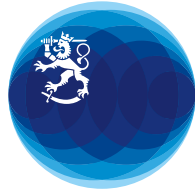


20 August 2021



Era of New Cooperation

Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

Publications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2021:10

Era of New Cooperation

– The Contribution of the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to
Strengthen Multilateral Cooperation

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki 2021

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Era of New Cooperation – The Contribution of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to Strengthen Multilateral Cooperation

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Abstract

Strengthening multilateral cooperation is a key long-standing objective of Finland's foreign policy. Tackling cross-border challenges, many of which are still unknown, requires cooperation based on a rules-based approach and international law. A weaker commitment to multilateral cooperation is not in the interests of any country. It is particularly damaging to small countries, such as Finland.

To support the world order that is vital to it, Finland must act systematically and with determination in the international arena. The purpose of this document is to justify and communicate our commitment to multilateral cooperation, a rules-based approach and international law, and to demonstrate Finnish strengths through action.

Based on Finland's special expertise, the document lists some of the areas that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will prioritise in its multilateral activities in the coming years. The priority areas are as follows: equal rights and participation, climate and environmental change, sharing responsibility in the new information environment, peace and security through expertise, just and democratic world, and smart societies of the future.

The work supports the values and objectives of Finland's foreign policy in a broad range of different areas. Our actions arise from our national interests and our determination to make the world a fairer and better place for everybody.

Keywords multilateralism, international cooperation, foreign policy, international organisations

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Uuden yhteistyön aika – Ulkoministeriö monenkeskisen yhteistyön vahvistajana

Ulkoministeriön julkaisu 2021:10

Julkaisija Ulkoministeriö

Yhteisötekijä Ulkoministeriön suunnittelu- ja tutkimusyksikkö

Kieli Suomi

Sivumäärä 30

Tiivistelmä

Monenkeskisen yhteistyön vahvistaminen on Suomen ulkopoliittikan pitkäaikainen ja keskeinen tavoite. Rajat ylittävien ja osin vielä tuntemattomienkin haasteiden ratkaiseminen vaatii yhteistyötä, joka nojaa sääntöpohjaisuuteen ja kansainväliseen oikeuteen. Heikentynyt monenkeskinen yhteistyö ei ole yhdenkään valtion etu. Erityisen vahingollista se on Suomen kaltaisille, pienemmille valtioille.

Tukeakseen itselleen elintärkeää järjestelmää Suomen on toimittava suunnitelmallisesti ja määrätietoisesti kansainvälisellä kentällä. Tämän asiakirjan tarkoitus on perustella ja viestittää sitoutumistamme monenkeskiseen yhteistyöhön, sääntöpohjaisuuteen ja kansainväliseen oikeuteen sekä osoittaa Suomen vahvuuksia toiminnan kautta.

Asiakirjassa esitetään Suomen erityisosaamiseen nojaten esimerkkejä siitä, mihin ulkoministeriö aikoo lähivuodet keskittyä monenkeskisessä työssään. Toimissa painottuvat seuraavat teemat: yhdenvertaiset oikeudet ja osallistuminen, ilmaston ja ympäristön muuttuva tila, vastuunkanto uudessa informaatioympäristössä, osaamisella rauhaa ja turvallisuutta, oikeudenmukainen ja demokraattinen maailma sekä tulevaisuuden älykkäät yhteiskunnat.

Työ tukee laaja-alaisesti Suomen ulkopoliittisia arvoja ja tavoitteita. Toimintamme perustuu sekä kansalliseen etuumme että haluun tehdä maailmasta oikeudenmukaisempi ja parempi paikka sen kaikille asukkaille..

Asiasanat multilateralismi, kansainvälinen yhteistyö, ulkopoliittikka, kansainväliset järjestöt

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En tid för nytt samarbete – Utrikesministeriet stärker det multilaterala samarbetet

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Stärkandet av det multilaterala samarbetet är ett långsiktigt och centralt mål för Finlands utrikespolitik. För att lösa gränsöverskridande och delvis ännu okända utmaningar krävs samarbete som bygger på regelbaserad och internationell rätt. Ett försvagat multilateralt samarbete ligger inte i någon stats intresse. Det är särskilt skadligt för mindre stater som Finland.

För att stöda ett för egen del livsviktigt system måste Finland agera planmässigt och målmedvetet på det internationella fältet. Syftet med detta dokument är att motivera och kommunicera om vårt engagemang för multilateralt samarbete, en regelbaserat verksamhet och internationell rätt samt att påvisa Finlands styrkor genom handling.

