPF would give conceptual primacy to international militarism over developmental priorities and further entrench top-down enforcement mechanisms rather than build bottom-up capacity across the world.

The vagueness of key milestones is a final source of concern. Rather than tying implementation to timelines, any such proposal could more effectively be linked to specific disarmament benchmarks, arms control treaties, and steps toward regional security guarantees (e.g., nuclear-weapon-free zones). This cart-and-horse conversation needs deepening: a peace force should emerge only as part of a broader architecture and gradual process of trust-building and verifiable demilitarization and disarmament, not as an early standalone construct that might in fact prejudice the other two processes, a point made more than once in Part I of this Roadmap. In this view, the transition trajectory is underdeveloped—how we move from today's geopolitical disorder (and fifty-plus conflicts) to a

functioning system of peace and security is perhaps the single most important question. To prevent institutional drift, the Peace Force should include sunset clauses, periodic cap reviews, and scale-down triggers tied to verified reductions and sustained compliance. The end-state has less need for protective capacity because restraints hold, and conversion has created broad domestic coalitions for peace.

7. Conclusion

An international peace force remains one among several possible tools for a more peaceful, just, and adaptive international order. This protocol is offered not as a definitive roadmap, but as one possible scenario among many for the future of global peace and security. It is singled out partially because unlike the others, it is grounded in historical precedent. The original 1945 UN Charter created such a force, ultimately stillborn in the Cold War. Ironically, this is one area where the pre-digital, pre-climate, pre-nuclear Charter was ahead of its time, and one that would require far less revision than other parts.

It may well be that establishing a UN peace force is not the right path forward, but this conclusion must flow from a deliberate collective assessment rather than a Cold War inheritance. Second, the nature of warfare is evolving rapidly, with the proliferation of automated weapons systems, hypersonic technologies, cyber operations, and space-based surveillance capabilities. These trends challenge conventional models of peacekeeping and peace enforcement and underscore the need to reconsider how global security can be structured in the decades ahead. Finally, as noted previously this draft protocol must be tightly connected conceptually to today's global disarmament agenda, especially weapons of mass destruction.

Only time and circumstance will tell whether it is the right tool. For now, the proposal is offered open-ended, acknowledging its speculative nature and resisting the temptation to impose a single future. Even if the proposal appears distant or improbable in the current geopolitical climate, articulating it serves a critical function. It opens space for imagination, invites constructive critique, and allows policymakers and scholars to explore the institutional requirements for a different kind of international order. In this sense, the protocol is more a starting-point than an end-point, an invitation to rethink the architecture of peace on a small, crowded and increasingly fragile planet.

Beyond Disarmament and Collective Security: The Choice Before Us

The Roadmap you have just read is not a finished edifice but a scaffolding. Its two pillars—disarmament and collective security—are mutually reinforcing, yet their true significance lies in what they represent together: an insistence that humanity can and must design institutions for its own survival.

The temptation, always, is to defer. To muddle through with what we have. To wait for crises to dictate the pace of reform. But in a century of cascading risks—from nuclear miscalculation to climate disruption, from cyber sabotage to engineered pandemics—delay itself is a form of recklessness. The absence of a credible global architecture does not preserve stability; it incubates disaster.

It is true that the record of human violence is long, and the failures of international institutions frequent. Cynicism has become the default posture of many who have seen too many initiatives stall. But cynicism is not realism It is, as Jonathan Schell warned , a habit of despair that mistakes the inertia of the present for a law of nature. The belief that violence is eternal, that governance will always fracture, that survival is beyond our reach, these are not truths but self-fulfilling defeats.

The real "harsh reality" is that humanity's tools of destruction have outstripped the institutions that govern them. What follows is not fated. It is contingent on whether we summon the will to create organizations commensurate with our peril and our promise. Disarmament and a United Nations Peace Force are not

utopian departures; they are pragmatic responses to risks that can otherwise end civilization.

The work ahead is difficult. It will meet resistance, skepticism, and inertia. But it is also profoundly shared. From world leaders to grassroots activists, from scientists and jurists to citizens in every society, billions of people intuit the same truth: we cannot survive the 21st century with 20th-century machinery of war and 20th-century machinery of governance.

This Roadmap does not ask the reader to believe that change will be easy. It asks only that we abandon the illusion that muddling through is safe. The alternative to deliberate institutional reform is not continuity; it is collapse. By sketching how disarmament and collective protection might be made real under a Second United Nations Charter, this document seeks to prove that survival is not beyond our reach—if we choose to act.

The full protocols, with Articles, will follow. They are the next step in turning design into law, aspiration into practice. But the larger invitation is timeless: to recognize, with clear eyes and without false comfort, that our generation holds the responsibility Schell described—perhaps the last generation with the power to decide whether organized violence remains the governing principle of international life, or whether human survival becomes the higher law.

Creating a Global Weapons Inventory—Japan and Uruguay

A credible disarmament process must start with an exhaustive inventory of weapons equipment and systems for all UN Member States. This inventory would deliver a critically important baseline and inform a global understanding of the scale of the disarmament process that was necessary and provide insights as to the appropriate steps necessary to implement it. The creation of this inventory would thus serve both as an initial benchmark[102] for this process and the first test of compliance with the disarmament process by countries. This Annex serves as an example of what such an inventory system could look like. For our example countries, we have selected Japan and Uruguay. As countries with increased transparency around its military apparatus, compiling a broadly accurate inventory for the country, while not without some challenges, was feasible. While the inventory below is compiled from the best available information, given security concerns, we cannot claim the data below to be fully comprehensive. Regardless, to demonstrate what this exercise could look like, the inventory below is useful.

Example: Weapons Inventory – *Japan*

Manpower[103]

Type of Personnel	**Number**
Active	247,150
Reserve	56,000
Paramilitary	25,000
Total	~328,150 (0.27% of population)

[102] With reference to the *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline* produced in 2021 by The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

[103] From Global Firepower "2025 Japan Military Strength." These numbers appear roughly accurate compared to the results of internet searches for Japan's military personnel.

Air Forces[104]

Type of Equipment	Number
Total aircraft[105]	1,443+
Fighter aircraft[106]	217–253
Trainer aircraft[107]	328–401
Attack aircraft[108]	38
Transport aircraft[109]	44–55
Special-mission aircraft[110]	~141
Tanker fleet[111]	4
Helicopters[112]	596–698
Reconnaissance drones[113]	3
Attack/combat drones[114]	0

[104] United Nations Register of Conventional Arms UNROCA original report for Japan 2023 was used to collate final data.

