



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Policy framework

Global Multilateralism

Defining the Kingdom of the Netherlands'
position in a changing multilateral global order



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Policy framework

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Summary

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. By launching this war of aggression, Russia has flagrantly violated the Charter of the United Nations (UN). Its practice of targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is also a gross violation of international law. What is more, Russia is blocking an effective response by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and ignoring a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution adopted by a large majority. Despite the profound impact these events have had on international relations, the international community has not been unanimous in explicitly condemning these clear violations of the international legal order.

Concerns regarding the integrity and future of the rules-based multilateral order have existed for some time. The post-war global order, which is characterised by political ideals and values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights and free trade/markets, faces major challenges and is changing under the pressure of shifting global power relations. Within the multilateral system, a realignment of political spheres of influence is also evident. The growing economic importance of Asian countries in particular – especially China – and emerging regional powers in the Global South is leading them to speak out more forcefully in multilateral forums and, increasingly, to demand a greater say there. In addition, they frequently attach great importance to their sovereignty, and often it seems they are only willing to take on responsibility for tackling global issues in exchange for more power and influence in key bodies.

In order to defend the interests of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and tackle major global challenges such as war, climate change, migration, poverty and inequality, we need a broader basis for cooperation than the shrinking platform of like-minded Western countries from which we currently operate. Together with our EU partners, we will have to significantly strengthen our position within the global multilateral system, which remains of vital importance to the Kingdom. This can be achieved by stepping up cooperation with other partners and developing a joint agenda in areas of shared interest, as well as by listening rather than preaching, and entering into new partnerships based on equality and an open-minded attitude. This investment in new partnerships will need to be accompanied by a willingness to make compromises, inconvenient though they may be, in order to effectively advance national and collective interests in the changing context of the multilateral system, but without compromising our values and standards.

Together with this broader group of partners, the Kingdom is thus working to foster an inclusive and effective multilateral system, in which rules-based global multilateral institutions remain anchored and enjoy widespread legitimacy. The present policy framework is a first step in this direction.

The strategic approach is based on three pillars: protect, strengthen and reform. The Kingdom wishes to protect the multilateral system from forces that undermine the international legal order and human rights. At the same time, it is committed to strengthening its own position and that of the EU in the dynamic constellation of geopolitical forces. The multilateral order must remain fit for purpose, or be made so where it is not. The Kingdom will work to promote a more representative, coherent, efficient and effective system that does not subvert the visions and missions of the relevant organisations, as laid down in their founding treaties and statutes.

The Kingdom will remain a dependable and predictable actor and donor. Together with the EU, it will work to promote 'Our Common Agenda' – the UN Secretary-General's (UNSG) reform agenda – and to help modernise the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the international financial institutions (IFIs). Together with the EU and other partners, the Netherlands will advocate the added value of the institutions in their role as standard-setting, implementing and coordinating organisations. The universal values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter will serve as guidelines in this regard.

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In order to implement this approach, the Kingdom requires a coherent policy in which its strategic objectives and the deployment of the instruments at its disposal are closely correlated. That is why this policy framework is linked to choices in adjacent policy areas, including foreign trade and development cooperation policy (as set out in the policy document 'Do What We Do Best'), the Global Climate Strategy and the Dutch Global Health Strategy. The Kingdom's current efforts in the field of multilateral policy encompass four key areas (peace and security; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; global economic stability; and sustainable development) and three cross-cutting themes (climate change, biodiversity and pollution; health; and digitalisation). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as guidelines in this regard. The Kingdom's feminist foreign policy is reflected in every aspect of its policy efforts.

Among other measures, regular interministerial coordination meetings will be set up to facilitate the implementation of the policy framework. The strategic approach embodied in the aforementioned three pillars will be reflected in policies and operational plans at ministerial and interministerial level. The same applies to the objectives identified within those pillars. The strategy will be implemented within the existing policy frameworks of the relevant government organisations. The government intends to report annually to the House of Representatives concerning the implementation of the policy framework on multilateralism. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will play a coordinating role in the government-wide implementation of the framework.

This memorandum is based in part on the informal input and comments of various experts and civil society organisations.

Introduction

The prosperity, health and security of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are dependent on a stable world in which countries cooperate with each other on the basis of multilateral agreements and in which they can call each other to account if rules are violated. Along with other countries, the Kingdom has undeniably benefited from the multilateral system, which has enabled it to promote its interests and values in a collective setting. With the help of contributions from the Kingdom, United Nations (UN) development organisations and international financial institutions (IFIs) have reduced poverty worldwide and alleviated humanitarian needs.

The post-war global order, which is characterised by political ideals and values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, free trade and open markets, faces major challenges, however, and is changing under the pressure of shifting global power relations. Within the multilateral system, a realignment of political spheres of influence is also clearly evident.

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The growing economic importance of Asian countries in particular, as well as other emerging countries in the Global South, is leading them to speak out more forcefully in multilateral forums and, increasingly, to demand a greater say there. In addition, these countries frequently attach great importance to their sovereignty, and it often seems that they are only willing to take on responsibility for tackling global issues in exchange for more power and influence in key bodies. This applies in particular to China, which is trying to reshape the UN in accordance with its own views.

The UN system of collective security is under heavy pressure – and not for the first time – with the principle of ‘might makes right’ increasingly setting the tone. The UN Charter prohibits members from using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the UN. Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine is a gross violation of the Charter, and its attacks on civilian targets and civilian infrastructure constitute a grave violation of international law. Moreover, Russia has ignored a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution demanding an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of its troops from Ukraine, which was adopted by a large majority. The lack of agreement between the permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC), which is essential for world peace, has a price: countless victims, the untold suffering of a population and the destruction of a country and its cities. In addition, it poses a threat to European security and energy and food security, disproportionately affecting the world’s most vulnerable countries. All this is putting pressure on the international legal order within the multilateral system and is increasing unpredictability, making it more and more difficult to find solutions to global challenges.

In addition to these geopolitical challenges, the global multilateral system also faces major cross-border challenges such as climate change, pandemics, migration and rising global inequality. Only through multilateral cooperation, in which the Kingdom and like-minded countries continue to cast a critical eye on their own efforts and contributions, can these challenges be tackled effectively.

Together with the largest possible group of like-minded countries and new partners, the Kingdom will have to bring its influence to bear on the multilateral system so that it can continue to reap the benefits of multilateral cooperation and the work of multilateral organisations, both now and in the future. It is therefore important that the government sets out a vision for global multilateral cooperation – and the future of such cooperation – during its current term of office. This memorandum provides a strategic framework for the Kingdom’s policy efforts and approach in this area in the coming years, and also examines the dilemmas involved.

