



UNITED NATIONS
PHILIPPINES



Prevention Agenda in the Philippines

Policy note to implement the Philippines
2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable
Development Cooperation Framework
in the context of the United Nations
Secretary-General's Prevention Agenda



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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



International Labour Organization



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency



United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



UNOPS



World Food Programme



World Health Organization

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The evidence is staggering: prevention saves lives and safeguards development gains. It is cost effective. However, it remains chronically underprioritized. For the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to succeed, Member States must go beyond lip service and invest, politically and financially, in prevention.

— Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

Foreword

Prevention must be central to reversing sustainable development setbacks caused by COVID-19 disruptions, the polycrisis of climate, biodiversity, finance, and the emerging geopolitical conflicts.

Prevention and sustainable development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Full achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is critical, both in their own right and because sustainable development is ultimately the only way to comprehensively address the interlinked, multi-dimensional drivers of insecurity and violence. Where record temperatures, erratic precipitation and rising sea levels reduce harvests, destroy critical infrastructure and displace communities, they exacerbate the risks of instability.

A renewed commitment to prevention must start with investment in national prevention capacities anchored by whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches grounded in sustainable development that leaves no one behind. Above all, people must be at the centre of our prevention efforts: to attain development, overcome poverty and reduce the risks of conflict, climate change and violence arising from inequality, marginalization and exclusion.

Prepared through the collective effort of the United Nations (UN) system in the Philippines, this Policy Note is our contribution to the advancement of

prevention and development in the country. It details how we are operationalizing our approach to prevention and lists recommended areas and actions for the application of prevention in the work of UN agencies in the country.

This Policy Note is part of a series initiated by the UN in the Philippines to guide the implementation action of the 2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF). Topics include South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the UN Secretary-General's Prevention Agenda, and Leaving No One Behind, among others.



Gustavo González
*United Nations Resident and
Humanitarian Coordinator*

Overview

The Policy Note was initiated during a time of unprecedented worldwide crisis, as the Philippines, along with the rest of the world, struggled to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the challenging geopolitical situation and the threats of the triple planetary crisis – impact of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Combined, these factors have severely impacted global and local sustainable development pathways, including that of the Philippines. COVID-19 upended the world as we knew it, deepening poverty and inequalities, while the increasingly severe impacts of a changing climate jeopardize our very existence on the planet, alongside that of all life on earth.

In the Philippines, the pandemic led to economic contraction, increased poverty (to 18 per cent in 2021) and unemployment, and exacerbated inequalities. The Philippines also slipped three places in the Human Development Index from 113 to 116 between 2020 and 2021. Health care systems have been pushed to the limit, critical peace and reconciliation processes have been delayed and under-funded, and capacities to address the increase in incidence and severity of natural disasters have been badly strained.

In times of existential crises, we cannot simply return to “business as usual”. The only way out of these crises is *through*: tackling these multiple and interrelated challenges immediately, directly, and holistically, and working together in solidarity

to recover and to create new, more sustainable pathways to peace and prosperity. This will require rebuilding trust within and across nations and the forging of new relationships of collaboration and shared commitment to transformational change. Most importantly, it will require a fundamental shift in mindset, as governments, civil society, the private sector, and the international community move away from a culture of reaction towards one of prevention.

The UN Secretary-General’s Prevention Agenda lays out a clear vision for building this new culture of prevention. In it, he calls for:

1. Creating a new generation of national disaster risk reduction plans that address the growing challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, urbanization, and population growth;
2. Prioritizing early warning and early action on preventing violent conflict by integrating data for decision-making, supporting national capacities for dialogue, and ensuring that UN services for mediation and peacebuilding are accessible and rapidly deployable;



Over 500 participants from the National Economic Development Authority and the Department of Foreign Affairs, together with the UN Country Team, took part in the consultation on the CF on 23 February 2023. Photo from UNIC Manila/Gaylord Hintay

3. Advancing a preventive approach to human rights by improving policy frameworks, assessing the effective application of human rights instruments, and advancing the responsibility to protect agenda, in line with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights;
4. Building greater individual and societal resilience to future health, economic and financial shocks, by helping to identify risks and vulnerabilities more quickly and by strengthening social safety nets and policies that stimulate equitable job-rich growth.