[105] High uncertainty: The total aircraft is taken from Global Firepower, although the ranges of numbers for the specific aircrafts in the rest of the table, on which the total is based, are drawn from a variety of sources. Additionally, the total number of aircraft is rapidly increasing due to an expeditious scaling up of military capabilities in Japan.

[106] The lower estimate is from Global Firepower, while the higher is from the World Directory of Modern Military Warships. These numbers could not be independently verified, so both were listed. Different sources might categorize aircraft differently (fighter, attack, multirole, etc.), potentially contributing to this discrepancy.

[107] Similarly, the lower estimate is from the World Directory of Modern Military Warships, while the higher is from Global Firepower. These numbers could not be independently verified, so both were listed.

[108] Very difficult to verify this number from Global Firepower, as many other sources do not explicitly designate an "attack aircraft" category.

[109] The lower estimate is from the World Directory of Modern Military Warships, while the higher is from Global Firepower. These numbers could not be independently verified.

[110] From Global Firepower. This category is quite unique and therefore warranted independent verification.

[111] A number from Global Firepower was repeatedly contradicted, so we relied on the latest news to determine the current size of the Japanese military tanker fleet. However, this number will grow in the near future, as Japan has ordered two more tankers and has nine more orders planned.

[112] The lower estimate is from Global Firepower, while the higher is from the ArmedForces.eu. These numbers could not be independently verified.

[113] From the latest news (Indo-Pacific Defense Forum). However, Japan intends to rapidly enlarge this fleet over the next few years.

[114] Currently has no attack drones but has plans to acquire them. Thus, this number will enlarge rapidly over the next few years.

Land Forces

Type of Equipment	Number
Tanks[115]	521–550
Self-propelled guns[116]	149–214
Towed artillery	480
Rocket artillery[117]	99

Naval Forces[118]

Type of Equipment	Number
Aircraft carriers[119]	4
Helicopter carriers	4
Destroyers[120]	36
Frigates	6
Corvettes[121]	6
Submarines[122]	22
Mine warfare	22

[115] Recently, Japan discussed reducing its tanks to about 300 by 2023, but recent regional tensions caused the country to rethink this decision, and it is currently unclear the precise number they possess. In 2023, they secured an additional 10 tanks, further indicating how dynamic this data is.

[116] These weapons include 111 of Type 99 howitzer, 91 of M110 howitzers, and 12 of Type 19 howitzers. The 2nd Artillery Brigade recently acquired more of the latter type.

[117] Of these 99 pieces of equipment, 54 of them are Multiple Launch Rocket Systems.

[118] Japan has one of the world's largest navies and, thus, its naval branch is one of its most dynamic and secretive. Accordingly, this data was particularly difficult to find.

[119] Two of these aircraft carriers are Izumo-class and two are Hyuga-class.

[120] Of these destroyers, 9 are Murasame-class, 8 are Asagiri-class, 5 are Takanami-class, 4 are Akizuki-class, 4 are Kongo-class, 2 are Atago-class, 2 are Asahi-class, and 2 are Maya-class. The Maritime Self-Defense force plans to increase its number of Aegis destroyers to 10.

121 Until 2020, Japan had no corvettes, and this statistic is uncertain.

[122] Two of these submarines are exclusively for training purposes. Of the others, 12 are Soryu-class, 9 are Oyashio-class, and 1 is Taigei-class. These numbers reflect Japan's increase in submarines in 2019 to match China's growing naval power.

Biological Weapons

Japan neither pursues nor possesses biological weapons. Japan is a party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which was ratified in 1981.

The variable identifies whether a country pursues, possesses, or has recently used biological weapons, using information from Arms Control Association (2022), Nuclear Threat Initiative (2022), Center for Nonproliferation Studies (2008) and the UN (2022). A country is coded as pursuing biological weapons if it is increasing its capabilities or has a dedicated program. A country is coded as possessing biological weapons if it has weapons which it can deliver.

Chemical Weapons

Japan neither pursues nor possesses chemical weapons. Japan is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which was ratified in 1995.

The variable identifies whether a country pursues, possesses, or has recently used chemical weapons, using information from Arms Control Association (2022), Nuclear Threat Initiative (2022), Center for Nonproliferation Studies (2008) and the UN (2022). A country is coded as pursuing chemical weapons if it is increasing its capabilities or has a dedicated program. A country is coded as possessing chemical weapons if it has weapons which it can deliver.

Nuclear Weapons

Japan does not possess nuclear weapons.[123] Japan is a part to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was ratified in 1976.

Stockpile destruction

Under Article 3 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Japan[124] was required to declare and destroy (or ensure the destruction of) all stockpiled cluster munitions under its jurisdiction and control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 August 2018.

On 9 February 2015, Japan announced the completion of the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions, more than five years in advance of its August 2018 deadline. According to its April 2015[125] transparency report, Japan destroyed a total of 13,683 cluster munitions and 1,961,651 submunitions by the end of 2014, while 328 CBU-87 bombs containing 66,256 submunitions were destroyed in 2015.[126] In 2014 alone, Japan destroyed 4,965 cluster munitions and 962,429 submunitions.

[123] Ban Monitor Report. Country Profile, Japan.

[124] Source: The monitor.

[125] The report covers calendar year 2014, but additional mark-up in red shows updates the report to the end of February 2015 and states that Japan no longer possesses a stockpile of cluster munitions. Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Form B, April 2015.

[126] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Destruction of Cluster Munitions Completed," Press Release, 10 February 2015.

Example Weapons Inventory – *Uruguay*

Manpower

Type of Equipment	**Number**[127]
Active	25,000
Reserve	28,000
Paramilitary	5,000
Total	58,000

Air Forces

Type of Equipment	**Number**[128]
Total aircraft	43-52
Fighter aircraft	0
Trainer aircraft	12—17
Attack aircraft	6—7
Transport aircraft	6—8
Special-mission aircraft	5—6
Tanker fleet	2
Helicopters	12
Reconnaissance drones	0
Attack/combat drones	0

[127] Data from Global Fire Power, The Military Balance 2023 (IISS)

[128] Data from Global Fire Power, The Military Balance 2023 (IISS) and the globalmilitary.net

Land Forces

Type of Equipment	Number[129]
Tanks	19—31[130]
Self-propelled guns	6
Towed artillery	70
Rocket artillery	4

Naval Forces

Type of Equipment	Number[131]
Aircraft carriers	0
Helicopter carriers	0
Destroyers	0
Frigates	0
Corvettes	2[132]
Submarines	0
Mine warfare	2

Biological Weapons

Uruguay neither pursues nor possesses biological weapons. Uruguay is a party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to which acceded in 1981.