I dokumentet presenteras med stöd av Finlands specialkompetens exempel på vad utrikesministeriet under de närmaste åren tänker fokusera på i sitt multilaterala arbete. I åtgärderna betonas följande teman: lika rättigheter och deltagande, klimatets och miljöns föränderliga tillstånd, ansvarstagande i den nya informationsmiljön, fred och säkerhet genom kunskap, en rättvis och demokratisk värld samt framtidens intelligenta samhällen.

Arbetet stöder i hög grad Finlands utrikespolitiska värderingar och mål. Vår verksamhet bygger både på våra nationella intressen och på en vilja att göra världen till en rättvisare och bättre plats för alla dess invånare.

Nyckelord multilateralism, internationellt samarbete, utrikespolitik, internationella organisationer

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OPENING WORDS

Pekka Haavisto

Minister for Foreign Affairs

“Multilateral cooperation has helped us achieve a tremendous amount of good things in the world. For many of us, these are so self-evident that we do not always recognise them. What would our society be like if we had no functioning judicial system or no human rights? What about a world without the UN food aid, the World Health Organization or international law?

We have now reached a new crossroads, where global problems, such as climate change will not end at national borders. The international community must remain vigilant and respond to these problems in a sustainable and fair manner.

Multilateral cooperation is the best way to achieve results in issues that are vital for humanity. No one nation is capable of this work alone.”

Ville Skinnari

Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade

“Finland’s welfare and economic success are built on multilateral cooperation. Rapidly advancing technological development, artificial intelligence and other innovative solutions will open up unprecedented opportunities for humanity in the future. New phenomena require new rules, and strengthening their legislation, contractual basis as well as value and norm debate are a continuous objective for Finland in multilateral foreign policy.

In addition, climate change and humanity’s other greatest challenges do not recognise national borders. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how dependent we are on one another. Due to its expertise, Finland has much to give in multilateral cooperation that aims to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Building a more sustainable future will offer important opportunities for Finnish companies both in Finland and abroad.”

Thomas Blomqvist

Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality

“From its very beginning, Finnish foreign policy has depended on multilateral cooperation. From the time Finland gained independence, it has endeavoured to participate in international cooperation whenever possible: The League of Nations, the Nordic countries, the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Nordic countries have traditionally been strong supporters of multilateral cooperation. They are a unique and permanent reference group for Finland, and they carry more weight when speaking on global matters with one voice.”

1 Introduction

“If I had to select one sentence to describe the state of the world, I would say we are in a world in which global challenges are more and more integrated, and the responses are more and more fragmented, and if this is not reversed, it’s a recipe for disaster.”

(Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, at the World Economic Forum on 24 January 2019)

Strengthening multilateral cooperation is a key long-standing objective of Finland’s foreign policy. The President of the Republic as well as the Prime Minister and other Government members have repeatedly stressed the importance of the matter. According to the Government Programme and the Government Report on Foreign and Security Policy 2020, effective multilateral cooperation is an integral part of Finland’s security and the security of its citizens. Finland’s economic success and the wellbeing of its citizens are also built on multilateral cooperation. Our approach to multilateralism is based on our national interests and the determination to make the world a fairer and better place for everybody.

In line with this, Finland positions itself as a defender of multilateral cooperation, the rules-based international system and international law. To influence the direction of future developments, Finland must have clear goals and a distinct presence on the global arena.

The purpose of this document is to justify and communicate our commitment to multilateral cooperation, the rules-based international system and international law, and to demonstrate our strengths through action. This is in line with Nordic goals and priorities. With the actions described below, Finland is also contributing to the strengthening of multilateral cooperation called for by the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.¹

1 Joint communication of the European Commission and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on setting out a strategy to strengthen the contribution of the European Union to rules-based multilateralism (17 February 2021).

2 Multilateral cooperation in a crisis

The challenges facing the world are growing in scale and they are becoming increasingly intertwined. The need to find solutions to them is widely recognised in the international community. In a world shaped by armed crises, climate and environmental change, cross-border health threats, technological development and exclusionary nationalism and populism, it is essential that we join forces to address these challenges.

However, multilateral cooperation, a prerequisite for solving cross-border problems, has reached a critical juncture. Tensions between major powers, differing ideological stances, shifts in global economic and technological centres of gravity, even trade wars, are all shaking the foundations of cooperation.