The purpose of this policy framework is threefold: first, to create a platform to work with other countries on fostering a modern, inclusive and effective rules-based system; second, to promote – in conjunction with collective interests such as security, food security and public health – the Kingdom’s largely overlapping interests via the multilateral system; and, third, to promote a government-wide coherent policy on multilateralism in which the Kingdom’s strategic goals, policy focus and deployment of the instruments at its disposal are closely connected and mutually reinforce each other.

Structure

Definition of multilateralism

Multilateralism means ‘between several countries or parties’. Beyond this quantitative aspect, multilateralism is characterised by three qualitative principles:

1. an indivisibility of interests among participants;
2. a commitment to diffuse reciprocity; and
3. a system of dispute settlement designed to enforce compliance with agreed norms.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

This policy framework sets out the Kingdom’s policy efforts in the field of multilateralism for the current government’s term of office (2022-2026). ‘Multilateral’ means between different countries or parties. In the context of this memorandum, it relates to cooperation through global organisations, with the United Nations (UN), the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB)) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the primary examples. In order to cover the broad topic of ‘multilateralism’, the present framework focuses on the global picture. It therefore does not discuss – or only indirectly discusses – the Netherlands’ policy efforts in regional or thematic structures such as the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CoE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, it does examine the role of the EU role within the various global multilateral structures and the Netherlands’ efforts in this context. For the Netherlands, the EU remains the main platform and foundation for joint action. Where possible, the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom also act jointly with other countries in the framework of regional structures, such as the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Organization of American States (OAS). Multilateralism is a matter for the entire Kingdom, and the present framework therefore discusses several specific interests of the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom, particularly in relation to their status as Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Not every multilateral interest is of equal importance to the Kingdom, and not every organisation or partnership that is important to the Kingdom is under similar pressure, if at all, as a result of the changing international environment.

This framework memorandum is complementary to the Foreign Affairs Policy Letter of 8 March 2022, the Policy Document on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (FTDC):

‘Do what we do best’, of 24 June 2022 and other standing policy such as the Integrated International Security Strategy, the Global Climate Strategy, the Policy Memorandum on China (‘A New Balance’), the Dutch Indo-Pacific Guidelines and the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, the EU Global Gateway and the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy, the forthcoming Africa Strategy, the Policy Document on Human Rights and the Global Health Strategy. Various resources were used in the preparation of this framework, including advisory reports of the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV)¹ and studies conducted by The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies² and the Clingendael Institute (Netherlands Institute of International Relations).³

Chapter 1 discusses the importance of multilateralism for the Kingdom. This is a recurring theme throughout the framework. Chapter 2 describes current trends and developments within the multilateral system. Chapter 3 introduces the Kingdom’s strategic approach to multilateralism, based on three pillars and various objectives, in the form of a new policy framework. Chapter 4 describes current policy efforts and, where possible, translates them for the purposes of this framework. Among other issues, it examines the extent to which a number of policy areas and policy objectives referred to in the coalition agreement are under pressure. Finally, chapter 5 briefly reflects on the topic of implementation.

¹ AIV advisory report no. 113: [Regulating Online Content: Towards a Recalibration of the Netherlands’ Internet Policy](#), June 2020, and AIV advisory report no. 110: [Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights: An Indivisible Bond](#), May 2019.

² Rob de Wijk, Jack Thompson and Esther Chavannes, [Adjusting the Multilateral System to Safeguard Dutch Interests](#), The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, September 2020.

³ Tim Sweijs and Danny Pronk, [Interregnum: Strategische Monitor 2018-2019](#), The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies and Clingendael Institute, February 2019 (in Dutch).

1.

Why multilateralism is
important for the
Kingdom

The prosperity, health and security of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are dependent on a stable world in which countries cooperate with each other on the basis of multilateral agreements and in which they can call each other to account if rules are violated.

The vital interests of the Kingdom of the Netherlands fall into the following categories: security and territorial and physical integrity; maintaining the international legal order; social, political and economic stability; public health; global trade; sustainable development; and tackling the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. All these issues transcend national boundaries. The international orientation and relatively limited size – in terms of geography and population – of the Kingdom, which comprises the Netherlands in Europe and the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom, make multilateral cooperation a necessity in these areas.

As a medium-sized country with an open economy, the Kingdom is highly dependent on a stable and secure world for its own prosperity and security. Thanks in part to the multilateral global order, it was able to develop into one of the world's most prosperous countries after the Second World War. The Kingdom maintains and promotes high standards in the areas of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. It also has a major interest in a world in which countries cooperate on the basis of explicit agreements and in which they can call each other to account if those agreements are violated. The promotion of the international legal order is even enshrined in Article 90 of the Dutch Constitution.

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The UN is the place where the whole world comes together to seek solutions to global challenges. Its proper functioning is of key importance to the Kingdom, since it is it hard for the Kingdom to exert influence on the global stage independently. However, as the world's largest global trading bloc and largest donor of development aid, the EU is an influential actor. By sharing its national sovereignty with other countries where necessary, each individual EU member state becomes more powerful: multilateralism and sovereignty complement each other. Within the multilateral system, the SIDS are also important for the Kingdom, as they represent a substantial portion of the UN membership (38 member states and 20 non-UN members/associate members of the regional commissions) and in many cases are regional and like-minded partners of the Caribbean islands within the Kingdom.

1.1 Impact of cross-border challenges on the Kingdom

The Kingdom is vulnerable to climate change. A large portion of the Netherlands lies below sea level, and the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom are facing an increase in hurricane intensity, heat and coastal erosion. As a result of temperature rises, the Kingdom will be increasingly affected by extreme weather, periods of drought and flooding.

International cooperation in the fields of policy and research is crucial to gaining a better understanding of the climatic changes taking place around the world, not least in the Arctic and Antarctica. Thanks to their membership of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UN's specialised agency for weather, climate and water, the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) and the meteorological services of Curaçao and St Maarten have fast and free access to observations from the rest of the world for the purpose of weather forecasting, extreme weather warnings and climate diagnostics.

In 2021, in the framework of its Foreign Affairs Barometer opinion poll, the Clingendael Institute asked Dutch people what they thought were the most significant threats facing the Netherlands. The answers were: (1) migratory pressure on the borders of the EU; (2) the rise of China; and (3) climate change. These are cross-border challenges that are playing out at global level, and the solutions should for the most part also be sought at this level.

