

UN New Agenda for Peace

Submission of the World Evangelical Alliance

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) commends the United Nations Secretary General for identifying the necessity of A New Agenda for Peace. We are grateful for the opportunity to join many voices contributing to a global conversation that we pray will lead to a future of hope and peace where swords are beaten into ploughshares and people can enjoy life in all its fullness with none to make them afraid.

The WEA began in 1846 as collective desire of Protestant Christians to be engaged in the social issues and injustices of their day. This original seed continues to grow and has become a global communion of approximately 600 million Christians in more than 140 countries. We believe Jesus Christ calls us to be actively engaged in the well-being of the world and all its peoples and that integral to that is the call to peacemaking and the building of societies where there is “positive peace” as described by the 2022 [Global Peace Index](#).¹ We believe Jesus Christ calls us to speak and act toward God’s transcendent and moral vision of the flourishing life for all people and creation that is sourced in faith, hope, and love. We believe God calls human authorities to remember our finiteness and dependency, our need for divine wisdom and forgiveness, and our responsibility to steward and build systems and structures together that are just and righteous, with particular concern for the vulnerable and oppressed. We confess we continue to have much to learn from God and others in the global human family in this regard. We also believe our global alliance, with its active congregations, organizations, and networks has much to contribute to this important dialogue upon which so much depends.

We celebrate the contribution to A New Agenda for Peace made by our Christian sisters and brothers in the World Council of Churches and add our affirmation to their [submission](#).² As fellow Christians with shared concerns, we seek to add to their important voice.

We also celebrate that the United Nations recognizes the shared human responsibility to “protect and manage the global public good of peace.” This submission seeks to contribute to this global public good by affirming the six potential areas for the New Agenda for Peace – reducing strategic risks, strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new risks, reshaping responses to all forms of violence, investing in prevention and peacebuilding, supporting regional prevention, and putting women and girls at the center. We are committed to the SDG’s as focused goals to address those issues in our global communities that challenge environments of living in peaceful ways. We also recognize the value of strengthening and building upon the pillars for positive peace named by the Global Peace Index – well-functioning government, sound business environment, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbours, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, low levels of corruption, and equitable distribution of resources. Toward a New Agenda for Peace that will see the six potential areas strengthened and

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Peace Index 2022: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, Sydney, June 2022. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (accessed May 18, 2023).

² *World Council of Churches’ submission for UN New Agenda for Peace*. Peter Prove Director, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs World Council of Churches Geneva, 6 April 2023.

the eight pillars for positive peace undergirded, we call for special attention to be given to the following:

- **Faith community participation**

We submit that since faith communities of all kinds and confessions are found everywhere, in rural and urban settings, are uniquely contextually aware, have members involved in many segments of society, and are organized for community engagement, it is crucial that they and their leaders be welcomed, listened to, equipped, and involved as vital partners in any new agenda for peace. Both the Global Peace Index and Our Common Agenda name realities that faith communities are engaging and experienced in, and yet they are unnamed as potential contributors. The WEA has commissioned a Peace & Reconciliation Network to increasingly connect and assist our national alliances in peace and reconciliation work, have a Global Advocacy department with UN representation, and know other religious bodies care for the public good in this way as well. Most importantly, we have thousands upon thousands of local congregations, compelled by their faith in Jesus and his teachings, who actively care for and are engaged in their communities. A New Agenda for Peace in a globalized and pluralistic age should welcome and include the convictions, learnings, insights, contributions, and corrections of faith communities that are forming people who inhabit, labour, and serve within the areas and pillars that require crucial attention for the global public good.

- **Trauma-healing**

We submit that special attention be given, and investment made in trauma-care and the formation of trauma-responsive communities and structures. Unresolved trauma is a significant contributor to the breakdown of family and social structures, creating the individual and communal conditions for conflict and violence to simmer over generations and erupt disastrously. Attentiveness to the health of the whole person – mental, emotional, relational and spiritual – and the role trauma plays in eroding that health is a crucial part in forming communities and societies equipped to build positive peace.

- **Mandatory peacebuilding education including women and children**

We submit that special encouragement be given to educational curriculum development that includes the history and practices of peacebuilding. We believe that a global expectation of peacebuilding as a core educational component beginning with the youngest, and including women, would greatly facilitate the equipping of people of all ages, genders, areas and pillars of life to contribute to reducing strategic risks and be a deposit in prevention that would produce generational fruit in family, neighbourhood, business, culture-shaping, and governance.

- **Investment in peacebuilding by government and business**

We submit that national governments should be called to set a standard investment in peacebuilding. We also submit that business and industry should be invited to invest in peacebuilding as well.

Recent conflicts have increased defense spending by many countries with plans for greater expenditure. A New Agenda for Peace should call for governments to set minimum standards of investing in peacebuilding across their societies. Research, recognition, and rewarding of successful and grassroots efforts should not be seen as optional, but critical investment in human and environmental flourishing. We believe careful attention to regional voices of all involved parties, and religious and indigenous conflict resolution resources that exist in societies is a necessity. We propose that recognizing practices already and historically inherent in many cultures can help build a

positive peace if attended to, learned from, and adapted for current realities. These, along with new and emerging peacebuilding capacities should be expected governmental investment.

In addition, we propose that business and industry should be challenged and incentivized to make social investment in peacebuilding an expected part of their social responsibility, entrepreneurship, and contribution to thriving and flourishing communities. Government and business, understanding the economic and environmental impact of violence and the economic and environmental impact of peace,³ should partner creatively in addressing the horrific, unjust, and peace-preventing impact of increased militarization and weaponization and expect investment that produces positive peace.

- **Publish good news**

As those who claim to be people of “good news” (the etymological root of “evangelical”), we submit that the publishing of good news stories of peacebuilding and reconciliation would contribute significantly to forming culture and shaping practices. A New Agenda for Peace should emphasize the telling of stories from all around the world, including faith communities, where a positive culture of peace is being formed and built. While not minimizing the responsibility to counter “fake” news and tell the truth of what is fractured and broken, we propose that telling good news stories of where the public good of peace is being worked at, contended for, and being realized is strategic for transformation, particularly in an age where the technological interconnectedness of the world enables rapid and viral information sharing.

In conclusion, we express again our gratitude for the invitation of the Secretary General to make this contribution to A New Agenda for Peace. We concur with the view of the World Council of Churches in their submission that “in a world beset by such a constellation of converging crises, a traditional silo-ed approach to addressing peace and security could not pretend to be fit for the purpose.” We encourage the United Nations to a collaborative and wholistic approach that does not ignore voices of faith but welcomes their contribution and participation as vital for the healing of the nations.

With respect and for the sake of the world,



Archbishop Prof. Dr. theol. Dr. phil. Thomas Schirmacher, PhD, DD, Secretary General



Rev. Phil Wagler, Global Director, Peace & Reconciliation Network



Prof. Dr. Janet Epp Buckingham, Director, Global Advocacy

³ Global Peace Index 2022, 43-44.