The variable identifies whether a country pursues, possesses, or has recently used biological weapons, using information from Arms Control Association (2022), Nuclear Threat Initiative (2022), Center for Nonproliferation Studies (2008) and the UN (2022). A country is coded as pursuing biological weapons if it is increasing its capabilities or has a dedicated program. A country is coded as possessing biological weapons if it has weapons which it can deliver.

Chemical Weapons

Uruguay neither pursues nor possesses chemical weapons. Uruguay is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which was ratified in 1994.

[129] Data from Global Fire Power and United Nations Register of Conventional Arms
[130] The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms accounts for 19 Tanks.
[131] Data from Global Fire Power, The Military Balance 2023 (IISS) and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms
[132] The Uruguayan Navy in the 21st Century

The variable identifies whether a country pursues, possesses, or has recently used chemical weapons, using information from Arms Control Association (2022), Nuclear Threat Initiative (2022), Center for Nonproliferation Studies (2008) and the UN (2022). A country is coded as pursuing chemical weapons if it is increasing its capabilities or has a dedicated program. A country is coded as possessing chemical weapons if it has weapons which it can deliver.

Nuclear Weapons

Uruguay does not possess nuclear weapons.[133] Uruguay is a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (ratified in 1970) and to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (ratified in 2018).

Cluster Munitions and Stockpile destruction

Uruguay signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 3 December 2008 and ratified on 24 September 2009. It was among the first 30 ratifications to trigger the convention's entry into force on 1 August 2010.

In February 2008, Uruguay stated that it has never used, produced, or stockpiled cluster munitions.[134] Uruguay's responses of "not applicable" in its Article 7 report forms indicates that it does not have facilities that produce cluster munitions and does not possess any stockpile of cluster munitions, including for training or research purposes.

[133] Ban Monitor Report. Country Profile, Uruguay.
[134] According to Monitor.org

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Glossary of acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
BTWC	Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
BWC	Biological Weapons Convention
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
CD	Convention on Disarmament
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COPUOS	Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
CVID	Comprehensive, Verifiable, Irreversible Disarmament
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
DAC	Development Assistance Countries
DGC	Department of Global Communications
DRF	Disarmament and Regulation Framework
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FX	Foreign Exchange
GA	General Assembly
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGE	Group of Governmental Experts
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GONGO	Government-Organized Nongovernmental Organization
HCOC	Hague Code of Conduct (Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAN	Arms Control Association
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHR	International Health Regulations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
LAWS	Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MC	Mandatory Contribution
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSFPO	Member State Funding Practice Objectives
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
ODA	Office of Development Assistance or Official Development Assistance
OEWG	Open-Ended Working Group
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OST	Outer Space Treaty
OT	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty)
PA	Parliamentary Assembly
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PoA	Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons
PPP	Precise Point Positioning
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SUNC	Second United Nations Charter
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UNDC	UN Disarmament Commission
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNH	United Nations Habitat
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNOOSA	United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
UNPA	United Nations Parliamentary Assembly
UNPFF	United Nations Peace Force Framework
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAT	Value-Added Tax
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Annex III
Revised Statute of the International Court of Justice

Article 1

The International Court of Justice established by the Charter of the United Nations ~~as~~ **and continued under the Second Charter is** the principal judicial organ of the United Nations ~~shall be constituted~~ and shall function in accordance with the provisions of ~~the present~~ **this Revised** Statute. **Except as specified in this Revised Statute or the Second Charter, the terms of the existing judges on the Court and the processes, procedures, and legal personality of the Court are not altered by this Revised Statute.**

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURT

Article 2

The Court shall be composed of a body of independent judges, elected regardless of their nationality from among persons of high moral character, who possess the qualifications required in their respective countries for appointment to the highest judicial offices, or are jurisconsults of recognized competence in international law.

Article 3

1. The Court shall consist of fifteen Members, no two of whom may be nationals of the same State.

2. A person who for the purposes of membership in the Court could be regarded as a national of more than one State shall be deemed to be a national of the one in which he **or she** ordinarily exercises civil and political rights.

Article 4

1. The Members of the Court shall be elected by the General Assembly and by the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly** from a list of persons nominated by the national groups in the Permanent Court of Arbitration, in accordance with the following provisions.

2. In the case of Members of the United Nations not represented in the Permanent Court of Arbitration, candidates shall be nominated by national groups appointed for this purpose by their governments under the same conditions as those prescribed for members of the Permanent Court of Arbitration by Article 44 of the Convention of The Hague of 1907 for the pacific settlement of international disputes.

3. The conditions under which a State which is a party to ~~the present~~ **this Revised** Statute but is not a Member of the United Nations may participate in electing the members of the Court shall, in the absence of a special agreement, be laid down by the General Assembly ~~upon recommendation of the Security Council~~ **in consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly**.

Article 5

1. At least three months before the date of the election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a written request to the members of the Permanent Court of Arbitration belonging to the States which are parties to the ~~present~~ **Revised** Statute, and to the members of the national groups appointed under Article 4, paragraph 2, inviting them to undertake, within a given time, by national groups, the nomination of persons in a position to accept the duties of a Member of the Court.

2. No group may nominate more than four persons, not more than two of whom shall be of their own nationality. In no case may the number of candidates nominated by a group be more than double the number of seats to be filled.

Article 6

Before making these nominations, each national group is recommended to consult its highest court of justice, its legal faculties and schools of law, and its national academies and national sections of international academies devoted to the study of law.

Article 7

1. The Secretary-General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all the persons thus nominated. Save as provided in Article 12, paragraph 2, these shall be the only persons eligible.

2. The Secretary-General shall submit this list to the General Assembly and to the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly**.

Article 8

The General Assembly and the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly** shall proceed independently of one another to elect the members of the Court.

Article 9

At every election, the electors shall bear in mind not only that the persons to be elected should individually possess the qualifications required, but also that in the body as a whole**, there is equitable gender and geographic representation and that** the representation ~~of the main forms of civilization and~~ of the principal legal systems of the world ~~should be~~ **is** assured.

Article 10

1. Those candidates who obtain an absolute majority of votes in the General Assembly and in the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly** shall be considered as elected.

~~**2. Any vote of the Security Council, whether for the election of judges or for the appointment of members of the conference envisaged in Article 12, shall be taken without any distinction between permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council.**~~

2~~**3.**~~ In the event of more than one national of the same state obtaining an absolute majority of the votes both of the General Assembly and of the ~~Security Council, the eldest of these only shall be considered as elected~~ **Parliamentary Assembly, the General Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly shall take subsequent votes to choose between the two candidates**.