China is working to shape the international order to suit its own aspirations. Russia's actions, especially the illegal annexation of the Crimea, are undermining stability and trust in the field of international security, and the areas adjacent to Finland have also been affected. The renewed commitment of the United States to multilateral problem-solving is a promising sign but the leading role that the country has played in international affairs has also been a controversial issue domestically from the outset. Authoritarian social models and the emphasis that they put on the common good at the expense of individual liberties are increasingly challenging the democratic model founded on human rights. The political and economic pressure exerted on small countries, companies and civil society is becoming more direct in nature. Lack of trust in international cooperation is also a major challenge, and the situation is exploited by parties characterising themselves as champions of national interests, which they are using as a legitimising basis for their actions.

The rules-based international system, the cornerstone of multilateral cooperation, is founded on the universal values enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The UN Charter, the UN Security Council and multilateral treaties regulate the use of force and the control of the instruments of force, protect human rights and the environment, and promote sustainable and just economic and social development throughout the world. However, the international system built after the Second World War no longer fully reflects the changing balance of power, expansion and diversification of the international agenda, or the growing role of non-governmental actors in the international arena. The composition of the UN Security Council mirrors the past, and the irresponsible use of the veto power in particular paralyses decision-making.

There is growing reluctance to create binding rules, while more and more players are working to weaken, ignore or even dismantle existing commitments. Many countries take a selective approach to their international commitments or opt to ignore them altogether. Even the most serious international crimes often go unpunished.

The international trade system and the activities of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are questioned. Growing protectionism, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on value chains, and the increasing tendency of many countries to challenge the key rules and principles governing the system all collide in the situation.

Frustration with the existing international order has given rise to alternative attempts to find solutions to problems. These include a variety of different G groups (G7 and G20) and negotiating processes outside the established international system open to all nations.

The European Union (EU) is in itself a product of multilateral cooperation. It is also one of the staunchest defenders of multilateral cooperation, the rules-based international system and international law. However, the internal and external challenges facing the European Union are undermining its unity and effectiveness. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the EU to defend its interests or to act as a global champion of European values and the rules-based international system.

3 In defence of multilateral cooperation

Weakened multilateral cooperation is not in the interests of any country. It is particularly damaging to small countries, such as Finland. They can only influence global developments within the framework of an international order that encourages cooperation instead of the furthering of narrow national interests and the law of the strongest. Major powers also benefit from the predictability arising from the system and the legitimacy that it gives to their actions. The acceptance of democracy, rule of law and human rights as fundamental principles of international action as well as the increase in prosperity and wellbeing also stem from a functioning rules-based international system and the opportunities that it has created.

The need to reform the international system is widely recognised. The need for reforms is particularly urgent in the UN, the actor at the core of the global order, in which the difficulty in reconciling the interests of major powers, emerging powers, developing countries and developed nations is hampering change. Dealing with a multitude of challenges, actors and objectives, multilateral cooperation and the structures supporting it must be able to adhere to what works. At the same time, they must also embrace new operating models when the old methods no longer meet new requirements.

Fortunately, the crisis facing multilateral cooperation has not incapacitated it altogether. Restrictions on the right of veto in the UN Security Council are now discussed on the basis of the initiative put forward by France and Mexico in 2012. Despite an escalation in geopolitical tensions, the year 2015 saw the successful conclusion of negotiations on the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Even during times of confrontation, development policy has demonstrated its worth. The reform of the UN development system is also progressing as planned and results have already been achieved.

The Alliance for Multilateralism initiative by France and Germany and the initiative to promote the implementation of the United Nations 75th Anniversary Declaration by Spain and Sweden are good examples of recent efforts to support multilateral cooperation. The Summit for Democracy initiative presented by the United States also has the potential

to strengthen multilateralism. Germany and Norway recently presented their own white papers for multilateral cooperation.²

Responding to the key challenges of our time requires prompt action and strong adherence to what has been agreed. Cooperation on a multilateral basis in different compositions is the best (and practically the only) way to achieve just and sustainable results in issues that are vital to humanity.

² Germany: International cooperation in the 21st century: Multilateralism for humanity (19 May 2021).

Norway: Norway's Role and Interests in Multilateral Cooperation (White Paper) (14 June 2019).

4 Finland and multilateralism

Multilateral cooperation has been at the core of Finland's foreign policy from the outset. Since becoming independent, Finland has joined international cooperation bodies always when opportunities to do so have arisen: League of Nations, the Nordic Group, United Nations, Council of Europe and the European Union. Finland was a key player in the organisation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which evolved into the OSCE. Our work is based on the universal values of the United Nations, such as human rights and equality, sustainable development and environmental protection, and democracy and peace. These are also the values advocated by Finland. The United Nations is the backbone of the rules-based international system.