When it comes to *public health*, the COVID-19 pandemic is still a global problem. No government or institution can handle the threat of future pandemics alone. At the end of 2021, all 194 members of the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed by consensus to swiftly create an international instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

The global *security* structure has become more complex, and the challenges in this area are substantial. This is clear from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its threat to use nuclear weapons, the use of chemical weapons in Syria and North Korea's nuclear posturing, as well as from the increasing expertise and capabilities of terrorist groups. Due in part to these troubling developments, the UN's conflict management mechanisms are under pressure, as reflected, for example, in the paralysis of the UNSC. In addition, organised crime that undermines society has spread its tentacles around the globe, and the disruptive effects of international organised drug crime are palpable in the Kingdom. The increasing entanglement of the domestic and external dimensions requires a coordinated effort in the multilateral arena in order to also guarantee the security of the Kingdom by this means.

Combating *irregular migration* is a priority for the Kingdom. Besides conflict and violence, which are the main causes of this problem, other factors are increasingly playing a role: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, economic decline, growing inequality, infectious diseases and lack of access to healthcare, as well as looming food shortages. The Kingdom supports global bodies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which among other activities assist with the reception, registration and protection of refugees in the region, including in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom.

The growing issue of *water* constitutes an ever greater challenge for the Kingdom. Water – or the lack thereof – not only has a major impact on harvests and food security but can also play a key role in promoting conflict. In addition, poor water management is a major threat to sustainable economic development. This also applies to developed countries, where the burden is sometimes passed on to future generations. When properly managed, however, water can boost the economy and thus contribute to a sustainable future.

1.2 The Kingdom's interest in trade promotion

The Kingdom attaches great importance to the existence of global rules promoting *international trade*. Global agreements and standards, for example on the delivery of mail and parcels, ensure that logistical processes all over the world operate in a reliable and orderly manner. The same applies to agreements on maritime shipping and road and air traffic, which guarantee a level playing field and continuous improvement of safety and sustainability in these global sectors. This makes it possible to fly anywhere in the world, and enables the Kingdom to import and export goods.

The Kingdom is a member of the WTO, which is responsible for administering and ensuring compliance with transparent trade rules. This applies to rules 'at the border', such as tariffs, rules of origin and administrative requirements, as well as to investment transparency, agreements on state aid and the enforcement of intellectual property rights. Entrepreneurs and workers benefit greatly from this system, which underpins the flow of essential products and services across open borders.

The WTO was established in 1994 as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of 1947. Its tasks are to promote international trade, settle trade disputes and remove trade barriers. The organisation's basic philosophy is that international trade is the fastest and most effective way to increase global prosperity and that all obstacles to international free trade should therefore be removed.

1.3 Economic stability enhances the Kingdom's prosperity

The IMF and the WB help ensure the stability of the global economy and contribute to the economic development of less developed countries. The Kingdom has been a shareholder and a member of the boards of governors of the IMF and the WB since their establishment.

As a shareholder in the WB and the IMF, the Kingdom ensures that these financial institutions are sufficiently capitalised to continue carrying out their functions and programmes. In this way, it helps maintain and promote economic stability around the globe, thereby contributing to a more equal world. This also benefits the stability and prosperity of the Kingdom itself.

1.4 Advantages of multilateral development cooperation

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The UN development system, which comprises various specialised agencies, supports programme countries in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and agreements, such as the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.⁴ As far as the Kingdom is concerned, multilateral organisations such as the UN, the WB and the regional development banks are indispensable partner organisations in the implementation of the SDGs.

Research conducted by the OECD shows that multilateral development cooperation is more effective than its bilateral counterpart on most measures. There are several reasons for this. First, multilateral organisations offer economies of scale, as they have more expertise, bigger budgets and larger programmes. For example, financing in the form of loans from multilateral development banks represents a multiple of the capital invested by their shareholders. Second, there is greater coherence and coordination between programmes, since multilateral organisations promote the general coherence of policy within a given country through economies of scale and mutual cooperation. Due to their small size, this is also of value to the Caribbean countries within the Kingdom. In addition, multilateral organisations frequently set standards and are instrumental in promoting compliance in fields such as human rights, public and reproductive health, humanitarian law, education and the environment. Another advantage is that individual organisations often have a higher degree of specialisation, enabling them to deploy greater expertise and build consensus between countries on a scientific basis. A further benefit is that multilateral organisations are often involved for the long term. They are generally the first

⁴ UN General Assembly resolution [A/RES/69/15: SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action \(SAMOA\) Pathway](#), 15 December 2014.

to arrive, and if at all possible do not leave conflict areas when others are forced to do so. Because of this, as well as their neutral character, they frequently have better access to the authorities, civil society and aid recipients in a country. All this means that they are often better positioned than bilateral development organisations to convince partner countries of the need to devote themselves to human rights, economic reforms and security in addition to such issues as education, food and public health. For example, UN country teams draw up country programmes based on local needs and then coordinate the programming and financing with various international partners. The UN thus takes a holistic and inclusive approach to development cooperation.

Like the EU and other like-minded donors, the Netherlands is able, as a relatively large and dependable donor, to exert influence on the governing bodies of international development organisations. The Netherlands is committed to safeguarding and protecting a holistic and inclusive approach to development cooperation that focuses on improving the lives of individuals and promoting human rights.

1.5 Multilateral interests of SIDS

The Caribbean parts of the Kingdom face various challenges related to their status as SIDS. Multilateral cooperation is vital to addressing these challenges and finding solutions to the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS, including their limited capacity and resources to develop in a sustainable manner. Immutable factors such as their size, remote location and exposure to climate risks and natural disasters affect the socioeconomic status of SIDS and their ability to achieve the SDGs. The World Bank also recognises the unique development challenges faced by small island economies and in 1985 introduced the Small Island Economies Exception. Examples of growing cross-border challenges include climate change, the economic consequences of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the interwoven nature of internal and external security. There has also been an increase in hurricane intensity, heat, coastal erosion, cross-border migration and people smuggling, resulting in rising socioeconomic inequality and poverty. Given the small size of the Caribbean countries within the Kingdom, it is also important to collaborate with regional partners such as the CARICOM,⁵ the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the ACS,⁶ as well as with development banks and UN bodies. Furthermore, multilateral cooperation can potentially help SIDS gain access to technical assistance, expertise and (international) funding.

⁵ Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten are in talks with CARICOM concerning the possibility of associate membership. They already have ties to various CARICOM organisations, including the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

⁶ Aruba, Curaçao, St Maarten, Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius are associate members of the ACS.

2.

Analysis: trends and
developments in the
multilateral system

'The United Nations Charter and the ideals it represents are in jeopardy. We have a duty to act. And yet we are gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction. The international community is not ready or willing to tackle the big dramatic challenges of our age. (...) Our world is in peril – and paralyzed. Geopolitical divides are: undermining the work of the Security Council, undermining international law, undermining trust and people's faith in democratic institutions, undermining all forms of international cooperation. We cannot go on like this.'

