

Written Input for Preparation of Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

<https://www.wilpf.org/>

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This submission highlights feminist approaches to peace and development to prioritise for the Pact for the Future (hereafter the Pact). The following recommendations build on the recommendations already submitted by WILPF's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) programme¹ and its disarmament programme, Reaching Critical Will (RCW),² specifically in relation to *A New Agenda for Peace*³ (hereafter the Agenda).

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

SDG 5: Gender equality

While the UN Secretary General (UNSG) has significantly advanced UN discourse on gender equality (GE),⁴ the Agenda's focus is too narrow to dismantle patriarchal structures. The focus is on women's participation in decision-making around peace and security and on elimination of violence against women. This fails to recognise that the current structures of decision-making are themselves patriarchal and women's participation in such structures will not lead to equal division of power between the genders. Those power dynamics have to be transformed.

Calling for financing for GE within the current capitalist system is a bandaid. GE cannot be achieved within a political economy that generates structural oppression and hierarchies, including those based on class, ethnicity/race, and gender. These oppressive structures and norms have led to women carrying a disproportionate burden when it comes to social reproduction, especially working class women and women from immigrant and/or racialised communities. We need gender-responsive policies and public investments that prioritise and

¹ *Taking forward the UN's New Agenda for Peace: WILPF's Analysis and Recommendations on WPS and Gender*, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), September 2023, https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/WPS-Report_UNs-New-Agenda-for-Peace_WILPFs-Analysis-and-Recommendations-on-WPS-and-Gender.pdf.

² *Submission to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) for the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace*, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, January 2023, <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/other/RCW-NAP-.pdf> and *Review of A New Agenda for Peace's Recommendations for Disarmament and Demilitarisation*, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, July 2023, <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/nap-disarm-review.pdf>.

³ *Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*, United Nations, July 2023, <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9

value social reproductive work, and we need a commitment for advancement of economic and social rights, expansion of the social infrastructure, protection and investments in public services and a recognition of women as agents of change and not simply recipients of development.

The Pact should:

- Recognise the systemic nature of power-dynamics as causal in inequalities, and the consequential gender-based violence (GBV), how misogyny fuels sexual- and GBV all over the world, and how conflict exacerbates pre-existing patterns of violence, discrimination, and gender-based inequalities that are sustained by structural inequalities;
- Stress how, particularly in conflict settings, institutional weaknesses, impunity, and access to weapons aggravate violence and femicides;
- Commit to the eradication of all forms of GBV through fundamental, structural change in our systems of governance, in reliance upon human rights law, gender equality and hence transformed social relations; and
- Centre the value of social reproduction in economic and social policies, thereby addressing the unequal political economies and securing social, political, and economic rights, through *inter alia* gender-responsive investments in social infrastructure and in public services.

Financing for development

Common Agenda Policy Brief 6 recognises that the international financial architecture (IFA) has failed to mobilise financing at scale needed to combat the climate crisis and achieve the SDGs.⁵ However, the brief fails to recognise that the problem doesn't just lie in that one mechanism but in conscious and continuous harmful political and economic decisions embedded in the political economy of neoliberal capitalism, which has led to harming the well-being of people, nature, and animals. This approach prioritises profitability over human safety, causing inequalities between people and countries, including a serious sovereign debt crisis, especially in countries of the Global South.

It is insufficient to reform the IFA; we must transform the capitalist political economy itself. The new architecture should be built on cooperation, interdependence, and the principle of care instead of profit and exploitation.

Furthermore, in the debates around financing for development, including for GE, climate justice and safety, and aid, emphasis has been put on leveraging private capital, with the argument that public funding is insufficient.⁶ At the same time, military spending from public budgets is at an all time high, and big corporations avoid paying taxes. The Pact must push back against this false narrative of insufficiency of public finance.

⁵ *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 6: Reforms to the International Financial Architecture*, United Nations, May 2023, <https://indonesia.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-international-finance-architecture-en.pdf>.