In addition to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Government as a whole is involved in multilateral cooperation. The Prime Minister is in charge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and individual ministries are responsible for matters concerning a range of different multilateral organisations. The Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action established in 2019 at the initiative of Finland, in which the Finnish Minister of Finance serves as the second co-chair, is a good example of effective multilateral cooperation with international impact. It is becoming increasingly important for ministries to engage in closer cooperation in multilateral issues. In a growing number of matters, the cooperation also involves actors from outside central government. Finland has always attached great importance to the inputs of companies and civil society, which will become increasingly important in the future.

Multilateral cooperation can be strengthened by managing issues in organisations and forums established for the purpose (such as the UN organisations, WTO, OECD, World Bank and the IMF) and regional organisations (such as the OSCE, Council of Europe, Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council BEAC), by adhering to international law and by respecting the decisions of the international court system. This also includes the option of imposing sanctions on parties violating against the rules. Acting within the agreed organisational framework, rather than outside it, supports the international system.

Multilateral action can also be strengthened by reforming organisations and updating their procedures. If necessary, there must be cooperation with partners and, on a case-by-case basis, with like-minded countries to support and develop the rules-based international system. Finland is also promoting the principles of good governance in multilateral cooperation through its own activities and by setting an example.

In foreign relations, the European Union is Finland's most important reference group and security community. On account of its global weight, it is also a key channel for Finland to exert its influence. For this reason, Finland must work to strengthen the unity of the EU. By presenting a united front in multilateral organisations, the EU can also play a more effective role. Cooperation between Member States, shared responsibility and exchange of information in the exercise of multilateral positions of trust as well as better coordination of candidacies are some of the practical instruments allowing the EU to play a more important global role.

Nordic countries have traditionally been strong supporters of multilateral cooperation. For Finland, they serve as a unique and permanent reference group, which together carry more weight than any one of them could alone. By engaging in cooperation in smaller groups, Finland can also influence trends and priorities of multilateral cooperation in larger forums and at global level.

The Council of Europe, the guardian of European human rights standards, and the OSCE, a success story of the 1970s détente (and which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2025) are also key structures supporting security and European values important to Finland. Finland participates in the activities of NATO as a partner.

Multilateral cooperation can also be promoted by taking responsibility and by participating in international activities, and by working in political-level tasks and in international organisations. In line with this, Finland is systematically putting forward candidates for positions of trust, chairmanships and leading roles, in which it can best promote its objectives and enhance the functioning of the international system.

Finland is seeking membership in the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2022–2024 and in the UN Security Council for the term 2029–2030. In the United Nations, Finland can pursue its global responsibilities and influence international standards, rules and decision-making, as well as present its own values and views in the largest possible arena. In addition to the United Nations, the OSCE and the OECD are also key cooperation forums where Finland is seeking high-level positions and special roles in which it can promote its goals and make its expertise available. Such opportunities are also opening up in regional organisations in areas adjacent to Finland (Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States).

Finnish expertise and personnel resources are made available to international organisations, judicial and other bodies, multilateral decision-making and peace processes. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is systematically promoting the appointment of Finnish experts in international tasks at different levels.

Finland is promoting multilateral cooperation in its bilateral relations with other countries. In return, the rules-based international system supports Finland in the management of its bilateral foreign relations, while multilateral forums also provide opportunities for bilateral contacts. The action that Finland takes and the messages that it sends must be consistent and uniform in both areas.

Finland can also exert influence in multilateral cooperation by supporting initiatives presented by other countries and by seeking new partnerships in an open-minded manner. Finland can demonstrate its value as a partner by setting an example, by utilising its own strengths and by strictly adhering to its commitments. At the same time, we emphasise that multilateral cooperation remains the most sustainable and just way to strengthen peace, security, equal rights and wellbeing, both in Finland and in global scale.

5 Actions presented by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to support and promote multilateral cooperation

Below are some of the areas that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will prioritise in its multilateral activities in the coming years. The list is based on Finland's strengths and special expertise. These actions do not rule out other continuous activities that support the achievement of Finland's objective to strengthen multilateral cooperation. The following themes are emphasised in the actions by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs:

- equal rights and participation
- climate and environmental change
- sharing responsibility in the new information environment
- peace and security through expertise
- just and democratic world
- smart societies of the future

The actions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs include both ongoing projects and new openings. They also bring together actors from areas outside public administration, such as the private sector and civil society.

The themes are connected to each other. As with global challenges in general, the themes also are characterised by interdependence. In fact, the work carried out within the framework of the themes supports the values and goals of Finland's foreign policy in an overarching manner.

5.1 Equal rights and participation

Starting point

Support for equal rights and participation is at the core of Finland's human rights-based foreign policy. However, the universal nature of human rights and equality between population groups are increasingly questioned around the world.