Article 11

If, after the first meeting held for the purpose of the election, one or more seats remain to be filled, a second and, if necessary, a third meeting shall take place.

Article 12

1. If, after the third meeting, one or more seats still remain unfilled, a joint conference consisting of six members, three appointed by the General Assembly and three by the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly**, may be formed at any time at the request of either the General Assembly or the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly**, for the purpose of choosing by the vote of an absolute majority one name for each seat still vacant, to submit to the General Assembly and the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly** for their respective acceptance.

2. If the joint conference is unanimously agreed upon any person who fulfills the required conditions, **she or** he may be included in its list, even though **she or** he was not included in the list of nominations referred to in Article 7.

3. If the joint conference is satisfied that it will not be successful in procuring an election, those members of the Court who have already been elected shall, within a period to be fixed by the ~~Security Council~~ **General Assembly**, proceed to fill the vacant seats by selection from among those candidates who have obtained votes either in the General Assembly or in the ~~Security Council~~ **Parliamentary Assembly**.

4. In the event of an equality of votes among the judges, the ~~eldest judge~~ **president of the General Assembly** shall have a casting vote.

Article 13

1. ~~The~~ **Subject to the provisions of Article 1, the** members of the Court shall be elected for nine years and may be re-elected~~; provided, however, that of the judges elected at the first election, the terms of five judges shall expire at the end of three years and the terms of five more judges shall expire at the end of six years~~.

~~2. The judges whose terms are to expire at the end of the above-mentioned initial periods of three and six years shall be chosen by lot to be drawn by the Secretary-General immediately after the first election has been completed.~~

2~~3~~. The members of the Court shall continue to discharge their duties until their places have been filled. Though replaced, they shall finish any cases which they may have begun.

3~~4~~. In the case of the resignation of a member of the Court, the resignation shall be addressed to the President of the Court for transmission to the Secretary-General. This last notification makes the place vacant.

Article 14

Vacancies shall be filled by the same method as ~~that laid down for the first election~~ **provided above**, subject to the following provision: the Secretary-General shall, within one month of the occurrence of the vacancy, proceed to issue the invitations provided for in Article 5, and the date of the election shall be fixed by the ~~Security Council~~ **General Assembly**.

Article 15

A member of the Court elected to replace a member whose term of office has not expired shall hold office for the remainder of his predecessor's term.

Article 16

1. No member of the Court may exercise any political or administrative function, or engage in any other occupation of a professional nature.

2. Any doubt on this point shall be settled by the decision of the Court.

Article 17

1. No member of the Court may act as agent, counsel, or advocate in any case.

2. No member may participate in the decision of any case in which **she or** he has previously taken part as agent, counsel, or advocate for one of the parties, or as a member of a national or international court, or of a commission of enquiry, or in any other capacity.

3. Any doubt on this point shall be settled by the decision of the Court.

Article 18

1. No member of the Court can be dismissed unless, in the unanimous opinion of the other members, **she or** he has ceased to fulfill the required conditions.

2. Formal notification thereof shall be made to the Secretary-General by the Registrar.

3. This notification makes the place vacant.

Article 19

The members of the Court, when engaged on the business of the Court, shall enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities.

Article 20

Every member of the Court shall, before taking up his **or her** duties, make a solemn declaration in open court that he **or she** will exercise his powers impartially and conscientiously.

Article 21

1. The Court shall elect its President and Vice-President for three years; they may be re-elected.

2. **The Court shall ensure that over time there is equitable gender representation in the positions of both President and Vice-President.**

3. The Court shall appoint its Registrar and may provide for the appointment of such other officers as may be necessary.

Article 22

1. The seat of the Court shall be established at The Hague. This, however, shall not prevent the Court from sitting and exercising its functions elsewhere whenever the Court considers it desirable.

2. The President and the Registrar shall reside at the seat of the Court.

Article 23

1. The Court shall remain permanently in session, except during the judicial vacations, the dates and duration of which shall be fixed by the Court.

2. Members of the Court are entitled to periodic leave, the dates and duration of which shall be fixed by the Court, having in mind the distance between The Hague and the home of each judge.

3. Members of the Court shall be bound, unless they are on leave or prevented from attending by illness or other serious reasons duly explained to the President, to hold themselves permanently at the disposal of the Court.

Article 24

1. If, for some special reason, a member of the Court considers that he **or she** should not take part in the decision of a particular case, he **or she** shall so inform the President.

2. If the President considers that for some special reason one of the members of the Court should not sit in a particular case, he **or she** shall give him notice accordingly.

3. If in any such case the member of the Court and the President disagree, the matter shall be settled by the decision of the Court.

Article 25

1. The full Court shall sit except when it is expressly provided otherwise in the ~~**present**~~ **Revised** Statute.

2. Subject to the condition that the number of judges available to constitute the Court is not thereby reduced below eleven, the Rules of the Court may provide for allowing one or more judges, according to circumstances and in rotation, to be dispensed from sitting.

3. A quorum of nine judges shall suffice to constitute the Court.

Article 26

1. The Court may from time to time form one or more chambers, composed of three or more judges as the Court may determine, for dealing with particular categories of cases; for example, ~~**labour cases and cases relating to transit and communications**~~ **environmental cases**.

2. The Court may at any time form a chamber for dealing with a particular case. The number of judges to constitute such a chamber shall be determined by the Court with the approval of the parties.

3. Cases shall be heard and determined by the chambers provided for in this article if the parties so request.

Article 27

A judgment given by any of the chambers provided for in Articles 26 and 29 shall be considered as rendered by the Court.

Article 28

The chambers provided for in Articles 26 and 29 may, with the consent of the parties, sit and exercise their functions elsewhere than at The Hague.

Article 29

With a view to the speedy dispatch of business, the Court shall form annually a chamber composed of five judges which, at the request of the parties, may hear and determine cases by summary procedure. In addition, two judges shall be selected for the purpose of replacing judges who find it impossible to sit.

Article 30

1. The Court shall frame rules for carrying out its functions. In particular, it shall lay down rules of procedure.

2. The Rules of the Court may provide for assessors to sit with the Court or with any of its chambers, without the right to vote.

Article 31

1. Judges of the nationality of each of the parties shall retain their right to sit in the case before the Court.

2. If the Court includes upon the Bench a judge of the nationality of one of the parties, any other party may choose a person to sit as judge. Such person shall be chosen preferably from among those persons who have been nominated as candidates as provided in Articles 4 and 5.

3. If the Court includes upon the Bench no judge of the nationality of the parties, each of these parties may proceed to choose a judge as provided in paragraph 2 of this Article.