⁶ "Create New Era of Public-Private Partnership, Deputy Secretary-General Stresses in Remarks to World Bank, International Monetary Fund Side Event," UN Press Release, 14 April 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/dsgsm1843.doc.htm>.

Current understanding of “development” is grounded in the Western systems of thought, in particular the capitalist political economy, which is based on perpetual growth and individual wealth, requiring division and dominance. Furthermore, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) used to measure economic “health” does not reflect the well-being of people and the planet. We have to fundamentally rethink how we assign value and to what. The understanding of development must be decoupled from this approach and linked instead to living, integrating and harmonising within the natural boundaries of the planet; degrowth.

It is essential that the degrowth is understood as a reduction of the world’s consumption of energy and material goods in a way that is globally just, taking into account the inequalities created by colonialism and capitalism, seeking to create an economy organised around communal well-being and ecological stability, rather than growth of GDP.⁷

The Pact should:

- Call for all sovereign debt to be cancelled;
- Call for decoupling of development from the concept of growth and recentering of it around communal well-being, global justice and ecological stability;
- Ensure degrowth policies, backed by legislation, are at the centre of all future economic planning;
- Oblige states to commit to an immediate reduction in military spending, and redirect it towards financing development and social good, particularly climate justice;
- Ensuring a structural perspective when tackling poverty and inequality, by dismantling capitalism, racism, patriarchy, ecological destruction, and militarism as part of a “package” in ensuring sustainable development;⁸
- In effecting all of the above the Pact must recognise the vital importance of social reproduction and the role the gender relations have in creating conditions for peaceful transformation.

SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG16: Peace

Militarisation poses significant obstacles to any meaningful climate action. Recent assessments indicate that global military activities contribute approximately 5.5 per cent of

⁷ Recognising inequalities, degrowth calls for a radical decrease of resource and energy use in the Global North to get back within sustainable levels. It acknowledges that most countries in the Global South will need to increase their resource use to meet human needs. While some sectors in society will still need to grow to ensure human well-being, such as public healthcare or regenerative agriculture, other sectors, such as fossil fuels and the arms industry, should radically degrow.

⁸ The demands incorporate human rights, ecological and social sustainability. They call for inclusive democratic participation in global economic governance, alliance building with diverse social groups, redistribution of wealth and resources and a shift away from excessive consumption, production and extraction. They also call for an equitable global trade order, tax and debt justice, corporate accountability, and the realization of the right to development, redistribution and revalidation of labour, targeted investments in the care sector, climate-friendly jobs, universal protection, and much more. See *Gendered inequalities of poverty: feminist and human rights-based approaches*, UN Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 26 April 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5339-gendered-inequalities-poverty-feminist-and-human-rights-based>.

total global emissions,⁹ yet the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change does not oblige militaries to report on their emissions.

In addition, ongoing conflicts produce substantial emissions. For example, the first year of the war in Ukraine has released emissions that roughly equal the annual output of a country like Belgium.¹⁰

Skyrocketing military spending has also been shown to correlate with increased emissions, and diverts public finance away from the mitigation and adaptation of the climate crisis, as well as gender-responsive economic and social infrastructure investments.¹¹

The Pact should:

- Recognise the impact world's militaries have on the climate and call for an end to the exclusion of military pollution in climate agreements;
- Highlight disarmament and demilitarisation as important aspects of climate action and environmental justice;
- Oblige states to endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and to immediately engage in a just transition to phase out the extraction and use of all fossil fuels.

Chapter II. International peace and security

Militarisation is a key impediment to diplomacy and peace. The UN and many member states have demanded disarmament and demilitarisation since the institution's founding, but the UN's permanent Security Council members have instead forcibly taken the world in the opposite direction. The Pact must be bold in its vision, setting out what is required to reverse this trend and build a multilateral system of demilitarised and nonviolent cooperation and global justice.