Objective

Finland will continue its long-term work to promote equal rights and participation as part of its multilateral foreign and development policy. Promoting the rights of women, girls and minorities is an important part of Finland's human rights policy.

The rights of women and girls must be safeguarded, and efforts must also be made to guarantee their participation in issues concerning technological development. The rights of persons with disabilities will be strengthened across silos in the work carried out in different sectors, such as humanitarian law. In addition to strengthening human rights and equality, Finland will also support full utilisation of the expertise and resources available in society to tackle future challenges.

WOMEN, GIRLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Finland holds a lead role in the Action Coalition focusing on technology and innovation in the multi-actor Generation Equality process coordinated by UN Women. The aim of the process is to increase the number of actors committed to equality work and to promote the achievement of the sustainable development goals over the next five years. The project is in line with the equality and development policy objectives set out in the Government Programme and the technology, digitalisation and innovation expertise, for which Finland is internationally known. In its work, Finland stresses the need to increase the number, participation and leadership roles of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM sectors), to narrow the gender gap in digitalisation, to develop gender-sensitive technologies, to reduce online violence targeting women and to create safe digital spaces.

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Finland will extensively promote the rights of the persons with disabilities in a broad range of different sectors. Finland provides financing for projects involving the rights of the persons with disabilities and holds several chairmanship roles. It will also promote disability inclusion in multilateral humanitarian organisations. Accessibility to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and participation of organisations representing them will be at the core of this work. Possible Finnish membership in the UN Human Rights Council would be the high point of the multilateral work: the rights of persons with disabilities (especially women and girls with disabilities) would be one of our priority areas.

5.2 Climate and environmental change

Starting point

Climate change, loss of biodiversity, destruction and fragmentation of habitats, and overconsumption of natural resources are all crucial issues of our time. Unless lasting and just solutions are found, these trends will increasingly impact the livelihoods and health of communities and individuals and may heighten the risk of conflicts.

Objective

Finland will participate in the global efforts to mitigate climate change as an EU Member State and will implement joint targets at national level. Finland has pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by the year 2035. Finland will act on a multilateral basis by utilising its own areas of expertise and by seeking sustainable solutions in cooperation with its partners.

Renewable energy solutions and circular economy are Finnish strengths and key instruments in climate change mitigation and adaptation. In accordance with the multistakeholder model, multilateral cooperation involves states, companies, development banks, organisations and other actors.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Finland is a front runner in carbon-neutral circular economy. The aim of the World Circular Economy Forum, first hosted by Sitra in 2017, is to accelerate global change towards circular economy. The successful concept must be permanently anchored in Finland. Circular economy foreign policy as part of the climate and innovation policy will strengthen Finland's role in the international implementation of sustainable development goals and will give a boost to commercial applications of circular economy. A new project, to be jointly launched with the African Development Bank and the Nordic Development Fund, will provide a just basis for streamlining circular economy solutions in African countries, create jobs and reduce poverty and inequality.

METEOROLOGY AND NATURAL DISASTERS

Climate change has increased and strengthened extreme weather phenomena. In addition to climate change mitigation, measures to adapt to climate change are also needed, especially in developing countries. The benefits of weather and climate services extend well beyond the management of disaster risks. Finland possesses world-class weather system expertise. Finland has granted support to least developed countries and small island states in the management of climate risks and to the CREWS initiative focusing on early warning systems. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs promotes, supports and finances the use of up-to-date weather and climate services in developing countries and will examine whether such work could also be carried out in cooperation with multilateral organisations, such as the African Union and the African Development Bank.

In addition to the management of natural disaster risks, the highly regarded Finnish meteorological know-how is also used in many sectors of society. It helps countries to adapt to climate change in such areas as agriculture, tourism, transport, energy, water and health sectors.

The work by regional multilateral organisations in the Northern region (such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council) and the Northern Dimension of the EU will be utilised in the tackling of environmental issues. At the same time, Finland will support rules-based and agreement-based cooperation in the Arctic region, in environmental policy, and in issues with wider relevance.

While focusing on cooperation in climate and environmental matters, Finland will also establish new partnerships with states that in the past have had fewer connections to our country. New business opportunities will also be generated for Finnish companies operating in the sector.

CLEANING THE NUCLEAR WASTE SITES IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN

Thousands of nuclear waste sites have been identified in the Arctic Ocean as part of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership. It has been examined within the framework of the EU Northern Dimension whether the financing mechanism of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) could be used to raise two nuclear submarines from the bottom of the sea. The project would be environmentally significant. Finland holds the chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council for the term 2021–2023, while Russia is currently the chair of the Arctic Council. Practical cooperation helps to alleviate tensions in the Arctic region and keeps the environmental perspective at the core of regional development.