UN Secretary-General (UNSG) António Guterres uttered these telling words in a speech to the UNGA in September 2022 in New York. In *Our Common Agenda*, he outlines his vision for the future of global cooperation. He advocates breathing new life into multilateral cooperation to ensure it is inclusive, effective and based on solidarity and broad participation. He warns that the international community cannot ignore the alarm bells set off by the pandemic and climate crisis. In twelve commitments, the UNSG sets out his policy for making a breakthrough to a better future. He calls on member states to enter into a new social contract with their own populations in order to restore public trust and social cohesion, and make the UN an inclusive organisation. *Our Common Agenda* has so far attracted a lot of interest and support.

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The UNSG's vision comes at a moment when the post-war, cooperative and rules-based multilateral world order has been under substantial pressure for some time, due to shifts in the global balance of power. These geopolitical trends and developments are described in the fourth Rutte government's Foreign Affairs Policy Letter of 8 March 2022.⁷ Their implications for international cooperation in the global multilateral context are examined below.

2.1 Shifts in the global balance of power

A global order is neither absolute nor eternal. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the multilateral order that has existed since the Second World War has contributed to a prolonged period of relative stability and development. When the UN was established, it had 51 – mostly Western – member states. That number has now risen to 193. After the Second World War, the United States – as the global leader of the period – assumed responsibility for the organisation and functioning of the international system. However, shifting economic and demographic dynamics are putting increasing pressure on the existing architecture.

The rise of member states from Africa, Latin America and Asia has caused a significant shift in the global economy's centre of gravity. Roughly 75% of the world's population now lives in the largest countries in Asia. The growing economic importance of Asian

⁷ [Foreign Affairs Policy Letter](#), March 2022 (in Dutch).

countries in particular is leading them to speak out more forcefully in multilateral forums and increasingly to demand a greater say there. This often concerns a legitimate desire to reform the multilateral system in a way that better reflects the current balance of power. The Group of 20 (G20) is an example of a more recently established forum in which emerging economies from Asia, Africa and Latin America are more strongly represented.

The global order according to China

In China's view, the liberal-democratic principles of the international multilateral system primarily serve 'Western' interests and pose a threat to the 'legitimate security interests' of an existing power structures in other countries (such as China). This has several important implications. Within this vision, principles such as 'democracy' and 'human rights' have no universal meaning and are open to interpretation by individual countries. At multilateral level, economic development is prioritised over political and civil rights. Although China values international stability, sovereignty and a functioning multilateral system, it is pursuing a long-term strategy to shape this system according to its own vision, for example through initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI), or in some cases by establishing its own parallel structures.

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Moreover, the increased political assertiveness and international ambitions of China in particular are leading to a global realignment of the balance of power. As a result, the multilateral system is in danger of transforming from a cooperative multilateral system into a more competitive and transaction-oriented one. In this new context, countries are increasingly basing decisions on their own interests instead of seeing global multilateral organisations as instruments to secure collective goods and other benefits.

2.2 Pressure on international law and global values

Periods of upheaval in global power relations have historically been characterised by rising tensions. This is clearly evident in the current, hard-nosed game of multilateral diplomacy. Emerging powers are trying to expand their influence and challenge their incumbent counterparts. The rules of the game are changing, and other priorities are being pursued. Although the vast majority of member states insist that their interests are in principle best served by a rules-based global order, countries with authoritarian governments are using their increased power to ignore or downplay the importance of existing international agreements. As a result, the universality of the values, agreements and principles on which the multilateral system is based is increasingly under pressure. While multilateral consensus still exists on key agendas, such as the SDGs, the broader multilateral system is less effective due to the undermining of the existing normative framework. If this trend continues, the multilateral system will likely become increasingly polarised and

fragmented. Depending on the domain and the issue, it will also become increasingly difficult to find solutions to urgent global challenges.

2.3 Putting the UN Security Council's legitimacy and effectiveness to the test

The global order according to Russia

Russia believes that large, powerful countries have more rights than their smaller neighbours. On this basis, it has allocated itself a sphere of influence in which it reserves the right to ward off interference by outsiders and resist calls for democracy ('colour revolutions'). Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the most recent and poignant example of this 'doctrine', which previously served as a basis for its invasion of Georgia (in 2008).

The primary responsibility of the UNSC is to maintain international peace and security, on the basis of the UN Charter. In matters of war and peace, the eyes of the world turn first and foremost to the UNSC, the highest international decision-making body in the realm of peace and security. However, due to a lack of political will to compromise, as exemplified by Russia's frequent use of its veto right, this important body has lost much of its legitimacy in recent years. On the other hand, the UNSC's growing paralysis has led to a more active role for the UNGA, where the members of the UNSC cannot exercise their veto. In 2022, for example, the UNGA met in emergency session to adopt two resolutions on Russia's invasion of Ukraine after the country blocked similar resolutions in the UNSC. Since then, on the initiative of Liechtenstein, the UNGA has decided to always convene after a veto has been cast in the UNSC. Although the UNGA cannot adopt binding resolutions (unlike the UNSC), the fact that all member states enjoy equal representation within this body imbues it with the normative and moral authority of the international community.

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2.4 New multilateral institutions and initiatives

As a result of not obtaining what they consider to be a proportional voice in multilateral organisations, some countries are also seeking other ways to increase their influence within the multilateral system or certain parts thereof. The BRICS countries⁸ founded the New Development Bank (NDB) on account of their dissatisfaction with the balance of power within the Bretton Woods institutions. In addition, China has created several other alternative structures, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and launched initiatives to put its own stamp on the UN's activities. For example, it uses its

⁸ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

influence to include references in UN texts to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – a large-scale Chinese initiative that aims to create links between continents and their adjacent seas through infrastructure investment. Through this initiative China is also exporting its own value system. Furthermore, it is raising support for its own GDI, which is supposed to support the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development but in doing so prioritises economic development over civil and political rights. China is also seeking support for the GSI, an initiative in the field of security through which it appears to be selectively applying the principles of the UN Charter.

In addition to the above, there has been an increase in the number of formal and informal plurilateral cooperation structures, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD)⁹, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the G20 and the recently established European Political Community (EPC).

The G20 is a forum where the world's major economic powers discuss global challenges and joint multilateral initiatives. Since the 2008 financial crisis, the G20 has strengthened financial and economic cooperation. In recent years, the Netherlands has consistently been invited to participate as a guest of the rotating presidency.¹⁰ The G20 is an important forum for the Netherlands to exert a modest influence on international decision-making concerning the biggest global challenges. It also provides the Netherlands with an opportunity to join forces with the world's most influential countries and play a unifying role in respect of other countries outside the G20.