This note was originally prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery in the Philippines 2020-2023 (SEPF). This note was further updated in 2023, when the UN in the Philippines was finalizing its new strategic document, the next generation 2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development

Cooperation Framework (CF) that guides sustainable development work of all UN entities in the country. This Policy Note positions the UN in the Philippines to strengthen its collective focus on prevention by operationalizing and adapting the Secretary-General's Prevention Agenda to the new current realities.

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Background and context

I. Global Context

A. UN Secretary-General's Prevention Agenda (2017)

The SG's vision on prevention is based on the view that the UN must do everything it can to help countries to avoid the outbreak of crises that take a high toll on human lives and overwhelm the capacities of the institutions and communities to achieve peace and sustainable development.

The SG's Prevention Agenda considers the SDGs and the Sustaining Peace Agenda to be complementary and mutually reinforcing. The best and only way to prevent societies from sliding into crisis is to make sure they are resilient. This requires greater investment in inclusive peacebuilding and sustainable development and a quantum leap in the scale and scope of climate action, as well as more effective disaster risk reduction, and proactive management of mass migration. Agenda 2030—and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change—are essential instruments to avoid a downward spiral of increasingly destructive disasters due to natural hazards and man-made crises.

Societies are also more resilient when they uphold the full breadth of human rights. These norms make for tolerant and vibrant societies, where diversity is seen as an asset, not a threat. Conversely, it is the systematic undermining of these norms that often increases the risk of crisis. Sovereignty is inevitably strengthened when dignity and rights are fully protected and respected.

In his efforts to place prevention at the heart of the UN's work, the Secretary-General has called for a number of specific actions, including:

- Scaling up preventative diplomacy and support to political solutions to conflicts through mediation and inclusive dialogue;
- Putting women and girls at the center of prevention efforts, ensuring women's equal participation in mediation efforts as well as in peace and security decision-making and implementation;
- Strengthening foresight and early warning capacities to better identify and adapt to new risks to peace and development including climate change;
- Addressing crises holistically, by better understanding the relationship between different kinds of risk factors;
- Providing the necessary resources for prevention, including at the national level, by allocating sufficient resources to support peace processes, aligning military budgets to security sector reform, ensuring adequate social spending, and tailoring development assistance to uphold human rights and address the root causes of conflict.

This ambitious agenda cannot be achieved with the current way of working. It will require more holistic and integrated joint programming as well as more systematic collection and analysis of data for decision-making. It will also require greater coordination of actions across the pillars of the UN system, including peace and security, development, humanitarian response, and human rights.

Finally, as the anchor of multilateralism the UN has unprecedented convening power. The UN system is most impactful when enabling others, and—in the Philippines as well as across the world—this shift to a culture of prevention can only be done in partnership with a wide array of actors, including national and local governments, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector and communities. For prevention to be effective, it must be people-centered.

B. Our Common Agenda (2021)

The Secretary-General expands on and refines his vision for prevention in his “Our Common Agenda” report, which looks ahead to the next 25 years and provides his vision on the future of global cooperation and a reinvigorated multilateralism.

In this report, he refers to the COVID-19 pandemic as a “wake-up call” for humanity. It has exposed human rights concerns and exacerbated deep fragilities and inequalities in societies worldwide. It has amplified disenchantment with existing institutions and political leadership and brought into focus social ills that undermine progress towards the SDGs, including:

- The increasingly disastrous effects of a changing climate and biodiversity loss, including famine, floods, fires, and extreme heat;
- Deepening poverty, exclusion, and inequalities;
- Violent conflicts and social divides within and across nations; and
- A loss of faith in the values of trust and solidarity.

The only chance we have to address these multiple global crises is to revitalize multilateralism, reembrace global solidarity and find new ways to work together for the common good. This will require a renewal of the social contract between Governments and citizens, to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights.

