



A4P+

Priorities for 2021-2023



United Nations



United Nations
Peacekeeping

Action For Peacekeeping +

Introduction

The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, launched in March 2018, and the Declaration of Shared Commitments of August 2018 reaffirmed UN peacekeeping as a critical contributor to peace, and a powerful demonstration of multilateral cooperation.

Three years in, the Declaration of Shared Commitments remains the roadmap and the reference for our collective efforts to strengthen peacekeeping. It has benefited from the broad political support of 154 Member States, four partner organizations, and has provided common purpose for all peacekeeping partners.

In an expression of support for the A4P initiative, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations restructured its report from 2020 to reflect the Declaration's eight themes. A4P also informed the adoption of a number of Security Council resolutions, which continue to guide our work. This includes resolution 2436 (2018) [on peacekeeping performance], resolution 2518 (2020) [on safety and security] and resolution 2538 (2020) [on women in peacekeeping].

A4P has also yielded many tangible improvements in the way our missions, with their partners, deliver their mandates.

Collective engagement to advance lasting political solutions has amplified the impact of our missions' political engagement in partnership with regional organizations, in particular the African Union.

We have collectively advanced the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, notably by expanding women's participation in political processes in numerous settings. Internally, women represent 41% of all civilian senior leadership posts. Targets from the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy have all been surpassed, except for military contingents.

Major force and police adaptation processes have been implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, allowing for more flexibility and greater reach. Fatalities from hostile acts have decreased every year over the past three years from 59 in 2017 to 13 in 2020. And for the first time, individuals have been convicted for killing peacekeepers in the Central African Republic (CAR).

We have established robust systems to manage the risks of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. We have strengthened our abilities to provide and follow up on support to victims.

Peacekeeping transitions in Haiti and Darfur have been executed more effectively and coherently with other partners, under shared sustaining peace objectives.

Significant progress has been made in improving our environmental risk management and performance, with the establishment of a data system making it possible to monitor progress across missions. For example, in the area of wastewater management, sites with minimum risk had increased to 69% from 33% in 2017.

Last but not least, our missions have maintained operational readiness throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering their mandates while supporting host governments in tackling this unprecedented crisis.

These achievements are the result of collective action and support from Security Council members, troop and police contributing countries, and financial contributors. We must preserve and sustain these shared gains, while also addressing outstanding weaknesses as peacekeeping continues to face significant challenges. The resurgence in attacks on peacekeepers in Mali and CAR and the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remind us that we have more to do collectively. Recent reviews have shown us where and how we should improve.

A4P+

For the A4P agenda and its eight commitment areas to move forward, the UN Secretariat believes that tangible progress is required over the next two years on a few specific, systemic priorities (the A4P+ priorities outlined below). These will require dedicated, enhanced focus on the part of our field missions, the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC).

These priorities have been selected on the basis of consultations and recent reviews, and by applying the following criteria: the extent to which they will enable progress against multiple A4P commitment areas; the existence of realistic, concrete and clear pathways, with capacities already in place or readily accessible; their impact on the ground, which can be meaningfully demonstrated, with data where relevant; and their relevance for sustaining consensus in support of UN peacekeeping.

A4P+ Priorities for 2021-2023

1. Collective coherence behind a political strategy: The three years since A4P was launched have confirmed, through successes and setbacks, the importance of the primacy of politics. Violence has often escalated when political processes collapsed or went through periods of crisis or delay. For this focus to have a positive multiplier effect, it must be collectively coherent, based on effective partnerships.

Many actors, including regional organizations, Member States, international financial institutions, and UN agencies, funds and programmes, bring critical resources and leverage to bear on a country's political trajectory. It is essential for all these actors to actively support common political strategies, at all levels, and to step up their political leverage to achieve and sustain political solutions. To enable such engagement, we must make greater use of the unique convening power of our peacekeeping operations. We will also continue to support and facilitate political dialogue with all stakeholders and strengthen the quality of our analysis and reporting to Member States.

2. Strategic and operational integration: As we strive to increase political coherence with our partners, we must also, in tandem, achieve tangible progress on our internal strategic and operational coherence.

Dimensions of internal integration where progress is imperative include: planning and reporting between the uniformed, civilian and support sides, based on joint data and analysis, incorporation of gender data and expertise throughout the planning, monitoring and reporting process; empowerment of the Chief of Staff and joint strategic planning units as key enablers of integration; and command and control practices as set out in the 2019 Policy on Authority, Command and Control in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. We will also continue to seek more effective integration with our partners, notably by exploiting the peace and security, management and development reforms for greater operational cooperation across the UN system.

These efforts must be enabled by leadership team practices that model and demand integration. We must also ensure that such efforts are properly mirrored and coherently guided by Headquarters.

3. Capabilities and mindsets: In recent years, we have collectively improved uniformed capabilities and reduced the number of units with critical capability gaps. We must continue to ensure that peacekeeping operations have the right capabilities in the right place and at the right time, with the right mindsets.

To this end, we need to work with Member States to accelerate our deployment times and increase investments in preparing, training and supporting contingents to deploy with the required capabilities, including by making triangular partnerships more effective. The Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS), the Light Coordination Mechanism (LCM), the United Nations Police Training Architecture Programme, and Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) can all contribute. We will prioritize relevant specialized trainings (such as Counter-IED) for qualified individuals and units (including female candidates in support of key mandated activities) already committed to deploying to a UN operation as well as in response to in-mission needs. We will also continue to work with Member States to avoid all caveats, which have a detrimental impact on mandate implementation and performance.

