



**United Nations System  
Chief Executives Board  
for Coordination**

Original: English  
**ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION**  
Word Count: 2919

---

**Second Regular Session of 2022**

Manhasset, New York, 27 and 28 October 2022

**Summary of Deliberations**

**I. Introduction**

1. The second regular session of 2022 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at the Greentree Foundation Estate in Manhasset, New York, on 27 and 28 October 2022.
2. The session consisted of three segments on the following themes: (i) state of the world; (ii) new agenda for peace; and (iii) reclaiming the digital commons. The Board also received a lunch presentation on the “UN 2.0” survey.
3. In the present summary, the highlights of the deliberations during the session are provided.

**II. Segment 1 – State of the world**

4. The Secretary-General presented an overview of the current state of the world, reflecting on the impact of multiple, cascading, and dramatic crises and geopolitical tensions on the multilateral system and on the work of the United Nations system. Updates were also provided on the challenges to non-proliferation, with a special focus on nuclear safety and security in Ukraine, and on the work of the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, including the Black Sea Grain Initiative.
5. In the ensuing dialogue, Board members considered global economic trends, including in international trade, and the interlinkages between the global growth outlook and key sustainable development issues including increasing inequalities, climate, food security and health. Principals discussed the challenges of today’s extreme polarization on the state of human rights and the interconnection with the post-pandemic recovery, climate emergency, and global economic and political realities. The Board underscored the importance of the multilateral system in upholding the values and principles of the United Nations and to concentrate its efforts on areas where it could add value, while seizing opportunities and focusing on those most in need of support from the United Nations system.

**III. Segment 2 – New Agenda for Peace**

6. In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General invited CEB members to share their views on what could constitute the New Agenda for Peace. He solicited ideas with respect to

both the traditional peace and security sphere and emerging “ungoverned” domains such as cyber, new weapons, and outer space, where a meaningful role for the United Nations still had to be identified. A comprehensive approach to prevention, also considering elements like poverty eradication, social cohesion and challenges associated with the digital space, was needed, as was a peacebuilding strategy that supported countries through difficult transition processes by linking sustainable development efforts and addressing the root causes of conflict.

7. The discussion was also informed by presentations by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations. The presenters reiterated the importance of engaging the full United Nations system in the effort of increasing cooperation in support of the New Agenda for Peace, recognizing that each entity had a critical contribution to make, especially in relation to addressing emerging drivers of conflict. and in light of the deterioration of the peace and security environment. Among the salient peace and security challenges that had emerged in recent years were the quickly evolving nature of conflict, protracted conflict, the erosion of norms and regional and other security frameworks and treaties, heightened geopolitical divisions, the impact of climate change on security, the emergence of cyberspace as a new domain for conflict, disruptive facets of new technologies, violence outside of conflict environments such as that linked to organized criminal groups, growing exclusion and marginalization in part exacerbated by the pandemic, and a lack of confidence in States and other institutions.
8. The opening presentations identified four areas in need of structural change: (i) prevention: to do more and make better use of the tools contained in Chapter VI (“Pacific Settlement of Disputes”) of the United Nations Charter, including mediation, negotiation and other forms of peaceful resolution of conflict, as well as to bolster the foresight capacity of the United Nations and invest more in national capacity for prevention; (ii) peacebuilding: to strengthen the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and explore creating similar mechanisms that could help mobilize national political and financial support for prevention and peacebuilding, (iii) inclusion: to focus more on efforts to engage women, youth, and marginalized groups, including in the context of implementing the women, peace and security agenda, and (iv) investment: to generate both financial and political support for prevention and peacebuilding.
9. The presenters envisioned the New Agenda for Peace to be bold but pragmatic and to identify concrete proposals developed in a consultative manner with Member States. It should take a more comprehensive approach to peace and security and identify opportunities for cooperative multipolarity to move beyond the logic of competition. It could explore how to better respond to emerging drivers of conflict (e.g., impact of climate change, transnational criminal activities) and new forms of conflict enabled by digital technology (e.g., misinformation, online hate speech, cyberwar); better address the regional dimensions of conflicts and the question of multilateral enforcement; and better involve communities, youth and women in peace operations. A new vision and agenda for disarmament could also be an important component of a New Agenda for Peace.
10. In the ensuing discussion, the Board recognized that the United Nations was a unique symbol for world peace and the preeminent fora for bringing the international community together in the pursuit of peace and security. However, Members also stressed the need for a paradigm shift and for pursuing structural change, including by moving towards a more integrated cross-pillar approach to peace and security. It was important for the New Agenda for Peace to strengthen the peace, development and humanitarian nexus and better integrate peace and security, development cooperation and human rights, in light of their interconnected nature. Internally, the importance of working within the United Nations system across the peace, development and humanitarian pillars was strongly reiterated, as was the need to ensure both vertical and horizontal integration across functions. The United Nations also needed to continue to

advocate for human rights and demand accountability for perpetrators of violence. It had a role to provide longer-term strategic thinking, using evidence and data to systematically analyze potential threats and opportunities. This required for the Organization to build its intelligence capacity and foresight and forecasting capabilities.