Effective multilateralism, however, depends on an effective UN, able to adapt to global challenges while living up to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The UN system must work holistically and across all pillars to address these global challenges. Central to this new approach is the application of a prevention perspective to the design and implementation of collective actions to promote peace and security, tackle climate change, strengthen healthcare systems and other basic services, spur economic recovery, and safeguard human rights.

II. National Context



By 2040, the Philippines shall have become a prosperous, predominantly middle-class society where no one is poor; our people live long and healthy lives, are smart and innovative, and live in a high-trust society.

This long-term vision, enshrined in the Philippines' Ambisyon Natin 2040, remains intact and has become even more prominent with the advent of new crises. The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 (PDP) seeks to make the reduction of vulnerabilities to future risks an integral part of achieving this vision, including by establishing prevention and mitigation measures to:

- Reduce the impact of climate change and disasters;
- Strengthen communicable disease control and prevention capacities, including risk communications;
- Strengthen public accountability and integrity (anti-corruption);
- Prevent human rights abuses and address violations in partnership with state and non-state duty bearers;
- Promote the well-being of families and prevent violence among family and household members;
- Mainstream conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting approaches in development planning and nurture meaningful dialogue with vulnerable groups and their communities;

- Ensure the effective participation and leadership of women and girls as change agents for conflict transformation and post-conflict development; and
- Fight criminality, trafficking, and terrorism in compliance with human rights standards.

As such, the current national development context is especially suitable for an expanded focus on prevention across all areas of collaboration with the UN system in the Philippines.

III. 2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

As part of the preparation of the new CF, the UN in the Philippines prepared its [Common Country Analysis \(CCA\)](#) that provides a comprehensive overview of the current situation in the country, including a multi-dimensional risk analysis which identifies key areas of risk which require focused prevention actions. The CCA found that the Philippines has been characterized by high inequality and concentration of wealth as economic growth has not translated into commensurate human development outcomes. Food and nutrition insecurity, maternal mortality and child stunting rates are high for a country aspiring to be an upper middle-income country (UMIC). The country is at high risk of the impact of climate change, and its exposure to natural hazards, continuous degradation of natural resource base and pollution already have serious consequences for the economy and health. Long-standing human rights challenges are both a cause and a consequence of inequality and development challenges. The current peace process underway in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has the greatest potential to deliver a lasting peace and eliminate key drivers of poverty and instability in the region but implementation has been uneven due to the cumulative impact of COVID-19. Further progress on the SDGs requires continued action for rapid recovery and making the economy more inclusive,

competitive, innovative and resilient; making governance more transparent and accountable; promoting a more human rights conducive climate; supporting peace and development in regions that are also the most economically marginalized; promoting evidence-based and participatory policy-making; deepening commitment to leaving no one behind (LNOB) with focus on the vulnerable groups; strengthening the human rights-based approach to drug policies, investing in human capital; action on climate change, environmental governance and pollution; and reducing disaster risks emanating from climate change and increasing natural hazards.

The CCA provided the foundation for the 2024-2028 CF – the first new generation cooperation framework in the Philippines – that is the key strategic document guiding the work of all UN development system entities in the Philippines, goes several steps further. The CF embodies global UN development system reform aspirations underpinned by the UN system

leading the sustainable development agenda through enhanced coherence, relevance and efficiency. The CF is transformative as it sets the stage for the UN's shift from development assistance to strategic and expanded partnerships for sustainable development, where greater focus is placed on policy development, capacity-building, bringing forward global knowledge, supporting coalitions – locally, nationally and globally – and playing a strong development-enabling role. The CF is also transformative in how the UN works collectively – with much greater emphasis on internal collaboration, jointness and shared expertise. The CF will be the key tool to bring forward the SG's Prevention Agenda by strengthening its collection and use of data, expanding the UN's convening and coalition-building role, and increasing the design and application of joint interventions to identify and proactively address risk factors and patterns across the three CF Outcomes. Many of the strategic actions outlined in the CF are well-suited to a preventive approach, including:

CF Outcome 1 – Human capital development, inclusion and resilience building

- A focus on the most marginalized, vulnerable, and at-risk people and groups;
- Building capacities of health systems, including prevention of future zoonotic outbreaks;
- Strengthening government food and nutrition policies and plans for sustained access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious food;
- Improving capacities of national agencies and local governments to design and implement shock-responsive social protection programmes.
- Supporting civil service reform to contribute to more agile, anticipatory, adaptive and participatory governance;
- Digitalization, public awareness, public reporting of corruption, public expenditure tracking, public hearings and building transparency in systems such as procurement and land information and management;
- Building capacities of the government at all levels, and of civil society to address the underlying drivers of conflict, operationalize early warning and early response systems, strengthen conflict mediation and resolution and promote inclusive peacebuilding that actively engages women, indigenous minorities and youth as implementors and decision-makers;
- Supporting inclusive, peaceful, free and fair electoral processes in collaboration with civil society and government;
- Building capacity of the enforcement machinery to prevent and counter organized and cross-border crime, including human trafficking, smuggling of firearms, drugs and migrants, and illicit financial flows;

CF Outcome 2 – Sustainable economic development, decent work, and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative finance for green, climate and disaster risk reduction and inclusive investments' • Enabling innovations and access to technologies that boost agri-fisheries production and improve food security; • Bridging digital skills and digital gender gaps, building trust in digital payment systems, and addressing cybersecurity concerns; • Building the capacity of the tripartite partners to uphold labour rights, counter discriminatory practices, and improve women's participation, representation, and leadership in the workforce.
CF Outcome 3 – Climate action, environmental sustainability and disaster-resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting environmentally sound solutions, including industrial decarbonization technologies, circular economy principles, clean and renewable energy, resource-efficient processes and sustainable consumption and production; • Mainstreaming climate action, with participatory and gender-responsive approaches, into spatial and sector policies and strategies; • Supporting rights-based, gender-responsive approach to sustainable management of environment, natural resources and biodiversity; • Building capacities of institutions and communities at all levels for strengthening resilience, protection-centered disaster risk reduction and management, preparedness, response, and durable and nature-based solutions; • Seeking durable solutions to protracted displacement, especially of communities gravely affected by climate change, and environmental degradation. • Developing a multi-sectoral internally displaced persons (IDP) durable solutions strategy transitioning from humanitarian response to early recovery, reconstruction, and durable solutions taking into consideration the meaningful participation of IDPs and host communities in all of the processes.
Crosscutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the triple nexus approach: engaging in fully integrated humanitarian, development and peace analysis, assessment, and programming and breaking down traditional organizational, financing, and programming silos

The sections that follow will provide guidance on how these and other elements of the CF can be leveraged to enable the localization of the UN SG's Prevention Agenda in the Philippines.

Strategic guidance on implementing the United Nations Prevention Agenda

I. Priority risks

The following table provides an overview of high priority risks. These were identified through a process of collective analysis involving members of the UN Country Team (UNCT), national counterparts, and external partners. They represent topics for joint data collection, monitoring, and early warning and response activities. This list of priority risks will be revisited and, if necessary, updated, as conditions evolve.

The new Cooperation Framework will be the key tool to bring forward the Secretary-General's Prevention Agenda by increasing the design and application of joint interventions to identify and proactively address risk factors and patterns.

Table 1. High priority risks

Destructive disasters due to natural hazards, climate change, and environmental degradation	Political instability and violent conflict	Democratic space, justice, and rule of law	Economic and social vulnerabilities in the context of COVID-19 recovery
Typhoons are becoming more violent and prone to rapid intensification	Election-related violence: a) escalation of intra- and inter-clan violence in BARMM; b) political instability ahead of the inauguration of the new BARMM regional government, ending the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in 2025	Shrinking civic space, exacerbated by the pandemic: a) repression of human rights defenders, civil society, and political opposition; b) repression of the media; c) incitement by the authorities of intimidation or violence; d) use of social norms to stifle dissent	Underinvested and overstretched public health system, putting at risk other health outcomes*