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2.5 Initiatives in support of rules-based multilateralism

In 2018, Germany and France established the Alliance for Multilateralism for the purpose of strengthening rules-based multilateralism. Their plan is to create a strong coalition from this informal network of countries. The goal is a renewed commitment to stabilise the rules-based international order, uphold its principles and adapt it where necessary. Eighty-seven countries,¹¹ including the Netherlands, have now joined this initiative. Inspired by a similar sense of urgency, President Macron organised the Paris Peace Forum in 2018 and 2019. At the end of 2019, the United States launched the Summit for Democracy initiative, which aims to consolidate democratic values and increase the resilience of democratic societies through international cooperation. The first summit was held online at the end of 2021. The second summit is expected to take place in early 2023. The Netherlands is closely involved in this initiative.

⁹ The US, India, Japan and Australia take part in this initiative.

¹⁰ With the exception of 2020, under the presidency of Saudi Arabia.

¹¹ The following link has further information about the participating countries: [Ministerial Meeting \(multilateralism.org\)](https://www.multilateralism.org)

2.6 Non-governmental actors

Multilateral cooperation is less and less the exclusive preserve of national governments. As a result of increasing inequality between and within countries, ongoing conflicts, humanitarian disasters, climate change, cross-border health crises and migration, the context in which multilateral organisations operate is changing. Civil society, which comprises national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, political movements, trade unions, knowledge institutions and young people, provides a valuable contribution to the work of multilateral organisations such as the UN, as do local and regional authorities. Civil society organisations enter into dialogue with governments, businesses and religious leaders and are able to mobilise communities. Many of them have a dedicated support base that encompasses all levels of society and is able to directly effect changes in society. In this way, civil society helps promote an open society, a robust democracy governed by the rule of law, and sustainable development. It can rightly be regarded as the life blood of society. Civil society organisations grant a voice to those who may not otherwise be heard. Due to the changing nature of the challenges and changes in sociopolitical culture, it is vital to do more to involve non-governmental actors in multilateral institutions, processes and decisions alongside states. Not all UN member states experience these changes in the same way, so the necessary adjustment process gives rise to a certain amount of friction. In fact, a substantial number of countries actively oppose the involvement of civil society organisations.

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2.7 Constructive cooperation

Despite certain alarming trends and developments as described above, the vast majority of countries are strongly in favour of multilateral cooperation. For many of them, global multilateral organisations remain the only suitable platform for drawing attention to the cross-border challenges they face and concluding agreements at international level. Geopolitical tensions have always existed, and multilateral forums are specifically designed to discuss those tensions and work towards solutions that are acceptable to a majority of countries. With more than 86,000 peacekeepers in 12 fragile states,¹² the UN helps promote stability and peace around the world. The World Food Programme (WFP) feeds 128 million people in 120 countries.¹³ The WHO saves more than three million lives each year through its vaccination programmes.¹⁴ The UNHCR supports 89.3 million people who have fled war, hunger or persecution.¹⁵ In many specialised UN and non-UN standard-setting organisations, such as the WHO (healthcare), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (non-

¹² United Nations Peacekeeping, [Global peacekeeping data \(as of 31 October 2022\)](#).

¹³ World Food Programme, [WFP Annual Review 2021, June 2022](#).

¹⁴ WHO, [Vaccines and immunization](#).

¹⁵ UNHCR, [Global Trends Report 2021, June 2022](#).

proliferation), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), cooperation is generally constructive. Despite regular discussions concerning the distribution of voting weights, the IMF and the WB are similarly able to carry out their mandates in an effective manner, for example by investing in or providing loans to developing countries.

2.8 Conclusion

The multilateral system that has served the Kingdom so well is changing due to the realignment of the global balance of power. The current system is under pressure. Russia's disregard for the principles of the UN Charter and international law in its war against Ukraine is the most recent and poignant example of this. The international rules-based order has also become more unpredictable, as states feel less bound by rules (or at least by the traditional rules) or deliberately violate them. This has led to uncertainty and instability in international relations for the Kingdom and other countries. Efforts to effectively tackle global challenges such as climate change, cyber security and pandemics are therefore at risk.

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At the same time, key aspects of multilateral cooperation remain intact, operational and effective in a wide range of policy areas. In addition, a large group of small and medium-sized countries are calling for the system to be strengthened to protect such cooperation from the 'whims' of the major powers. For many countries, multilateral institutions such as the UN provide the most important international platform for addressing the cross-border challenges they face. Unlike the Netherlands, they do not always have access to powerful regional and/or thematic organisations, such as the EU and NATO, that serve as a basis for close partnerships. This is another reason why it is important that globally trusted rules-based institutions remain anchored in today's dynamic constellation of geopolitical forces.

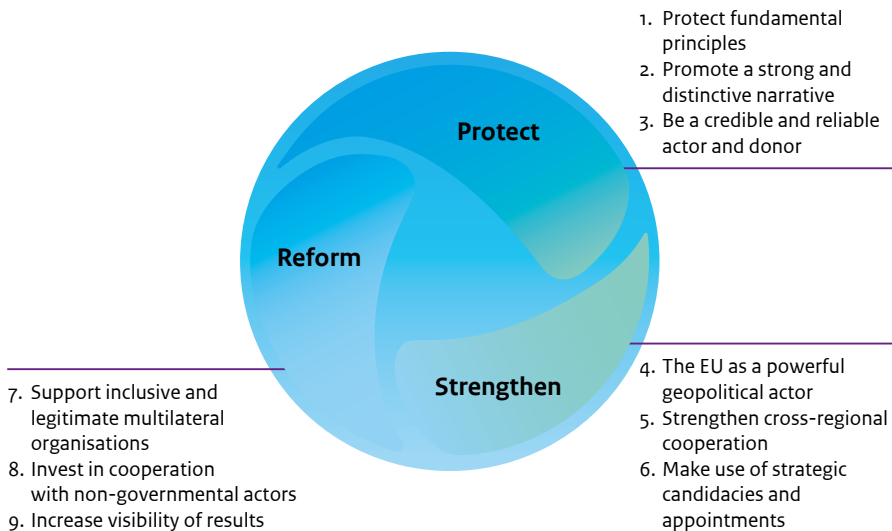
Based on the principles that matter to it most, the Kingdom will have to strategically adapt or, where appropriate, fine-tune its priorities, policy instruments and partnerships and support the reform plans of the multilateral organisations. This is discussed in greater depth in the following chapters.

3.

Strategic approach:
protect, strengthen and
reform

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, a new strategic framework is required to explain how the Kingdom aims to implement its policy on multilateralism in the coming years. Against the backdrop of the above-mentioned shifts in the balance of power, the Kingdom wants to work together with like-minded and new partners to foster a modern, inclusive and effective rules-based multilateral system, without giving up on key concepts such as the international legal order and human rights in the process. For this purpose, it is not enough to work exclusively with traditionally like-minded parties: it is imperative to also look beyond this circle for other partners that can provide support in multilateral negotiations. This requires a strategic approach that focuses on finding connections between the various policy areas and the interests of a larger pool of strategic actors.