5.3 Sharing responsibility in the new information environment

Starting point

Ensuring a safe information and cyber environment is placing increasing demands on countries, international organisations and companies. It is becoming increasingly difficult to define the sources of disruptions and threats, and their nature and duration in the new operating environments. Filtered through international law, proportionate regulation and cross-disciplinary cooperation, these developments offer great opportunities for humankind.

Objective

The aim of Finland is to ensure an open, free and secure cyber environment in which consideration is given to the ethical perspective as well to the issues concerning data protection and the freedom of speech.

The good reputation of Finland as an international actor will allow our country to play a leading role in cyber issues. The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats established in Finland in 2017 has strengthened our profile in hybrid issues and made us a more attractive partner in this field internationally.

COUNTERING INFORMATION INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

Finland is widely known as a top country in the countering of external information influence activities. This can be attributed to a combination of a good and broad education base, media literacy as part of schooling, free media and comprehensive security thinking. The Eastern Partnership countries share a challenging information influence environment. As a follow-up to the event organised for young media influencers within the framework of the Eastern Partnership during the 2019 Finnish EU Presidency, Finland is examining whether it could permanently host a similar event on an interactive and regular basis. In addition to boosting media literacy, the aim would also be to encourage young media actors to build networks and share experiences.

PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES IN THE CYBER ENVIRONMENT

International law in the cyber environment is an emerging theme. Finland wants to bring a positive perspective to the debate and emphasises the themes of peaceful cooperation. In 2021, in cooperation with the Erik Castrén Institute of the University of Helsinki and the Cyber Policy Institute, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs produced an online course for diplomats on the peaceful resolution of cyber disputes. Since then, Nordic diplomats have also attended the pilot course and there are plans to make it available in other countries. The pilot course also provides an instrument to prepare views for discussions in the United Nations.

Finland's response to information influence activities will be based on our strengths, such as broad-based education and solid media literacy. Young influencers' expertise and understanding regarding the evolving information environment is of crucial value.

Responding to cyber threats requires continuous development of security preparedness, in which companies of the sector play a key role. Finnish companies possess solid cyber expertise.

In addition to responding to cyber threats and enhancing resilience, Finland will also stress the huge opportunities arising from the new operating environments. Conflicts can also be resolved in the cyber environment through peaceful cooperation and in accordance with the principles of international law.

5.4 Peace and security through expertise

Starting point

Global phenomena impacting security are increasingly intertwined and conflicts have become more diverse in nature. There is increasing awareness of the relevance of peace and security to such issues as the impacts of climate change, economic and social development and human rights.

Objective

Finland will examine security from a broad perspective. In addition to military threats, rivalry between major powers and hybrid influencing, the impacts of major global challenges on peace and security must also be taken into account.

FINLAND IS OFFERING GOOD SERVICES

Peace mediation is one of Finland's priority areas. In addition to the work continuously carried out in the UN, Finland is also well-placed to engage in practical peace mediation (by for example, using the services offered by the CMI established by former President Ahtisaari). The Centre for Peace Mediation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs started work in autumn 2020. Finland must be able to anticipate where it can offer peace mediation services and be prepared to seize opportunities. Finland maintains the capacity to host meetings between parties to disputes, bilateral and multilateral meetings at different levels, and summits between heads of state. Recent successes in this field include the 2020 Afghanistan Conference and the role played by Foreign Minister Haavisto as Special EU Representative to the Horn of Africa.

Peace mediation, crisis management and conflict prevention are long-standing themes in Finland's foreign policy. Finland will continue to contribute to international peace, security and stability, and will stand out as a responsible and competent player in the field of international security.

In its multilateral foreign policy, Finland will invest in expertise arising from training, mediation and knowledge in matters of peace and security.

Finland will strengthen its profile and capacity to influence world events by engaging in peace mediation and crisis management, by providing good services and by maintaining important networks and channels of communication. Finland has long advocated the participation of women and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We also emphasise that the role of young people in conflict prevention and resolution should be recognised and encourage young people to be active in the promotion of peace and security.