4. The provisions of this Article shall apply to the case of Articles 26 and 29. In such cases, the President shall request one or, if necessary, two of the members of the Court forming the chamber to give place to the members of the Court of the nationality of the parties concerned, and, failing such, or if they are unable to be present, to the judges specially chosen by the parties.

5. Should there be several parties in the same interest, they shall, for the purpose of the preceding provisions, be reckoned as one party only. Any doubt upon this point shall be settled by the decision of the Court.

6. Judges chosen as laid down in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of this Article shall fulfill the conditions required by Articles 2, 17 (paragraph 2), 20, and 24 of the ~~present~~ **Revised** Statute. They shall take part in the decision on terms of complete equality with their colleagues.

Article 32

1. Each member of the Court shall receive an annual salary.

2. The President shall receive a special annual allowance.

3. The Vice-President shall receive a special allowance for every day on which she or he acts as President.

4. The judges chosen under Article 31, other than members of the Court, shall receive compensation for each day on which they exercise their functions.

5. These salaries, allowances, and compensation shall be fixed by the General Assembly **in consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly**. They may not be decreased during the term of office.

6. The salary of the Registrar shall be fixed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the Court.

7. Regulations made by the General Assembly **in consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly** shall fix the conditions under which retirement pensions may be given to members of the Court and to the Registrar, and the conditions under which members of the Court and the Registrar shall have their travelling expenses refunded.

8. The above salaries, allowances, and compensation shall be free of all taxation.

Article 33

The expenses of the Court shall be borne by the United Nations in such a manner as shall be decided by the General Assembly **in consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly**.

CHAPTER II

COMPETENCE OF THE COURT, JURISDICTION OF THE COURT, AND LEGAL CAPACITY TO BRING ACTIONS BEFORE THE COURT IN CONTENTIOUS CASES

~~**Article 34**~~

~~**1. Only states may be parties in cases before the Court.**~~

~~**2. The Court, subject to and in conformity with its Rules, may request of public international organizations information relevant to cases before it, and shall receive such information presented by such organizations on their own initiative.**~~

~~**3. Whenever the construction of the constituent instrument of a public international organization or of an international convention adopted thereunder is in question in a case before the Court, the Registrar shall so notify the public international organization concerned and shall communicate to it copies of all the written proceedings.**~~

~~Article 35~~

~~1. The Court shall be open to the states parties to the present Statute.~~

~~2. The conditions under which the Court shall be open to other states shall, subject to the special provisions contained in treaties in force, be laid down by the Security Council, but in no case shall such conditions place the parties in a position of inequality before the Court.~~

~~3. When a state which is not a Member of the United Nations is a party to a case, the Court shall fix the amount which that party is to contribute towards the expenses of the Court. This provision shall not apply if such state is bearing a share of the expenses of the Court~~

Article 34~~6~~

1. The **Court shall be competent to adjudicate cases involving international law, including determining matters of fact, resolving questions of law, and fashioning binding remedies in any case for which it has original** jurisdiction ~~of~~ **under Article 35 Paragraphs (1)(2)(3) and (4) of this Revised Statute. The Court shall be competent to adjudicate appeals from international courts and tribunals, including reviewing their decisions of law, and modifying remedies imposed by them, in any case for which** the Court ~~comprises all cases which~~ **has appellate jurisdiction under Article 35 Paragraph (5) of this Revised Statute**.

Article 35

1. The International Court of Justice shall have the power to exercise original compulsory jurisdiction to adjudicate any legal dispute involving international law between or among Members of the United Nations and any additional State Parties to the Revised Statute, however, in accordance with Article 95 of the Second Charter, in the event that the parties ~~refer to it and all matters~~ **to a dispute have entered into a bilateral or multilateral agreement entrusting their dispute or the general subject matter under which their dispute falls to another tribunal with the capacity to render a binding decision, the Court shall decline the exercise of jurisdiction in favor of that tribunal**.

2. The International Court of Justice shall have the power to exercise original jurisdiction to adjudicate any legal dispute involving matters where the Court's jurisdiction is specially provided for in the **Second** Charter ~~of the United Nations~~ or in treaties ~~and~~ **or** conventions in force **at the time the dispute arises**.

~~2. The states parties to the present Statute may at any time declare that they recognize as compulsory ipso facto and without special agreement, in relation to any other state accepting the same obligation, the jurisdiction of the Court in all legal disputes concerning:~~

~~a. the interpretation of a treaty;~~

~~b. any question of international law;~~

~~c. the existence of any fact which, if established, would constitute a breach of an international obligation;~~

~~d. the nature or extent of the reparation to be made for the breach of an international obligation.~~

~~**3. The declarations referred to above may be made unconditionally or on condition of reciprocity on the part of several or certain states, or for a certain time.**~~

~~**4. Such declarations shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall transmit copies thereof to the parties to the Statute and to the Registrar of the Court.**~~

~~**5. Declarations made under Article 36 of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice and which are still in force shall be deemed, as between the parties to the present Statute, to be acceptances of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice for the period which they still have to run and in accordance with their terms.**~~

3. The International Court of Justice shall have the power to exercise original jurisdiction to adjudicate any legal dispute involving international law between or among states where those states voluntarily submit the dispute to the Court for resolution in accordance with, and to the extent provided, by a *compromis* submitted by such parties to the Court.

4. The International Court of Justice shall have the power to exercise original jurisdiction to adjudicate any legal dispute involving international law in which the respondent state party does not contest the jurisdiction of the Court under the doctrine of *forum prorogatum*.

5. Pursuant to Article 95 Paragraph (2) of the Second Charter, upon the application of a state party to a dispute, or in the case of an investment dispute by a non-state party, the International Court of Justice shall have the power to exercise binding jurisdiction to adjudicate appeals, if the governing documents or practices of those courts or tribunals allow for appeal to the International Court of Justice.

6. In the event of a dispute as to whether the Court has jurisdiction, the matter shall be settled by the decision of the Court.

Article 36

1. All members of the United Nations and any additional State Parties to the Revised Statute will have the legal capacity to bring actions against other states recognized as states by the General Assembly before the International Court of Justice to redress or prevent behavior in contravention of international law, so long as they can demonstrate to the Court that such behavior, if proven, is causing, or would cause, harm to them or that such behavior, if proven, is a violation of what the Court determines to be an obligation *erga omnes*.

2. Pursuant to Article 95 Paragraph (2) of the Second Charter, any member of the United Nations, or non-state party to an investment dispute, may appeal an adverse decision of law from an international court or tribunal whose governing documents or practices allow for final appeal to the Court.