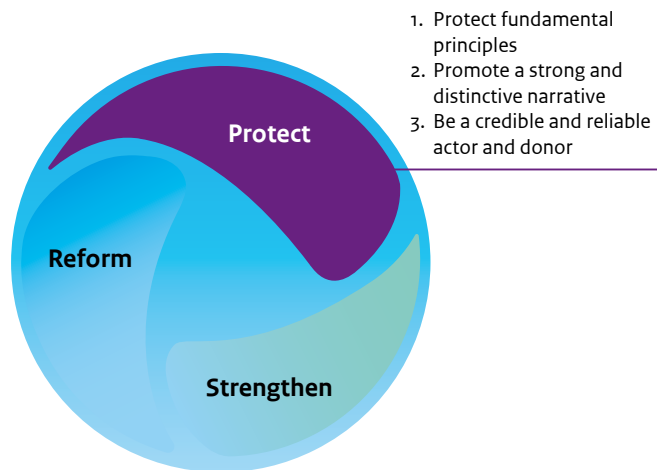
The new strategic framework provides a structure for the Kingdom's efforts. It is based on three pillars – **protect, strengthen and reform** – that are not always strictly segregated but instead overlap with each other. The Kingdom cannot be equally active in all areas, and decisions will have to be made about where we take the lead ourselves and where we leave this to allies or other like-minded parties.



3.1 Protect

Both the Kingdom and the EU are founded on certain fundamental principles, including democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and compliance with international law. Efforts to make decision-making within global multilateral organisations more inclusive may also increase the influence of authoritarian non-democratic regimes. With this in mind, it is important that the Netherlands and the EU continue to promote the multilateral system while at the same time upholding the core concepts of the international legal order and human rights. Fundamental principles of international law, as enshrined in the UN Charter, that are specific to multilateral institutions must be protected and, if necessary, restored, not least in the light of the changing global order. The Kingdom is committed to a rules-based global order in which international law, the UN Charter and the related statutes and mandates of UN institutions serve as guidelines. The Kingdom helps protect these institutions against undesirable politicisation.

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Objective 1: Protect fundamental principles

In order to protect the universal values and principles on which the multilateral system is based, the Kingdom must continue to proactively promote them using the various foreign policy instruments it has at its disposal.

The Kingdom is working together with like-minded parties to set boundaries in regard to behaviour and values on the part of certain countries that are at odds with the values of international law and the rule of law. Examples included taking legal action, initiating

multilateral sanctions or suspending a country's membership of multilateral forums. The strategy is two-fold: to seek dialogue, where possible, with countries that do not adhere to universal values and principles, and to actively confront them if that dialogue leads nowhere. This can be done through multilateral forums such as the UN Human Rights Council. The Kingdom will work to strengthen the existing instruments and expand them where necessary, as recently in the case of the establishment of an UN commission of inquiry into war crimes stemming from Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

When negotiating resolutions and other texts, it is important to use UN terminology ('mainstreaming'), uphold and prevent the erosion of existing legal interpretations and ensure that new terminology is in line with international legal standards.

Objective 2: Propagate a strong and distinctive narrative

The Kingdom will take early advantage of the development of new regulations and procedures, for example in the field of digital technology, which will play a key role in many areas of activity of multilateral organisations in the coming years. This requires the timely anticipation of international developments and initiatives and the timely development of close ties with like-minded partners with a view to launching processes in a consistent and careful manner, and propagating a distinctive narrative.

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Consistently exposing and where necessary countering harmful practices, such as the spread of disinformation and the inclusion of troubling or subversive language in resolutions, requires a strong and distinctive narrative at national (and EU) level that can be used to actively enter into dialogue with other partners. A strong narrative is one that relies on sound evidence and scientific fact, has solid legal underpinnings and supports the basic principles and objectives of the multilateral institutions. It should also have credibility and promote policy coherence. When it succeeds in adopting common positions within a short period of time, this is one of the EU's key strengths. Through its norms and values, which are linked to its internal legislation, the EU frequently manages to inspire a wider congregation of countries. A strong narrative can help convince other like-minded countries that their actions are considered subversive and provide them with an opportunity to convey their views and positions in the framework of a dialogue, thus encouraging them to join the search for common ground. In consultation with the EU, the Kingdom will co-develop narratives in various policy areas and, where appropriate, introduce and coordinate them with like-minded countries with common interests. Incidentally, the effectiveness of such narratives can be increased by engaging with the perspectives, as well as the specific interests and wishes, of the interlocutors concerned.

Objective 3: Be a credible and reliable actor and donor

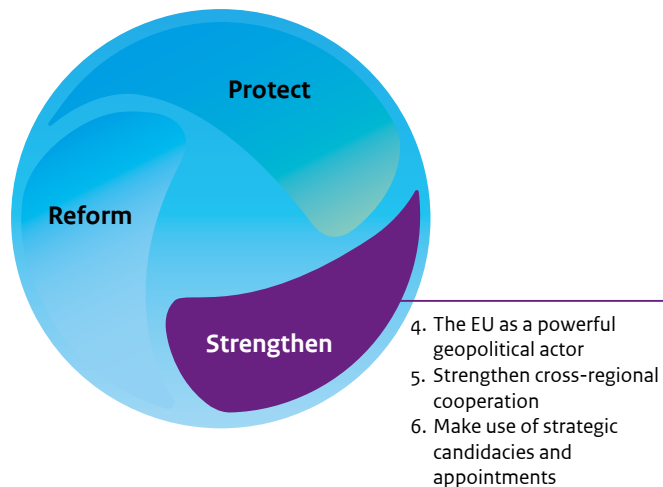
In order to protect and support collective and national interests, the Kingdom will remain a credible and reliable partner of and donor to multilateral organisations and partner countries. It works with unearmarked donations wherever possible so that the efforts of the multilateral institutions can achieve their maximum effect rather than being

fragmented and weakened. For this to be possible, the Kingdom must be a permanent and significant fixture in the primary organisations when it comes to managing policy. In addition, it must comply and ensure compliance, both substantively and financially, with the treaties. The Kingdom is actively committed to implementing agreements that advance globally agreed goals and will conduct outreach activities to promote them. This will enhance transparency and increase the visibility of results. A clear explanation of this approach will also be included in the aforementioned narratives. This further requires that the Kingdom coordinates its efforts internally.