Natural disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation	Political instability and violent conflict	Democratic space, justice, and rule of law	Economic and social vulnerabilities in the context of COVID-19 recovery
Large-scale displacement due to disasters due to natural hazards and its impact on the most vulnerable, including women and girls	Delayed or incomplete implementation of the peace agreement before the 2025 BARMM regional elections ending the transition phase	Use of legislation to target individuals and groups challenging national and local power structures, especially women, indigenous peoples (IPs), humanitarian workers, and human rights / environment defenders	Exacerbation of health conditions that existed before the pandemic, e.g., undernutrition, low immunization rates, maternal deaths, and adolescent pregnancies.
Limited knowledge and awareness on climate change or of its impact on forcibly displaced populations	Longstanding, unresolved disputes over land and resources, including rido or clan-based violence	Undermining of human rights institutions	COVID-19 vaccine rollout disrupted during electoral period (currently at 30 per cent)
Lack of government capacity for disaster risk reduction at the local level	Limited knowledge of ceasefire protocols and weakening of peace mechanisms resulting in violations of ceasefire agreements during law enforcement operations	Selective application of rule of law; lack of confidence in the justice and protection systems; lack of accountability for violations and abuses	Disruptions to jobs and income generation due to COVID-19 restrictions
Exploitation of natural resources contributing to environment degradation	Reconstruction without community engagement and a sustainable durable solutions strategy addressing conflict-induced displacement	Excessive use of force and killings by security forces; use of torture by security forces and state agents; policies and practices of impunity	Negative impacts of school closures and other barriers to access to education, especially for children of disadvantaged families; increasing numbers of students withdrawing from school altogether
Intensifying pollution levels affecting both health and environment	Lack of inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding including the agency of indigenous people, women and girls and youth; peace without reconciliation		Gaps in legal and operational frameworks for protection of asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless and IDPs

Destructive disasters due to natural hazards, climate change, and environmental degradation	Political instability and violent conflict	Democratic space, justice, and rule of law	Economic and social vulnerabilities in the context of COVID-19 recovery
Lack of government capacity to deal with multiple disasters at the same time	Uneven security conditions in different parts of the country driving inequalities in economic and social development		Stagnant economy, income inequality, and limited opportunities can contribute to other risks, e.g., youth alienation, violent extremism, marginalization, crime.
Occurrence of a truly catastrophic natural disaster event	Recurring violent conflict contributes to forced displacement and undermines efforts to address protracted displacement in BARMM		Increasing food insecurity
	Rising tensions in temporary shelters as these increasingly become seen as permanent residences for the internally displaced		

Note: Corruption and lack of inclusion of indigenous people’s communities, women and youth are aggravating risk factors that cut across all four priority risk areas.

* These setbacks pose significantly higher challenges for BARMM, which is the poorest region in the country.

II. Guiding principles for engagement

The Prevention Agenda is not just about scaling up the UN’s efforts to monitor and address high priority risks. It is also about transforming the way the UN works together to tackle these multiple and interrelated challenges in a holistic manner. To help advance this necessary change in approach, the UN will apply the following guiding principles when engaging in prevention activities:

- Are we pooling our resources and working collaboratively when undertaking foresight activities, risk analysis, and early warning / response activities?

- Are we applying systems thinking to our joint programme design and implementation?
- Do our programmatic strategies consider the interrelationships between risk areas such as poverty, inequality, injustice and discrimination, communal tensions, weak rule of law and governance, climate change, disasters, insurgency, and political instability?
- Are we targeting our actions to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized?