11. The Board highlighted the role of prevention as an enabler and accelerator for the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and for realizing human rights. Concern was expressed, however, regarding rising defense budgets and decreasing support for development, the degradation of norms and the rule of law and rising impunity. To succeed in prevention and in sustaining peace, members observed that the United Nations would require a strengthened mandate to be able to proactively act on data and intelligence, address new technologies and the root causes of conflict, such as inequalities, lack of social cohesion, and climate change, better integrate UN country teams in prevention and peacebuilding efforts, engage with regional groups in a more systematic way and raise awareness of the growing role of non-state actors. In this context, efforts to introduce a new global measure of social and economic progress going beyond GDP was seen as necessary to create a just economy, which was core for prevention.
12. Recognizing that women and girls were often disproportionately affected by conflict and war, members stressed the importance of making more and faster progress in including them in peace processes and to accelerate the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Similarly, routine engagement of youth as agents for peace should be pursued.
13. On the subject of ensuring financing for peace and prevention, it was necessary to be realistic about the magnitude of resources needed to invest in prevention to avert a crisis. This required to persuade donors to take a longer-term view and for the Organization to be able to demonstrate the impact of its efforts to maintain peace and prevent conflict. Members suggested that quantifying the costs of conflict to society and the international community, as well as estimating the benefits of peace in financial terms, could help make a stronger case for investment in prevention.
14. On disarmament, there was more work to be done on chemical and biological weapons, and the challenges associated with emerging threats, such as lethal autonomous weapons systems and outer space. Regarding the latter, the role of non-state actors, including private individuals, was a new factor that could complicate efforts. Furthermore, members acknowledged that cybersecurity and cyberwar were increasingly salient in the peace and security context.
15. The Secretary-General concluded the discussion with some reflections on factors that could be included in the ongoing conceptualization of the New Agenda for Peace, with a view to put forward concrete proposals at the 2024 Summit of the Future, for consideration by Member States. The global peace and security environment had changed markedly since the peacekeeping function had been established, requiring the United Nations to change its perspective and operations on peace and prevention, including by taking a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to peace, development and human rights. The Secretary-General saw an opportunity to make better use of United Nations country teams to support peace and security efforts through an integrated approach and observed the need for capacity building in this context.

### **III. Segment 3 – Reclaiming the digital commons**

16. In his opening remarks, the United Nations Secretary-General identified the digital commons to be among the most important domains for the future of humanity, holding both enormous potential as well as challenges. Digital technologies needed to be harnessed for supporting inclusivity, reducing inequalities, and rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); yet their governance posed serious challenges. The

Secretary-General added that misinformation presented additional problems and that certain business models risked undermining international law and privacy. He stressed that it was important to leverage digital opportunities as much as possible, while addressing risks and harms.