PEACETECH

Peace technologies are emerging and promising tools in the field of international peace mediation and conflict resolution. Technological solutions provide a basis for detailed conflict modelling, participatory decision-making and foresight in peace processes. With them, better conflict analyses and impact assessments can be produced. As part of its multilateral foreign policy, Finland gives priority to openings in which new technologies can be flexibly harnessed to promote peace.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis management lies at the core of multilateral cooperation. Finland gives priority to crisis management operations that are authorised within the framework of the international system. Finland takes part in the international provision of crisis management training and primarily supports the participation of women in crisis management and peacekeeping through such venues as the courses arranged by UN UNITAR and UN Women. More than 40% of the experts sent by Finland are women. Finland can best increase international crisis management training by emphasising its strengths and the themes that present challenges internationally and at EU level. These include a comprehensive approach, civilian-military cooperation, participation of women and expertise in the field of hybrid threats and peace mediation in crisis management operations.

YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

Finland will publish a national action plan on the UN Resolution 2250: 'Youth, peace and security'. The aim is to mainstream the topic. The issue will be promoted bilaterally at country level, in development cooperation, in peace processes and at global level in international organisations. Finland hosted the first youth symposium of the UN in 2019 and will co-host the UN youth conference in Doha in 2022 with Qatar and Colombia. Promoting the participation of young people in peace processes is one of Finland's strengths in the field of peace mediation. An annual 'Youth, peace and security' prize is under consideration. It would be awarded for increasing meaningful participation of young people in peace and security issues.

5.5 Just and democratic world

Starting point

International norms and agreements and monitoring compliance with them are essential for the functioning of the global community. Democracy and the rule of law provide a sustainable value base for future societies, as well. All these principles are frequently put to the test and continuing efforts must be made to preserve them.

Objective

International law primarily regulates relations between states and the functioning of international organisations, and the role of the International Court of Justice is to resolve disputes between states. This system lays the basis for international order, peace and security, and it is important to preserve it.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will be actively involved in the development of international law and its implementation. The United Nations (globally) and the Council of Europe (regionally) are the key actors and discussion forums in this respect. The EU is actively involved in the development of international law.

AGAINST IMPUNITY

Finland has supported the work against impunity for many years. Finland has provided funding for the intergovernmental Justice Rapid Response cooperation mechanism since its founding in 2009. The mechanism provides criminal law expertise to resolve the most violent conflicts of the world. Finland also provides funding for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism established in 2016 to assist in the investigation of the violations against international law carried out in connection with the Syrian uprising and in prosecuting suspects. Finland is one of the longest-standing contributors to the Trust Fund for Victims of the International Criminal Court.

Finland's priorities in the field of international law include the elimination of impunity for the most serious international crimes, global promotion of the rule of law principle and the strengthening of the rules-based international system.

Prosecution in the most serious international crimes is primarily the responsibility of national governments. In cases where national governments are, for a variety of reasons, unable to fulfil this responsibility, international courts, especially the International Criminal Court (ICC) play a key role in the reduction of impunity. Reducing impunity can also be seen as part of broader support for the rule of law in fragile states.

Promoting democracy and the rule of law are at the core of a just and functioning society. They are also the fundamental principles governing Finland's foreign policy. Strong and stable societies of the future will also be built on this value base. Finland will support democracy and the promotion of the rule of law principle by actively participating in the work of the Council of Europe, other international organisations in the sector, through development cooperation and by financing non-governmental organisations. At the same time, Finland is also seeking new innovative operating models.

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

Finland is committed to the promotion of democracy and the rule of law nationally, in the EU and internationally. The purpose of the networked Rule of Law Centre jointly established by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the University of Helsinki in 2021 is to support international rule of law work through research, education, advice and evaluation. Operating on a demand-driven basis, it brings together experts from Finland and other countries and builds contacts with key actors such as the UN and the EU. Finland will chair the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) in 2021. FOC is the most important of the intergovernmental coalitions promoting free, open and secure internet. Finland will promote the work of FOC as part of human rights, democracy and sustainable development.

5.6 Smart societies of the future

Starting point

The world in which we live is changing rapidly. The foundations for societies of the future and the values and standards defining them are already under construction. Technological development, education, cooperation across silos and innovative networks and solutions will open unprecedented opportunities for humankind in the coming years.

Objective

Finland will strengthen its profile as an international cluster of innovation, skills and expertise. This work is supported by the placing of UN innovation activities in Finland. This will contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through cooperation and sharing of ideas between the private sector, non-governmental organisations and higher education institutions.

ESTABLISHING A UN INNOVATION HUB IN FINLAND

The aim of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is to develop Finland into an innovation cluster of the UN system and to strengthen the existing UN functions as part of a wider development of the UN campus in the Helsinki region. Finland is home to the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), UN Global Pulse Finland, which focuses on foresight work, UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Social Impact Investing Initiative (S3i) of UNOPS, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The most recent addition is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which is planning to set up thematic centres for innovative learning and funding in the Helsinki region in autumn 2021.