- Are we putting women and girls at the center of prevention efforts?
- Are we allying our efforts with those of local change agents and peacebuilders?
- Are we using our convening power to facilitate civic spaces for multistakeholder dialogue and to strengthen alliances to address obstacles to peace and sustainable development?
- Are we speaking with one voice on the centrality of human rights to our development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian activities?
- Are we doing everything we can to enable the prevention capacities of affected populations, counterparts, and strategic partners in government, civil society, the private sector, and the international community?
- Are we building internal consensus, harmonizing positions, joining up humanitarian, peace, and development efforts, and coordinating our resource mobilization strategies to prioritize prevention prior to engaging with counterparts and strategic partners?
- Are we connecting our preventive actions to regional and global instruments and mechanisms for preventive diplomacy and addressing human rights violations?

III. Entry points and approaches

This final section lays out a number of important entry points and approaches for operationalizing the global Prevention Agenda for each of the Outcome Areas of the CF, based on ongoing efforts in these areas. Decisions regarding revision or expansion of these existing initiatives, as well as the creation of new ones, will be informed by the guiding principles outlined in the previous section.

A. Human capital development, inclusion and resilience building

In the short run, to prevent further social and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, the top priority is to support the recovery and long-term expansion of the healthcare system. There is also a need to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on women and young girls, in particular, in accessing essential sexual and reproductive health and rights services, as well as in providing protection from the increased risk of gender-based violence. Increasing food insecurity also warrants further analysis and dialogue.

The first-ever UN Joint Programme for Human Rights is an excellent example of an inclusive, holistic programme that takes an integrated approach to address current human rights challenges while also addressing root causes of violations. The provision of additional resources would allow for greater programmatic effectiveness by strengthening capabilities for data collection and analysis, use of the UN's convening power to support civic space and civic engagement, and strengthening of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up.

B. Low-carbon economic development and decent work

Economic recovery efforts include specific support for both temporary and long-term employment, as well as for sustainable business models that protect the environment while building resilience to future shocks. Strategic interventions that promote local livelihoods and economic growth will also help to prevent violence and contribute to sustained peace.

C. Equitable climate-resilient development, natural resource management and disaster risk reduction

The UN will mitigate immediate displacement risks and support durable solutions through anticipatory action and technical support for disaster risk reduction and resilient communities. Anticipatory action that will also mitigate the negative impact of elections that oftentimes limit the timely delivery and extent of humanitarian response. Particular attention will be given to durable housing solutions and sustainable, resilient infrastructure.

The UN will also advocate for greater awareness of the impacts of climate change and of the need to move more quickly to adapt to challenges of living on a rapidly warming planet. Linkages will be made to human rights issues, including shrinking civic space and violations against environmental defenders and others who seek to protect the land and the environment.

D. Strengthened rule of law and human rights, accountable institutions, gender equality and peace

The UN System in the Philippines has limited ability to address issues undermining political stability and prevent human rights violations, but it has engaged directly in peace process implementation through its significant capacity development and peacebuilding roles. Contributing more directly and effectively to prevention at the political level in these contexts will require intensifying the use of preventive diplomacy of the UN more generally and the good offices of the Resident Coordinator (RC) in particular.

Preventive diplomacy can also help to encourage both parties to the BARMM peace process to take steps to address threats to peace, including delays in delivering peace dividends as well as the neglected transitional justice component required for sustainable peace and reconciliation.



Jessa stands beside her transitional shelter that is one of the many currently being constructed across the most affected areas of Typhoon Rai. Photo from IOM

The UN system in the Philippines has invested significantly in supporting the implementation of the Bangsamoro peace process through its peacebuilding and development programs, including joint programs funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). These UN joint programs are excellent examples of prevention and inclusive peacebuilding, leveraging the integrated expertise and capacities of UN agencies to address critical gaps in the peace process, including the sustainable reintegration of women ex-combatants, strengthening the prevention and inclusive peacebuilding capacities of the BARMM local authorities including localizing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, supporting infrastructures of peace that capacitate marginalized communities to respond to early warning indicators and prevent escalation in conflict hotspots, and developing durable solutions to address the root causes and prevention of displacement. Ongoing efforts by the UNCT and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to operationalize the humanitarian-peace-development nexus will also benefit from this increased collective focus on prevention.