3.2 Strengthen

In order to strengthen its position, the Kingdom must collaborate with other countries. This requires diplomatic power and the leveraging of bilateral relations via the Kingdom's mission network. For the Netherlands, the best way to achieve this is through the EU. Given the current lack of consensus on potential reforms within the multilateral institutions and the wide range of views on multilateralism, the Kingdom will have to forge coalitions with (often larger) countries inside and outside the EU. Like-minded countries are countries that wish to collaborate on the basis of principles rooted in the rules-based international order. Democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, a level playing field and open markets are crucial in this regard. Cross-regional cooperation, including with less like-minded countries, is also very important.

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Objective 4: The EU as a powerful geopolitical actor

The EU can strengthen its leadership by acting as a coordinator, an honest broker and a bridge-builder. The EU's democratic and legislative powers are a valuable resource when it comes to building a better world, while its credibility as a peacemaker and its security and defence structures can contribute to multilateral efforts to promote, protect and maintain peace. However, this requires efficient coordination between the EU and its member states with regard to shared priorities, as well as a greater willingness, where appropriate, to fully utilise the EU's collective power to promote its values and priorities.

The EU should play a leading role in strengthening the rules-based multilateral order, with a particular emphasis on human rights, democracy, the rule of law, security, achieving the SDGs and tackling the three global environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

The Kingdom will continue to champion effective and credible EU action in multilateral institutions by facilitating the convergence of the member states' views on multilateral issues and promoting effective coordination between Brussels and the EU's representations to multilateral institutions. It will take a firm stance if EU interests in the multilateral arena come under pressure, for example by requesting votes more frequently in cases where red lines are crossed in negotiations. To increase the effectiveness of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Kingdom will continue to press for the introduction of majority decision-making. The integrated deployment of all policy instruments (in the areas of politics, development cooperation and trade) and the linking of relevant dossiers could help enhance the effectiveness of EU action. In addition, the Kingdom will encourage strategic cooperation with allies, and with like-minded and new partners (see also the next objective) as well as promoting multilateral-bilateral coordination. For example, if multilateral negotiations are not proceeding smoothly or if EU positions need to be reinforced, bilateral interventions can play a key role in finding common solutions. The Kingdom will actively contribute to the coordination of EU candidates for positions within UN bodies.

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Objective 5: Strengthen cross-regional cooperation

Multilateralism is often a numbers game in which the amount of votes achieved is decisive, although consensus is also frequently sought. It appears that divisions in the UNSC will remain substantial in the years ahead, due to shifting ideological, geopolitical and economic interests. As a result, issues will generally end up in the UNGA, where all countries have an equal vote. Voting patterns in the IFIs may also change in the next few years due to the increasing economic power of emerging countries. This provides medium-sized powers such as the Kingdom, but also the EU, with opportunities to establish special coalitions to bolster support for international action on issues that are important to them. However, this will require more coherent action at bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral level by allies, like-minded countries and regional groups.

Close strategic cooperation with allies

The Kingdom is a medium-sized power and should play a key role, together with its allies and partners, in promoting the interests described in chapter 4. The Kingdom's natural partners are countries that adhere to values such as freedom, democracy and market economics and have entered into a mutual security pact with the Netherlands. In other words, such cooperation is both value-based and alliance-based. Discussions on further forms of cooperation are currently taking place, for example in the area of strategic efforts to bolster democracy, collaboration on candidacies for senior appointments, coalition building and the prompt exchange of knowledge and information.

Developing a broader dialogue with other partners

It is imperative to expand and strengthen cooperation with other partners and develop a common agenda. This requires investment in bilateral relations in which the Kingdom listens carefully to its partners to gain insight into their concerns and interests and subsequently translates those shared interests into action in multilateral forums. Practical examples include involving other countries in decision-making in a timely manner, actively approaching them for joint statements and supporting them on issues that matter to them. This requires investment at both bilateral and multilateral level in the pursuit of a common agenda based on shared interests. This will sometimes need to be accompanied by a willingness to make compromises that are not always entirely in line with the Kingdom's own priorities but are nevertheless vital to protecting national and collective interests as effectively as possible. The choices that the Kingdom makes in this regard will be determined by the importance of the relevant interests and the nature of the risks for the Kingdom. The Kingdom will apply this general principle to individual policy areas and organisations in the agreements it concludes in the context of broader partnerships.

Many current crises are linked to water: food becomes more expensive when harvests fail, sustainable forms of energy are reliant on water, and climate change and conflicts both call for a better distribution of water.

Current and future challenges in this area require a nationally and internationally agreed approach that goes beyond 'business as usual'.

In this context, the Netherlands and Tajikistan will co-host the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York. This requires the Netherlands to work closely with a country that, for historical reasons, works hand-in-hand with – and is influenced by – Russia at political, economic and military level.

This is nonetheless precisely the kind of cooperation that is vital to protecting common interests.

The obvious place to start is with countries that share the aforementioned values and score highly on democracy.¹⁶ Cooperation should also be deepened with democratic emerging economies, such as India, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico. Participation in the G20 creates opportunities to collaborate with them. Countries that are influential within their own regions are also an interesting target group. A good example is Kenya, which not only serves as a stabilising factor in the Horn of Africa but also occupies an influential position in the East African Community (EAC) and the African Union (AU), as well as a non-permanent seat on the UNSC.

The Kingdom will devote particular attention to developing a more strategic relationship with countries in the Indo-Pacific region (such as Japan, South Korea and Australia, in addition to the aforementioned India and Indonesia) and various African countries. Other options include countries that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the G-77 group of developing countries at the UN and those of its members that have joined the Alliance for Multilateralism. Given the value they attach to the various parts of the UN agenda, on the one hand, and their bilateral relations with the superpowers, on the other, the NAM countries will generally seek to navigate between the various positions. Instead of forcing them to choose, the aim is to convince them that we have a lot to offer as an equal partner in many areas, including trade and investment, innovation, achieving the SDGs, humanitarian aid, public health, digitalisation and climate adaptation. The SDGs are an important rallying point in this connection. For example, the Kingdom is investing in the multilateral integration and coordination of the global roadmap to accelerate action on SDG 7 as a way of harmonising the global energy transition agenda. It is also cultivating relations with like-minded countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The SIDS also remain relevant partners. The Caribbean countries and other SIDS often have common goals, ensuring the continued importance of a coordinated multilateral approach.

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Despite some major differences of opinion, multilateral cooperation with China also remains important, especially on issues such as achieving the global climate goals. As a global actor, China is indispensable when it comes to tackling global challenges on the basis of shared interests. Since the economies of China and Europe are closely linked, there are also powerful incentives to continue working together in the economic field.

Regional groups

Multilateral institutions operate in regional (geopolitical) groups. The Kingdom belongs to the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG)¹⁷ within the UN and to similar groups of states within other multilateral organisations, such as the ILO's group of industrialised market economy countries (IMEC). Within the IFIs, it participates in 'EU++' consultations where positions are discussed and coordinated.