3. Pursuant to Article 95 Paragraph (3) of the Second Charter, all members of the United Nations, organs of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations, and intergovernmental organizations will have the legal capacity to bring legal actions for judicial review of decisions or actions of United Nations bodies referred to in Article 96 Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Second Charter, so long as they can demonstrate to the Court that such actions, if proven, are impacting, or would

impact, them or that such actions, if proven, are in violation of what the Court determines to be an obligation *erga omnes*.

4. The rules and procedures of this Revised Statute, the Rules of the Court, and the Second Charter shall apply equally to all litigants regardless of whether they are parties to this Revised Statute.

Article 37

Whenever a treaty or convention in force provides for reference of a matter to a tribunal to have been instituted by the League of Nations, or to the Permanent Court of International Justice, the matter shall, as between the parties to the ~~present~~ **Revised** Statute, be referred to the International Court of Justice.

CHAPTER III – THE LAW APPLICABLE TO THE COURT

Article 38

1. The Court, whose function is to decide in accordance with international law such disputes as are submitted to it, shall apply:

a. international conventions, whether general or particular, establishing rules ~~expressly recognized by~~ **applicable to** the contesting states;

b. **resolutions of international organizations that are binding upon states and resolutions and practices of international organizations that are binding on international organizations;**

~~c~~**b.** international custom **and recommendations of international organizations**, as evidence of ~~a~~ general practice **and norms** accepted as law;

de. the general principles of law recognized by ~~civilized~~ **the community of** nations;

~~d. subject to the provisions of Article 59,~~ **e.** judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists of the various nations, as subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law~~.~~**;**

f. municipal law as may be necessary for, or inextricably bound to, its application of (a) – (e) above or are otherwise necessary for it to perform its functions.

2. This provision shall not prejudice the power of the Court to decide a case *ex aequo et bono*, if the parties agree thereto.

CHAPTER ~~III~~ IV

PROCEDURE

Article 39

1. The official languages of the Court shall be French and English. If the parties agree that the case shall be conducted in French, the judgment shall be delivered in French. If the parties agree that the case shall be conducted in English, the judgment shall be delivered in English.

2. In the absence of an agreement as to which language shall be employed, each party may, in the pleadings, use the language which it prefers; the decision of the Court shall be given in French and English. In this case the Court shall at the same time determine which of the two texts shall be considered as authoritative.

3. The Court shall, at the request of any party, authorize a language other than French or English to be used by that party.

Article 40

1. Cases are brought before the Court, as the case may be, either by the notification of the special agreement or by a written application addressed to the Registrar. In either case the subject of the dispute and the parties shall be indicated.

2. The Registrar shall forthwith communicate the application to all concerned.

3. He **or she** shall also notify the Members of the United Nations through the Secretary-General, and also any other states **and entities** entitled to appear before the Court.

Article 41

1. The Court shall have the power to indicate, if it considers that circumstances so require, any provisional measures which ought to be taken to preserve the respective rights of either party.

2. Pending the final decision, notice of the measures suggested shall forthwith be given to the parties and to the Security Council.

Article 42

1. The parties shall be represented by agents.

2. They may have the assistance of counsel or advocates before the Court.

3. The agents, counsel, and advocates of parties before the Court shall enjoy the privileges and immunities necessary to the independent exercise of their duties.

Article 43

1. The procedure shall consist of two parts: written and oral.

2. The written proceedings shall consist of the communication to the Court and to the parties of memorials, counter-memorials and, if necessary, replies; also all papers and documents in support.

3. These communications shall be made through the Registrar, in the order and within the time fixed by the Court.

4. A certified copy of every document produced by one party shall be communicated to the other party.

5. The oral proceedings shall consist of the hearing by the Court of witnesses, experts, agents, counsel, and advocates.

Article 44

1. For the service of all notices upon persons other than the agents, counsel, and advocates, the Court shall apply direct to the government of the state upon whose territory the notice has to be served.

2. The same provision shall apply whenever steps are to be taken to procure evidence on the spot.

3. Members of the United Nations and parties to the Revised Statute shall cooperate with the Court in delivering effective notice and procuring requested evidence.

Article 45

The hearing shall be under the control of the President or, if **she or** he is unable to preside, of the Vice-President; if neither is able to preside, the senior judge present shall preside.

Article 46

The hearing in Court shall be public, unless the Court shall decide otherwise, or unless the parties demand that the public be not admitted.

Article 47

1. Minutes shall be made at each hearing and signed by the Registrar and the President.

2. These minutes alone shall be authentic.

Article 48

The Court shall make orders for the conduct of the case, shall decide the form and time in which each party must conclude its arguments, and make all arrangements connected with the taking of evidence.

Article 49

The Court may, even before the hearing begins, call upon the agents to produce any document or to supply any explanations. Formal note shall be taken of any refusal.

Article 50

The Court may, at any time, entrust any individual, body, bureau, commission, or other organization that it may select, with the task of carrying out an enquiry or giving an expert opinion.

Article 51

During the hearing any relevant questions are to be put to the witnesses and experts under the conditions laid down by the Court in the rules of procedure referred to in Article 30.

Article 52

After the Court has received the proofs and evidence within the time specified for the purpose, it may refuse to accept any further oral or written evidence that one party may desire to present unless the other side consents.

Article 53

1. Whenever one of the parties does not appear before the Court, or fails to defend its case, the other party may call upon the Court to decide in favour of its claim.

2. The Court must, before doing so, satisfy itself, not only that it has **competence under Article 34 and** jurisdiction in accordance with Articles ~~36~~ **35** and 37, but also that the **applicant party has capacity under Article 36 and that its** claim is well founded in fact and law.

Article 54

1. When, subject to the control of the Court, the agents, counsel, and advocates have completed their presentation of the case, the President shall declare the hearing closed.

2. The Court shall withdraw to consider the judgment.

3. The deliberations of the Court shall take place in private and remain secret.

Article 55

1. All questions shall be decided by a majority of the judges present.

2. In the event of an equality of votes, the President or the judge who acts in his **or her** place shall have a casting vote.

Article 56

1. The judgment shall state the reasons on which it is based.

2. It shall contain the names of the judges who have taken part in the decision.

Article 57

If the judgment does not represent in whole or in part the unanimous opinion of the judges, any judge shall be entitled to deliver a separate opinion.

Article 58

The judgment shall be signed by the President and by the Registrar. It shall be read in open court, due notice having been given to the agents.