The UNCT will further position itself in BARMM to monitor developments, provide quick-win peace dividends, and engage proactively in preventive actions, continuing its close and inclusive collaboration with peacebuilders on the ground that includes women and youth.

E. Cross-cutting

Success in all of these areas will require the establishment of a fully integrated, dedicated early warning / early action system at the country level for the UNCT, aligned with existing efforts by the HCT. Led by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), this effort would join up existing capacities, in-kind resources, and data sources to allow for more systematic collective information-gathering, analysis of trends, and running of risk scenarios, focused on the high priority risks indicated above. Agreements will be established to guide the process to escalate issues, including, if necessary, to the regional or global level.¹

No matter how accurate early warning is, the true litmus test lies with whether it leads to early action. The UNCT and the HCT—under the leadership of the RC / Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)—will work closely together to anticipate “threshold moments” when the risk of deterioration of conditions is heightened. The quality of the collective analysis of such situations will depend in great part on access to local knowledge and the development of local capacities. Women's groups and human rights organizations have a particularly important role to play in this regard.

As the UNCT scales up its preventive actions, it will continue to apply a “smart advocacy” approach. This means working quietly and behind the scenes, serving as a trusted but critical friend to government, and communicating in culturally sensitive ways. No one is better than the UN at doing this.

¹ The Secretary General's Call to Action on Human Rights requires Resident Coordinators to undertake regular Country Dialogues with UNCTs on the most pressing human rights concerns and emerging issues in the country context to guide United Nations action at country level.

IV. Operational considerations

As outlined in the Management Accountability Framework (MAF) of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System, the RC coordinates UN system-wide support to prevention, identifying and mitigating risks to the achievement of the SDGs, overseeing system-wide context and trend analysis, and keeping the Secretary-General informed, as needed. This may, in certain contexts, include support to political negotiations, early warning / early action, as well as other specific responses.

In leading this work, the RC has a number of sources of support available, including the deployment of Senior Peace and Development and Human Rights Advisors from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs-UN Development Programme (DPPA-UNDP) joint program and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) respectively, senior mediation experts from the UN Standby Team, UNDP SURGE Advisors, external experts from UNDP's ExpRes Roster and its Stand-by Partners, catalytic funding through the UN PBF, and advisory support from the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). In addition, formations such as contact groups and "groups of friends" can serve as a multiplier of prevention efforts, providing collective influence as well as additional resources.

In the Philippines, the RC is also designated as HC. Various tools and surge options are available to the HC under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee that can assist with coordinating early warning and anticipatory action activities.

Consolidation of early warning / early action capacities will entail identifying who would participate in the system, clarifying reporting expectations, and establishing the process to be used to escalate issues, with the goal of piloting this joined-up effort during the upcoming election context.

A proposed approach to monitoring of the application of the SG's Prevention Agenda in the Philippines is provided in the Annex to this Policy Note.

The UN Country Team and the Humanitarian Country Team – under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator – will work closely together to anticipate “threshold moments” when the risk of deterioration of conditions is heightened

Annex

I. Key prevention terms and concepts²

Anticipatory action is taken proactively upon issuance of a warning, activation of a trigger, or in anticipation of a crisis, ideally before the shock or at least before substantial humanitarian needs are known. It is intended to mitigate the impact of the crisis or improve the response.

Conflict prevention is undertaken by the UN at a variety of points along the conflict cycle, addressing issues that present long-term risks of conflict, engaging with parties that are on the brink of violence, helping to negotiate the end to conflicts, and assisting countries to achieve reconciliation and build resilient and inclusive societies.³

Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.⁴

Early action can be considered as a synonym for anticipatory action.

Early warning is the provision of timely and effective information that allows individuals, responders and decision-makers exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce risks and prepare for effective response.

Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus is a whole-of-system approach where coherence among the development, humanitarian and peace-related actors, policies and operations is fostered via collaboration on analysis, identification of collective outcomes, risk assessments, planning, programming, and monitoring and evaluation.⁵

Peacebuilding is action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.⁶

Preparedness refers to the ability of governments, organizations, communities, and individuals to anticipate and respond effectively to the impact of likely, imminent, or current hazards.

Preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.⁷

Prevention refers to measures to avoid existing and new risks. Prevention measures can also be taken during or after a hazardous event or disaster to prevent secondary hazards or their consequences.

² Source: Getting ahead of crises: a thesaurus for anticipatory humanitarian action (except where noted)

³ Source: United Nations Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy in Action

⁴ Source: <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster-risk-reduction>

⁵ Source: IASC Background paper on Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

⁶ Source: A/47/277 An Agenda for Peace

⁷ Ibid

II. Framework for monitoring implementation of the Prevention Agenda

The task of monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the SG's Prevention Agenda in the Philippines cannot be separated from regular monitoring of the CF, which is based on outcome-specific theories of change, a jointly agreed results framework and joint work plans that drive programming and results reporting. In other words, the expected outcomes (the "what") remain exactly the same. What changes is the "how": by adopting a preventive approach at critical junctions in the programming cycle the UNCT will transform how it works together in order to tackle these multiple and interrelated challenges in a more holistic manner.

The key decision points in applying this policy to the work of the CF will include:

1. Preparation and endorsement of annual joint work plans;
2. Design and approval of joint programmes;
3. Annual performance review;
4. Annual country results report to the government; and
5. Independent evaluation.

These may be supplemented by other system wide processes, such as the UNCT's biannual Call to Action country dialogue which should reflect on emerging human rights trends and risks. Time will be allocated during these milestones in the programming cycle to reflect collectively on the risk analysis and any emerging new risks and trends, and extent to which the guiding principles outlined in this Policy Note are being applied. For example, during the preparation and endorsement of annual joint work plans, Outcome Group members will be asked to reflect on the extent to which the proposed activities and results will allow for:

- Pooling resources and working collaboratively when undertaking foresight activities, risk analysis, and early warning / response activities;
- Applying systems thinking to joint programme design and implementation

- Consideration of the interrelationships between risk areas such as poverty, inequality, climate change, disasters, extremism, and political instability;
- Targeting actions to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized;
- Putting women and girls at the center of prevention efforts;
- Aligning efforts with those of local change agents and peacebuilders;
- Using the convening power of the UN to facilitate civic spaces for multistakeholder dialogue and strengthen alliances to address obstacles to peace and sustainable development;
- Speaking with one voice on the centrality of human rights to UN development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian activities;
- Enabling the prevention capacities of affected populations, counterparts, and strategic partners in government, civil society, the private sector, and the international community;
- Building internal consensus, harmonizing positions, joining up humanitarian, peace, and development efforts, and coordinating resource mobilization strategies prior to engaging with counterparts and strategic partners; and
- Connecting preventive actions to regional and global instruments and mechanisms for preventive diplomacy and addressing human rights violations.

These assessments can be done through a combination of online surveys and open discussion. Surveys will apply a three-point scale, where 1 is "Not at all", 2 is "Somewhat", and 3 is "To a great extent". The results of discussions will be captured in meeting notes, including any agreements on actions to address shortcomings with respect to the application of one or more of the guiding principles.

Abbreviations

BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	PDP	Philippine Development Plan
BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority	RC	Resident Coordinator
CCA	Common Country Analysis	RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
CF	The Philippines 2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CSO	civil society organization	SEPF	Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery in the Philippines 2020-2023
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs	SG	United Nations Secretary-General
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator	UMIC	upper middle-income country
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team	UN	United Nations
IDP	internally displaced person	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
IP	indigenous people	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind		
MAF	Management Accountability Framework		
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights		
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund		
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office		

CREDITS

This document was produced by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (RCO) in the Philippines on behalf of the United Nations Country Team. RCO wishes to acknowledge the contributions of all stakeholders in preparing this document.

The latest version of this document is available on UN Philippines website at philippines.un.org.

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The background of the page features a large, stylized logo of the United Nations Philippines. It consists of several overlapping circles in various shades of blue and orange, creating a dynamic, abstract design.

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