



Introduction

Global crises, from the continued COVID-19 pandemic to extreme climate events, from economic crises to egregious human rights violations, from governance failures to unfolding humanitarian emergencies, demand an urgent, intelligent, and principled response from the international community. These crises uniquely highlight the extent to which the world is interconnected and interdependent. Simultaneously, they shine a spotlight on the stark inequalities and fragility that undermine development progress, as well as on the increasing fractures in the multilateral system. Rising nationalist populism, heightened political polarisation and tense geopolitics continue to shake alliances and relations between governments, and between governments and their people.

According to the Global Peace Index, in 2021, **global peacefulness declined for the ninth year in a row**.¹ Conflict has become more complex and protracted, increasingly driven by non-traditional security threats like economic stagnation, irregular migration and displacement, environmental degradation, competition for natural resources or rapid growth in cities.² Few conflicts ended in 2021, and many intensified. Overall levels of political violence remained similar to 2020, but fatalities increased, and civilians were more frequently targeted.³ Additionally, **2021 featured an increase in coups, unprecedented over the past two decades**.⁴ Polarization and government misinformation increased, and critical rule of law institutions that provide an important check on misuse of executive power were eroded. Hundreds of human rights defenders were arrested, detained, or killed in 2021 in a continuing and concerning upward trend of reprisals against human rights defenders globally.⁵ And many of the advancements made in gender equality have been threatened by **the rapid onset of crisis**⁶ and **the continued effects of the pandemic**. This serves as a stark reminder of the need for gender-specific protections, as gender inequality remains a root cause and driver of gender-based and sexual violence in times of conflict and peace.⁷

The Evolution of the Global Programme

Against this backdrop, UNDP undertook an extensive reflective and consultative process in 2021 to adapt and develop Phase IV (2022-2025) of its *Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development*. As UNDP's Global Programme embarks on a new phase, it is

¹ <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>.

² UNDP Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

³ <https://acleddata.com/blog/2021/03/18/acledd-2020-the-year-in-review/>.

⁴ V-Dem Democracy Report 2022, https://v-dem.net/media/publications/dr_2022.pdf.

⁵ Front Line Defenders, Global Analysis, 2021, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/global-analysis-2021->

⁶ <https://undp.medium.com/i-cant-stay-quiet-and-watch-4ba00512f0e5>

⁷ UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief: the Impact of Covid-19 on Women (9 April 2020), <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>.

guided by the urgent imperative that today's complex justice, security and human rights challenges can only be tackled through new ways of thinking and acting.

The Global Programme is guided by and aligned to the **UNDP Strategic Plan for 2022-2025** and promotes people-centred and human rights-based approaches to addressing the drivers and symptoms of inequality, exclusion, injustice and insecurity, and accelerating progress towards the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The programme is designed on the basis of a core assumption, affirmed in Agenda 2030 and SDG 16, that "rule of law, justice, security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing concepts that, when strengthened together, enable more peaceful, just and inclusive societies".

Looking ahead, UNDP's work will remain grounded in respect for human rights and dignity as articulated by **the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights**⁸. UNDP is supporting the implementation of the **UN Secretary-General's Common Agenda** to better enable a multilateral system that is inclusive, networked, and effective. Now is the time to renew the social contract between governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. The Global Programme is anchored in **Agenda 2030** and the Common Agenda is an agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals, which represent a shared commitment of the international community and a framework for collective action to end extreme poverty, fight inequality, injustice and protect the planet.

Fostering Partnerships

The Global Programme continues to galvanize and maintain a wide range of strategic relationships and substantive and financial partnerships to support the promotion of rule of law and human rights in policy and programming. These include alliances with UN and non-UN entities and organizations, donors and national governments, civil society, research institutions and think tanks. Importantly, UNDP scaled up its engagement with the private sector, an actor whose practices have strong impact on both people and the planet. It is doing so through a dedicated initiative, focusing on responsible business conduct (Business and Human Rights). This contributes to UNDP's integrator role, including by hosting and/or participating in UN System-wide partnerships and through its commitment to ensuring greater coherence and complementarity through the One UN approach and the Triple Nexus. As in previous years, the 2022 Annual Meeting will spotlight the good work facilitated through the flagship partnerships of the Global Programme.

Meeting Objectives and Description

The 2022 Annual Meeting will:

- Launch Phase IV of UNDP's *Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development* and highlight how this unique programme provides a blueprint for transformative change by responding to current global crises, building on past programme successes and lessons learnt.
- Highlight the strengthened commitment to improved knowledge management and learning through the co-creation of policy pieces on e-justice, people-centered security, transitional justice, human rights, constitutions, and environmental justice with practitioners, academics, UNDP and UN partners.
- Showcase flagship partnerships such as the Gender Justice Platform, Tripartite Partnership to support National Human Rights Institutions, SALIENT, etc.

⁸ The Call to Action highlights 7 thematic areas for action which highlights where concerted system-wide and individual efforts within the UN are needed to achieve a 'quantum leap' in progress or avert backsliding in human rights. UNDP platforms, presences and programmes are critical to the Call to Action and UNDP been at the centre of support to implementation of the Call to Action.

- Set the stage for the rollout of the UNDP Human Rights for Sustainable Development Strategy (2022-2025) by highlighting both the institutional role of the UN upholding human rights and how the promise of the Common Agenda emphasizing human rights as a problem-solving tool, can support achievement of the SDGs and prevention.
- Commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Global Focal Point (GFP) for the Rule of Law in crisis contexts to highlight renewed efforts to frame and implement people-centered approaches to security.
- Spotlight the launch of the *Justice Futures CoLab* with an in-depth examination of how environmental justice can help to realize the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment and mitigate threats of climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, and pollution.
- Promote UNDP's Toolkit on Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence for business in conflict-affected settings.

The Annual Meeting will also provide the opportunity to unpack challenges, explore lessons learnt, and foster cross-regional learning that emerged during the final year of Phase III of the Global Programme (2016-2021) and in the emerging opportunities to be explored in Phase IV (2022-2025).

The Annual Meeting will be held as a virtual forum to enable exchange on the current development context in relation to the rule of law, human rights, justice, and security. Participants will include high-level UN officials, Permanent Representatives, Ministerial-level national counterparts, Member States, stakeholders from across the UN system, and representatives from think tanks, private sector, academia, and civil society.

The meeting will start on the morning of **Tuesday 21 June** with the opening session led by UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner highlighting UNDP's renewed commitment to rule of law and human rights through the launch of UNDP's *Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development*. This will be followed by a discussion on **human rights as a problem-solving tool to support sustainable development**, continued by a session focusing on **joint UN engagement through people-centered security** and launching our contributing paper, developed jointly with Folke Bernadotte Academy, on *People-Centered Approach to Security: Seeking conceptual clarity to guide UN policy development*. The day closes with a conversation on **environmental justice** and securing our right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment including the introduction of our new global initiative.

The morning of **Wednesday 22 June** will start with a reflection around the **responsibility of businesses in conflict-affected areas** to launch the *Toolkit on Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence* followed by an invitation only Partners Advisory Group Meeting.