Over the next two years, these actions must result in the deployment of more mobile, adaptable and agile forces for effective operations. Concomitant progress on operational and tactical peacekeeping-intelligence will be needed down to the field offices as well as sector and unit levels.

4. Accountability to peacekeepers: A4P places accountability at the heart of our shared efforts. This principle is particularly relevant in cases of crimes against peacekeepers. Despite all the challenges, every tangible advance serves as an important deterrent for similar crimes and improves the safety and security of peacekeepers.

In addition to our common fight against impunity, we must ensure the wellbeing of our personnel, including by developing and implementing system-wide mental health and wellbeing strategies for both uniformed and civilian personnel. We know that reliable medical support for all peacekeepers has an exponentially positive impact on our operations overall. Genuine progress has been achieved in areas such as casualty evacuations (CASEVAC) in field missions, including in generating small units capable of providing early damage control surgery. More needs to be done to support troops in improving their emergency medical care practices and in using technology. In this regard, we will build on current efforts to make greater use of telemedicine, for remote diagnostics and mental health support in particular.

We will continue to improve camp protection and environment through the Elsie Initiative and other efforts. We will focus on the training of engineering units on physical camp security infrastructures and environmental risk mitigation measures, with particular attention to gender considerations including in Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs).

5. Accountability of peacekeepers: In parallel and with equal vigor, UN peacekeeping must keep increasing its own accountability to Member States and to the populations it serves. The bar has been raised by management reform and the decentralization of decision-making authority throughout the organization.

Therefore, the onus is on the organization to demonstrate that applicable standards of accountability are met. Conduct and discipline is a key priority in this regard. We will intensify our efforts on prevention, enforcement and remedial action, with a focus on a strengthened response to paternity and child support claims, which support the realization of rights of victims including children. We will implement misconduct risk management tools to allow for contextualized, targeted mitigation measures. To sustain buy-in and build capacity, we will encourage Member States to systematically share good practices and encourage them to fulfill their responsibilities, including in the area of investigations, sanctions and criminal accountability, particularly in areas of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The systematic and rigorous implementation of the UN zero-tolerance policy, its victim-centered approach, as well as the “human rights readiness” framework and the human rights screening policy will remain at the center of our efforts. To this end, we will support enhanced civilian harm mitigation measures.

We will also step up our efforts to regularly assess our performance, recognize outstanding performance and seek remedial measures for insufficient performance. We will increasingly base our reporting on performance data. Finally, with a view to leaving a positive legacy, we will continue to enhance accountability for our missions’ environmental footprint as well as our stewardship of financial and human resources

6. Strategic communications: Strategic communications must play an enabler and multiplier effect across all mandated areas and in support of the entire Declaration of Shared Commitments. Through inclusive engagement and storytelling, strategic communications can promote successes, manage expectations, and help address disinformation, misinformation and hate speech. It can bolster support for peacekeeping with all key audiences and stakeholders at the local, regional and international level.

We have made significant strides, notably in making better use of new communication technologies to reach wider audiences. We must continue to innovate and modernize our public communication capabilities. We will also make strategic communications a shared responsibility within all missions and a key leadership function. And our work must enable Member States’ own communications efforts on peacekeeping.

7. Cooperation with host countries: Finally, few of our shared ambitions for peacekeeping can move forward without constructive engagement between our missions and host countries. Mutual trust is essential to enable performance, increase peacekeepers’ safety and security, and facilitate successful peacekeeping transitions. To this end, we commit to a clear and open dialogue with host countries, both government and communities, on the content of our mandates and our strategies, and on their responsibilities.

We will also ensure that missions systematically document and report Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) violations. We will also seek support from Member States in addressing such violations.

Making full use of its military, police and civilian assets, the UN therefore commits to investing greater efforts in enabling states to fulfill their responsibilities to protect their population and advance peace processes. We will also focus on advancing the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) for all UN support to non-UN security forces as well as expand approaches to increase compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law.

An imperative and an opportunity

Across these seven priorities, the Secretariat will endeavor to fully integrate the Secretary-General's call to action for accelerated implementation of the WPS agenda in peacekeeping context. In addition to being a core imperative, its transformative impact on the UN peacekeeping agenda must be fully seized to resolve conflict, strengthen people-centered approaches, and drive sustainable, inclusive and long-lasting peace outcomes.

We must go beyond the overall numbers. Building on our parity goals, we must recruit more women in managerial posts, increase training opportunities and create an enabling environment for women within our missions. And we must engage more systematically with women leaders and organizations to make women's full, equal and meaningful participation a reality.

Finally, we must accelerate our move towards innovative, data-driven, and tech-enabled peacekeeping.

The peacekeeping technology strategy will enable improvements in safety and security, protection, and analysis of hate speech. This effort will complement the activities underway to respond to the SG's data strategy; addressing the responsible use of data, upgrades to infrastructure and the establishment of a culture of data and innovation.

Conclusion

A4P+ is part of a renewed collective engagement to strengthen peacekeeping as an invaluable instrument for peace and security, and an expression of international solidarity. To this end, and within the framework of the Declaration of Shared Commitments, the leadership of peacekeeping missions, DPO, DOS, and DMSPC will focus their collective efforts and attention on these A4P+ priorities over the next two years. We will continue to inform Member States on progress achieved.

These A4P+ priorities are meant to support the entire A4P agenda, across all of its eight themes preserving, with progress in each commitment area strengthening all others. We will proceed with their implementation in the spirit of partnership that lies at the heart of our collective Action for Peacekeeping.