17. Providing framing remarks and moderating the discussion, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology noted that the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation included a reference to a digital commons architecture, a concept that was also raised in the Our Common Agenda report. He emphasized that a global digital commons approach required a comprehensive vision of governance and impact, covering: (i) missing content and data as well as gaps in connectivity; (ii) missed use and lack of capacity, infrastructure and interoperability; and (iii) misuse in terms of governance, cooperation and accountability.
18. Delivering remarks, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union noted that there has been significant growth and developments in the digital sphere, which was increasingly impacting the lives of people around the world. However, public policies to address governance and security of the digital commons have lagged behind technical progress. The importance of norms and regulations was raised to promote a digital commons that would benefit all people. The opportunities that existed for Member States to leverage these technologies for positive impact was emphasized, including the importance of international cooperation and capacity development to support positive uses of technologies. However, limited progress in addressing the downsides of technology was also acknowledged.
19. In the broad-ranging discussion that followed the presentations, the Board focused on opportunities and benefits; risks and harms; laws, principles, and norms; and architecture and capacities related to digital technologies. The Board saw great opportunities and benefits for digital technologies to rescue the SDGs and support sustainable development, including with regard to access to financial systems and financial inclusion, access to information and collection of data, agriculture, green technologies and just transitions, industrialization and economic diversification, e-commerce and digital trade, connectivity for migrants and refugees, sustainable smart cities, and for amplifying the voices of marginalized people.
20. Acknowledging that digital technologies were vital in the work of the United Nations system but also bore risks and caused harm, members discussed areas of concern such as the spread of misinformation, disinformation, harmful content, and radicalization in the digital realm. The impact of hate speech and harmful content on women, minorities, children, refugees and migrants, and other vulnerable groups was especially concerning. In the context of peace and security, the issue of cybersecurity was underlined as was the need to prevent the digital commons from becoming a sphere of conflict. For sustainable development, inequalities were identified as a major concern, especially in terms of exposure to the risks of digital technologies, and gender inequalities in particular required further action. Additionally, the potential for increasing inequalities between the global north and the global south was raised as a key issue that needed to be addressed.
21. During the discussion, the vital role of the United Nations system in the area of international laws, principles, and norms to govern the digital commons was highlighted. Board members recognized that technology was advancing faster than regulation could be formulated, and that the speed of innovation was accelerating. It was noted that the United Nations system had made important progress in the field of human rights, the ethics of artificial intelligence, a proposed cybercrime convention, a code of conduct on integrity in public information, and data governance.
22. Members noted that the digital commons was dominated by private sector actors, including several very large companies, which posed governance challenges at local,

regional, and global levels. The United Nations was seen as an objective convenor, which could bring together Member States and other stakeholders to support reclaiming the digital commons for the benefit of all and to promote human agency and sustainability. Norms based on evidence and knowledge and values such as transparency, accountability, and equality, were needed to help protect people from the risks of digital technologies and to facilitate that more voices were heard in the governance of digital technologies, including people from the global south, women, youth and people with disabilities. Members proposed to facilitate the exchange of experiences in the governance of the digital commons and to engage with the private sector in reflections on business models and incentives to mitigate harm. There was an opportunity to align incentives and policies supporting the digital commons with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to accelerate its implementation.

23. In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General acknowledged the unpredictability and trajectory of the digital transformation and emphasized that the United Nations system had to promote and rally around the promotion of human rights, human agency, inclusivity, sustainability and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure that the use of digital technologies supported the greater good. He saw a need for the United Nations system to better coordinate its own use of technologies and data collection, management and use; develop a strategic approach on the use of technologies to rescue the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda; intensify efforts to inform digital platform and social media good practices; and facilitate exchange of experiences among Member States and other stakeholders.

#### **IV. Other matters**

##### **A. Tributes to Board Members**

24. The Secretary-General welcomed the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Alvaro Lario; the Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services, Jens Wandel; the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Li Junhua; the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Simon Stiell; the Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Antonio Pedro; and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, who were attending a CEB session for the first time in their current roles.
25. The Secretary-General paid tribute to the Rector of the United Nations University, David Malone; and the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Houlin Zhao, who were attending a CEB session for the last time in their current roles.

##### **B. Lunch presentation on “UN 2.0” survey**

26. The Board was presented with the results of an assessment of “next-generation” capabilities, as outlined in the Secretary-General’s report on Our Common Agenda, needed to transform the Organization towards a “UN 2.0” – namely data, digital, innovation, strategic foresight, and behavioural science. Respondents to the survey, sent to CEB members, had generally felt that the five capabilities were important for the future and for the ability of the United Nations to have impact, including in the context of supporting Member States. The survey results showed that there had been good progress between 2020 and 2022 in the areas of data, innovation and digital abilities, but that there was still work to be done to build up behavioural science and foresight capacities. It was recommended that CEB members initiate discussions with their respective experts in the five domains to explore ways to move forward in their respective organizations. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General would continue to provide support to help entities advance the “UN 2.0” vision.

**C. Endorsement of documents**

27. The report of the High-level Committee on Programmes (CEB/2022/6) at its forty-fourth session, including the Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the United Nations System (CEB/2022/2/Add.1), as well as the report of the High-level Committee on Management (CEB/2022/5) at its forty-fourth session were endorsed electronically outside of the CEB session.

**D. Date and venue of the forthcoming session**

28. The Board members were reminded of the confirmed dates of the CEB first regular session of 2023, 4 and 5 May to be hosted jointly in Nairobi by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) with the support of the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

--

ADVANCE UNEDITED