PROMOTING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS

Education, training and skills have been fundamental to Finland's own development, and it is natural that we also put great emphasis on them in our multilateral cooperation. In autumn 2021, the Finnish National Agency for Education, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture will jointly launch a centre of excellence for educational development cooperation, which will disseminate Finnish educational sector expertise and support Finnish advocacy work. Finland supports the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) fund financing the development of the education sector in the least developed and fragile states and the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund supporting education in humanitarian crises. The Finnish Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade has been appointed as the global champion for school feeding of the World Food Programme (WFP) and he will also head the international school feeding coalition, to be launched at the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021.

The flexible and creative solutions required in a rapidly changing operating environment can only be achieved with an excellent expertise base and training. Finland is uniquely equipped to develop and promote the building of smart societies of the future.

In its multilateral cooperation, Finland will promote the utilisation of Finnish education expertise and as part of the process, a centre of excellence for educational development cooperation will be opened under the auspices of the Finnish National Agency for Education.

Studying, understanding and shaping the changing world will also require solid expertise in foresight and futures work.

Knowledge-based understanding of what the future could look like and how we can influence it is included in the toolbox of Finland's multilateral foreign policy.

FORESIGHT AND FUTURES WORK IS HELPING TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the appreciation for the ability to foresee change and prepare for it. Finland is one of the leading countries of the world in foresight and futures work. Finland is known for high-quality academic futures research and the active role played by civil society actors (such as Sitra) in this area. The Parliamentary Committee for the Future is one of the few such bodies in the world. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is promoting futures work as part of the Finnish operating model and country image. Finland is also working to include its foresight and futures work expertise in the activities of the UN and its special organisations and other international organisations.

6 Multilateral foreign policy and disruptive trends

Multilateral cooperation must also be able to respond to quickly and unexpectedly changing development trends. The way in which these emerging trends are positioned in relation to Finnish values and our views of the future and how Finland will cope amidst these developments is already determined during the early stages of the debate.

New and rapidly evolving trends are shaping our everyday lives, social systems and international cooperation in an unprecedented manner and at ever-increasing speed. Our reactions to them often come too late. Finland must remain alert and ready to influence global trends of the future when they are still evolving.

In its multilateral foreign policy, Finland is constantly working to strengthen the regulation, agreement-based procedures, and the debate on values and standards arising around new phenomena. The new phenomena must be harnessed for the benefit and happiness of humankind.

Disruptive trends that are interesting from the Finnish perspective and that involve both challenges and opportunities include the following:

- Health security. Despite early warnings, the COVID-19 pandemic took the world by surprise and showed that the preparations had been inadequate. Health security is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and it is critical to comprehensive security of societies. Finland will utilise its health security expertise and will actively work to promote health security and biosecurity. Finland is emphasising the critical role of multilateral cooperation in the combating of cross-border health threats and the mitigation of their impacts.
- Artificial intelligence is a multifaceted transformation technology opening up huge and partially unknown opportunities. Finland is excellently placed to become a world leader in the development and utilisation of artificial intelligence. In multilateral cooperation, Finland will work to ensure reconciliation of the development, utilisation and regulation of artificial intelligence with the core values and principles of the rules-based international system.

- Digitalisation is also changing long-established operating procedures in multilateral cooperation. The COVID-19 pandemic has speeded up the changeover to remote connections. However, the benefits and accessibility of this technology are unevenly distributed both between and within countries. Developing countries must be supported in the digital transition. In the framework of multilateral cooperation, equal opportunities to participate and influence must be guaranteed.

7 Towards a new future

Political polarisation, hardened rhetoric and the return of the rivalry between political systems are reflected in multilateral cooperation. Ideology is a powerful force for change but the ideological content and new forms of identity politics will also add a degree of inflexibility and unpredictability to international politics.

In the future, global problems will become increasingly intertwined and fragmented individual measures cannot offer any solutions to them. Such traditional approaches as the division into security, development and trade policies will no longer work. The international community must remain alert and respond to the change in a comprehensive, sustainable and just manner. No country is able to do this on its own. It is crucial to keep the channels of communication open on the international political stage.

In its foreign policy, Finland relies on jointly agreed rules and its own values, seeking practical, constructive and creative solutions to problems.

Finland is determined and excellently equipped to promote and support multilateral cooperation, international law and the rules-based international system in the inevitable process of change. The change will also open up opportunities for Finland to strengthen its own position and influence key issues, choices and visions of the future.



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