Article 59

Complementary to the Court's powers to issue decisions binding on parties and intervening states under Articles 34 and 63(2), ~~**The**~~ decisions of the ~~**Court has no binding force except between**~~ **Court shall be considered authoritative interpretations of international law by** the ~~**parties and in respect of that particular case**~~ **principal judicial organ of the United Nations**.

Article 60

The judgment is final and without appeal. In the event of dispute as to the meaning or scope of the judgment, the Court shall construe it upon the request of any party.

Article 61

1. An application for revision of a judgment may be made only when it is based upon the discovery of some fact of such a nature as to be a decisive factor, which fact was, when the judgment was given, unknown to the Court and also to the party claiming revision, always provided that such ignorance was not due to negligence.

2. The proceedings for revision shall be opened by a judgment of the Court expressly recording the existence of the new fact, recognizing that it has such a character as to lay the case open to revision, and declaring the application admissible on this ground.

3. The Court may require previous compliance with the terms of the judgment before it admits proceedings in revision.

4. The application for revision must be made at latest within six months of the discovery of the new fact.

5. No application for revision may be made after the lapse of ten years from the date of the judgment.

Article 62

l. Should a state consider that it has an interest of a legal nature which may be affected by the decision in the case, it may submit a request to the Court to be permitted to intervene **that the Court may deny. At the discretion of the Court, such intervention may consist of the submission of amicus curiae memorials and counter-memorials and other written communications, the participation in oral proceedings, and the becoming of a named party in the proceedings on conditions to be determined by the Court in conformity with its Rules.**

2. Should a public international organization or should a non-governmental organizations, civil society and other stakeholders who has concluded arrangements with the Economic and Social Council under Article 71 of the Second Charter consider that it has an interest of a legal nature which may be affected by a decision in the case, it may submit a request to the Court to be permitted to intervene that the Court may deny. At the discretion of the Court, such intervention may consist of the submission of amicus curiae memorials and counter-memorials and other written communications and the participation in oral proceedings on conditions to be determined by the Court in conformity with its Rules.

~~**2. It shall be for the Court to decide upon this request.**~~

~~3.~~ The Court, subject to and in conformity with its Rules, may request of States, public international organizations, and civil society and other stakeholders who have concluded arrangements with the Economic and Social Council under Article 71 of the Second Charter information relevant to cases before it, and shall receive such information presented by such organizations in the form it deems most acceptable.

Article 63

1. Whenever the construction of a convention to which states other than those concerned in the case are parties is in question, the Registrar shall notify all such states forthwith.

2. Every state so notified has the right to intervene in the proceedings **subject to the limiting conditions specified in Article 62(1)~~;~~,** but if it uses this right, the construction given by the judgment will be equally binding upon it.

Article 64

Unless otherwise decided by the Court, each party shall bear its own costs.

Article 65

1. The Registrar shall publish timely notice of changes to the Court's docket including all case filings and relevant timelines for intervening in cases in a forum intended to be readily available to States, public international organizations, and those organizations referred to in Article 62 Paragraph (2) and (3) who have concluded arrangements with the Economic and Social Council.

2. States, public international organizations, and those organizations referred to in Article 62 Paragraph (2) and (3) who have concluded arrangements with the Economic and Social Council having presented written or oral statements or both shall be permitted to comment on the statements made by other states or organizations in the form, to the extent, and within the time-limits which the Court, or, should it not be sitting, the President, shall decide in each particular case. Accordingly, the Registrar shall in due time communicate any such written statements to states and organizations having submitted similar statements.

CHAPTER ~~IV~~ V

ADVISORY OPINIONS

Article 6~~5~~

1. The Court may give an advisory opinion on any legal question at the request of whatever body may be authorized by or in accordance with the **Second** Charter of the United Nations to make such a request.

2. Questions upon which the advisory opinion of the Court is asked shall be laid before the Court by means of a written request containing an exact statement of the question upon which an opinion is ~~**required, and accompanied by**~~ **solicited together with** all documents likely to throw light upon the question.

~~**Article 66**~~

~~**1. The Registrar shall forthwith give notice of the request for an advisory opinion to all states entitled to appear before the Court.**~~

~~**2. The Registrar shall also, by means of a special and direct communication, notify any state entitled to appear before the Court or international organization considered by the Court, or, should it not be sitting, by the President, as likely to be**~~

~~able to furnish information on the question, that the Court will be prepared to receive, within a time-limit to be fixed by the President, written statements, or to hear, at a public sitting to be held for the purpose, oral statements relating to the question.~~

~~3. Should any such state entitled to appear before the Court have failed to receive the special communication referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article, such state may express a desire to submit a written statement or to be heard; and the Court will decide.~~

~~4. States and organizations having presented written or oral statements or both shall be permitted to comment on the statements made by other states or organizations in the form, to the extent, and within the time-limits which the Court, or, should it not be sitting, the President, shall decide in each particular case. Accordingly, the Registrar shall in due time communicate any such written statements to states and organizations having submitted similar statements.~~

Article 67

The Court shall deliver its advisory opinions in open court, notice having been given to the Secretary-General and to the representatives of Members of the United Nations, of other states and of international organizations immediately concerned.

Article 68

In the exercise of its advisory functions the Court shall ~~further be guided by~~ **follow** the provisions of the ~~present~~ **Revised** Statute ~~which~~ **that** apply in contentious cases ~~to the extent to which~~ **unless** it ~~recognizes~~ **has good reason to consider** them **not** to be applicable.

CHAPTER ~~V~~ VI

AMENDMENT

Article 69

Amendments to ~~the present~~ **this Revised** Statute shall be effected by the same procedure as is provided by the **Second** Charter of the United Nations for amendments to that **Second** Charter, subject however to any provisions which the General Assembly ~~upon recommendation of the Security Council~~**, in consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly,** may adopt concerning the participation of states which are parties to the ~~present~~ **Revised** Statute but are not Members of the United Nations.

Article 70

The Court shall have power to propose such amendments to the ~~present~~ **Revised** Statute as it may deem necessary, through written communications to the Secretary-General, for consideration in conformity with the provisions of Article 69.

Comment

Revisions to Specific Text

In addition to below referenced substantive changes to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, throughout the Revised Statute, we provide narrowly tailored revisions to specific text, such as our elimination of the exclusive use of the male pronoun. (In this regard, and with a more direct potential impact on gender representation, we provide for gender equity in the selection of judges and Court officers in Articles 9 and 21(2).)

Reflecting innovations in the Second Charter, we also updated specific references in different articles, such as with our substitution of "the Parliamentary Assembly" for "the Security Council." Among other narrowly circumscribed revisions, we updated text we considered anachronistic, including provisions that in the event of a tie vote among judicial candidates, the eldest candidate be deemed the winner (Articles 10(3) and 12(4)) and including problematic references such as to the "main forms of civilization" in Article 9 and "civilized counties" in Article 38(d).