The Pact should:

- Support the call in the Agenda for an updated UN study on the social and economic impacts of military spending;
- Oblige states to immediately reduce military spending with the aim of total elimination of weapons production within five years and redirecting towards communal well-being and ecological regeneration;
- Compel divestment from weapons producers and companies that develop or produce surveillance and carceral technologies;

⁹ Stuart Parkinson and Linsey Cottrell, "Estimating the Military's Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions," Scientists for Global Responsibility and Conflict and Environment Observatory, 2022, https://ceobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SGRCEOBS-Estimating_Global_Military_GHG_Emissions_Nov22_rev.pdf.

¹⁰ Lennard de Klerk, Mykola Shlapak, Anatolii Shmurak, Oleksii Mykhalenko, Olga Gassan-zade, Adriaan Korthuis, Yevheniia Zasiadko, *Climate damage caused by Russia's war in Ukraine*, Initiative on GHG accounting of war, June 2023, <https://climatefocus.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/clim-damage-by-russia-war-12months.pdf>.

¹¹ Mark Akkerman et al., *Climate Collateral: How military spending accelerates climate breakdown*, November 2022, <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/climate-collateral>.

- Compel an end to the privatisation of military production and the influence of corporate interest over national policies that perpetuate war, undermine disarmament, and preclude a rational analysis of spending priorities;
- Oblige states to close foreign military bases, which aggravate tensions and facilitate the launch of wars and occupations;
- Compel the total elimination of nuclear weapons and demand all states join and implement the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW);
- Oblige states to join and implement the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Cluster Munitions, Arms Trade Treaty, and UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons;
- Commit to the integration of gender diversity and perspectives throughout resource reallocation process;
- Ensure that in the discourse and decisions about disarmament and demilitarisation civil society is as equally represented as nation-states.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

The Agenda's boldest and most concrete recommendation is the call for multilateral negotiations to a legally binding instrument to prohibit autonomous weapon systems. However, negotiations of such a treaty have so far been blocked by a few heavily militarised states that are investing in the development of autonomous weapons. Likewise, only a handful of militarised governments have blocked work to prevent an arms race in outer space and to prevent cyber attacks.

The Pact should:

- Support the UNSG's call for the negotiation and adoption of a treaty prohibiting and restricting autonomous weapons systems by 2026;
- Adopt the framing of "cyber peace" for actions in the realm of cyber issues, call for a multi-stakeholder approach in UN cyber forums, and urge alignment of various aspects of the UN's work in this area; and
- Reaffirm the UNSG's recommendations to develop international norms, rules, and principles to address threats to space systems and launch negotiations on a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

The post World War II consensus has collapsed because of the refusal of the permanent members of the Security Council to uphold the Charter, acting instead to further their own geopolitical and economic interests. Violations of international law have been rampant, especially those set out to protect human rights and well-being. Impunity for state-violations of human rights is pervasive. In such a context we have normalised the use of violence and armed conflict as a means of dispute resolution, undermining the promise of the Charter. Urgent transformation of the multilateral system is imperative.

The Pact should:

- Demand fulsome consultations for restructuring of the multilateral system to uphold the Charter and its stated purpose to end war, ensure peace and to address all dispute resolution through dialogue, securing universal disarmament. Among other things, this requires:
 - Demanding from the states an absolute commitment to uphold the international law and the provisions of the Charter in order to participate in multilateral spaces, and considering the necessity of establishing ministries for peace in each state to assist in compliance;
 - Restructuring the decision-making processes, in particular in relation to the Security Council, including considerations of its abolition or fundamental reform;
 - Addressing the collapse of the social contract between people and their governance structures and how representation should be recalibrated;
 - Ensuring there is no conflict of interests of those engaged in global governance, and transparency to prevent the advancement of private agendas;
 - Legal and policy development to end impunity with particular emphasis on the role of the International Criminal Court.