Chapter II

Chapter XIV of the Second Charter grants the Court expanded adjudicative powers in four areas, three of which broaden the Court's authority in contentious cases.[1] In Chapter II of the Revised Statute, these three are given the legal definition necessary to become operationalized.[2]

The most significant of the three, found in Article 93(1) of the Second Charter, replaces the requirement that states must consent to the Court's jurisdiction in contentious cases with a provision allowing for the Court to exercise compulsory jurisdiction in such cases. In a historic break from past practice, under this provision an international tribunal would be empowered for the first time to adjudicate all interstate disputes among Members of the United Nations and additional Parties to the Revised Statute. Also novel and important, Article 95(2) of the Second Charter empowers the Court to review decisions of other international tribunals, and Article 95(3) empowers the Court to exercise judicial review over decisions or actions of UN bodies.[3]

Including three new adjudicative powers in our revision of Chapter II presented significant challenges because the Statute currently lacks a well-developed framework for circumscribing the Court's ambit of authority into which the new powers could be integrated. As a precondition to proceeding with our redrafting project, we, therefore, included such a framework in the Revised Chapter.

This framework now clearly divides adjudicative powers into three discreet components: the *competence* of the Court to determine matters of fact, resolve questions or law, and

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[1] The fourth grant in Chapter XIV of the Second Charter, expands the Court's authority in non-contentious cases, specifically, to render advisory opinions upon requests from the highest-level courts or tribunals of Members of the United Nations (Article 95(4)).

[2] In the Revised Statute, the authority for the Court to exercise its new advisory opinion grant is subsumed under Article 66 of Chapter V on *Advisory Opinions* (*see*, discussion below under the Chapter V heading).

[3] For further explanation of, and the rationale behind, these innovations, see *Second Charter Commentary on Revisions to Chapter XIV*.

fashion remedies in different classes of cases under Article 34; the power of the Court to exercise specified categories of *jurisdiction* in Article 35; and the *capacity* (standing) of the litigants to bring matters before the Court in Article 36.

Chapter III

Consistent with our effort to define the contours of the Court's adjudicative powers in Chapter II in a conceptually clean way, we removed from the Chapter the unrelated Article 38 on sources of law applicable to the Court and placed it in its own new Chapter III (*The Law Applicable to the Court*). The Revised Article 38 maintains the traditional sources found in the current Article with a limited number of notable modifications and additions.

The Revised Article 38 1(a) eliminates the current Article's ambiguous prescription (not otherwise specified in international law) that the Court's application of international conventions must be "expressly recognized by the contesting states" in favor of the formulation that they must be "applicable to the contesting states."

A new Article 38 1(b) is added which includes in applicable sources, "resolutions of international organizations that are binding on states and resolutions and practices of international organizations that are binding on international organizations." The first clause gives the Court authority to apply a limited new class of binding "exigent situation" resolutions approved by the United Nations General and Parliamentary Assemblies pursuant to the Second Charter's Article 15. Other situations where international organizations now or in the future promulgate binding resolutions (such as when the European Union or the World Health Organization issue regulations) would also fall under the ambit of Article 38 1(b).

The second clause of Article 38 1(b), which adds as applicable law "resolutions and practices of international organizations that are binding on international organizations" is intended to incorporate additional law necessary for the Court to effectively exercise "binding judicial review over decisions or actions" of United Nations and related bodies pursuant to the Court's new adjudicative mandate in Article 95(3) of the Second Charter.

Article 38 1(c) has been modified to include "recommendations of international organizations" as evidence of the subjective belief (referred to as *Opinio Juris*) that states are obligated to follow the interstate practices that the recommendations are intended to foster. Under international law, such *Opinio Juris* is required for the interstate practice to be considered binding customary international law. International courts, including the International Court of Justice, have long looked to such recommendations as evidence of *Opinio Juris*, and this modification gives explicit textual recognition to this practice.

Because of the modification of Article 59 in the Revised Statute (see below), the reference to Article 59 would no longer be meaningful and is, therefore, eliminated from Article 38 1(d).

Finally, while the Court's mandate is to resolve international law cases, because legal disputes require the seamless application of law, Article 38 1(f) makes up for a deficiency in the current Statute by allowing the Court, when necessary, to apply the domestic law of states.

Article 59

While the Statute's current Article 59 states that, "the decision of the Court has no binding force except between the parties and in respect of that particular case," the precedential value of the Court's judgments have been respected throughout the international system. Without taking a technical position on the extent to which the Court's decisions are universally binding, we believe our revised formulation that the Court's decisions "shall be considered an authoritative interpretation of international law by the principal judicial organ of the United Nation" more accurately reflects of the contemporary status of the Court's opinions than does the current provision.

Articles 62 and 65

Article 62 falls under the Chapter on "Procedure" (Chapter III in the current Statute and Chapter IV in the Revised Statute). In the current Statute, the Article is limited to prescribing the intervention of non-party states in the Court's proceedings. To create greater coherence in the Revised Statute, we consolidate under the Article (and the following Articles in Chapter IV) all references to third party participation in proceedings. As such, we moved the provisions prescribing the Court's authority to make informational requests of public international organizations from Article 34 of Chapter II (on Competence of the Court) to Paragraph (3) of the Revised Article 62, and we added the ability for it to make such requests of states and civil society organizations. More substantively, consistent with our efforts to democratize United Nations bodies, under Paragraph (2), we added a provision paralleling Article 94(2) of the Second Charter allowing for civil society and other stakeholders to intervene in proceedings. This is reflective of similar provisions providing for greater civil society access in Articles 2(8), 8(2), 71, 2(9) (Human Rights Council), and 2(1) (Earth System Council) of the Second Charter.

Article 65 (previously 66) providing for notification of pending proceedings to relevant parties has been expanded to ensure that beyond states, all interested actors, including public international organizations and civil society organizations, receive notice adequate to allow them to request to intervene in matters, should they choose to do so. In addition, the Article has been moved from Chapter V (Chapter IV of the current Statute) where it was limited to Advisory Opinions into what is now Chapter IV on "Procedure" to reflect also the need to provide such notice in contentious cases.

Chapter V

While Article 66(1) of the Revised Statute remains substantively unchanged, its grant to the Court of authority to "give an advisory opinion . . . at the request of whatever body may be authorized by or in accordance with the Second Charter" allows the Court to answer requests under the Second Charter Article 95(4) for advisory opinions by the highest level national courts.