¹⁶ Countries with a score of 7 or higher on the EIU Democracy Index produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

¹⁷ The WEOG consists of 28 member states, mainly from Western Europe but also from Oceania (Australia and New Zealand), North America (Canada; and the US holds observer status) and Western Asia (Israel and Türkiye).

Political context is more important than ever. Multilateralism remains a matter of give and take. The Netherlands will have to make concessions on issues concerning the core interests of others in order to gain something in return on issues concerning our core interests. In practice, this may also lead to dilemmas between, say, strategic national interests and core values.

Benelux cooperation in multilateral forums can be expanded further, for example by means of joint declarations in the UNGA. Experience shows that joint declarations have a greater impact than individual ones, in part because groups of states always speak first. Other options include burden sharing and information sharing. A further possibility involves exploring opportunities for policy coordination and cooperation between the Benelux and other like-minded European groups – such as the Nordics (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland) and the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) – on predetermined issues, albeit without undermining EU efforts. In addition to this, the Kingdom is an observer to the OAS, and several Caribbean countries are associate members of regional organisations in the western hemisphere. In this context, it is important to coordinate on a regular basis with like-minded countries within one's own region and within regional and international organisations, and to act in concert where possible.

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Within the IFIs, the Kingdom is represented in 'constituencies'. These are groups of countries that collectively cast a single vote in the governing bodies of these institutions. The composition of these constituencies differs from organisation to organisation. In a number of cases, the Kingdom provides the director who occupies a seat on the organisation's governing body on behalf of the constituency. Depending on the constituency, the Kingdom works together with both like-minded and other countries.

In order to effectively promote the Kingdom's interests at multilateral level, it is important to have a seat at the right table. Temporary membership of the governing body of a UN institution, the appointment of Dutch nationals to strategically selected positions within UN institutions and participation in the G20 are all suitable instruments in this regard.

Objective 6: Make use of strategic candidacies and appointments

The Kingdom will draw up a government-wide strategy on candidacies for 2023-2025, with a focus on UN positions for which the Kingdom needs to be elected by the member states or contracting parties. The Kingdom must put itself forward and campaign to be elected. Trading support with other countries in order to secure sufficient votes is a key part of this strategy.

In the past, competition for these kinds of UN positions was less intense. Countries often came to mutual agreements on the allocation of terms of office so that there were only

as many candidates as there were seats. The multilateral playing field has changed in this respect too. Fierce competition is increasingly common, with more candidates than available seats. As a result, more campaigning is now needed to win election. In addition, many countries are running increasingly transactional campaigns. The Kingdom welcomes competition, as it enhances the democratic character of the elections, but it also requires more strategic coordination with partners and allies. The Netherlands will work actively to promote the coordination of candidacies and appointments within the Kingdom and the EU, as well as with other partners and allies. It is developing a new government-wide strategy on appointments for 2023-2026. The appointment of Dutch nationals to strategic positions within key multilateral organisations will help ensure support within these organisations for the Kingdom's aforementioned values and interests. As part of this process, attention will also be paid to positions that oversee the standard-setting character of the organisation concerned. Both strategies are based on the priorities set out in the coalition agreement and the aforementioned policy documents.

The Kingdom in the Human Rights Council in 2024

The Kingdom attaches great importance to human rights everywhere. We are particularly committed to protecting freedom of expression, women's rights and LGBTIQ+ rights, freedom of religion and belief, human rights defenders and the right to a fair trial. The elections will take place in October 2023.

3.3 Reform

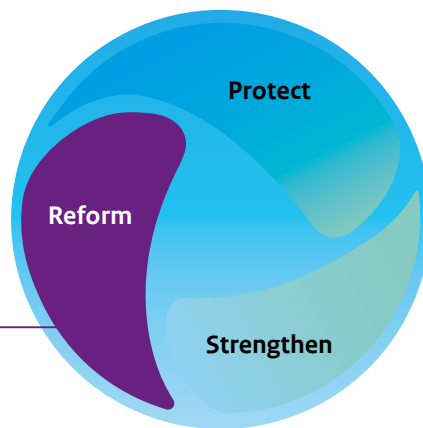
The multilateral order needs to be revitalised to make it fit for purpose, so that it can cope with the global challenges and geopolitics of the 21st century.

In order to perform their role, multilateral institutions require the trust and approval of all actors. They can only function to their full potential and be held accountable by their members if all relevant parties regard the rules as binding and do not undermine their authority. Credibility and reliability are essential for political and public support. Efforts to preserve and where necessary restore the legitimacy of the institutions are only likely to succeed if the system can transform itself into one that is more representative, coherent, efficient and effective, a system whose operation in practice does not undermine the visions and missions of the various organisations as laid down in their treaties and statutes. In order to be legitimate and inclusive, multilateral organisations must also satisfy the public's increasing demands for transparency, quality and performance.

The publication of *Our Common Agenda* has given fresh impetus to efforts to reform the UN and its organisations.¹⁸ In order to give this vision the best possible chance of succeeding over the next 25 years, the UNSG has called on countries to endorse ‘a renewed social contract anchored in human rights’. The foundations of this social contract are (a) trust; (b) inclusion, protection and participation; and (c) measuring and valuing sustainable development for people and planet.

Together with the EU, the Kingdom will work to support *Our Common Agenda*, modernise the WTO, strengthen the global health system and foster close cooperation between European financial institutions and other international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. In addition, the Kingdom will urge the multilateral institutions to increase accountability, for example through the UN Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) Accountability Framework. Together with the EU, it will continue to highlight the added value of the institutions in their role as standard-setting, implementing and coordinating organisations. The universal values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter will serve as guidelines in this regard.

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7. Support inclusive and legitimate multilateral organisations
8. Invest in cooperation with non-governmental actors
9. Increase visibility of results

Objective 7: Support inclusive and legitimate multilateral organisations

The Kingdom is a supporter of inclusive organisations. This does not necessarily mean that all differences should be eliminated; it means that they can be dealt with effectively by creating a level playing field. Inclusion is about listening and connecting, but also about taking decisive action, setting boundaries and leadership. The Kingdom will play its part by

¹⁸ [Our Common Agenda](#), Report of the Secretary General, United Nations, 2021.

strengthening and expanding cooperation with like-minded and new partners and non-governmental actors.

Reforming the UNSC is vital to breaking the current impasse and thus strengthening the legitimacy of the UN in general and the UNSC in particular. The Kingdom supports various initiatives intended to improve the representation of the UN membership on the UNSC and ensure greater compliance with its mandate. The Kingdom also supports proposals aimed at abandoning the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities, such as the Franco-Mexican initiative to refrain from using the veto in the case of resolutions aimed at stopping grave violations of humanitarian law.

When it comes to reforms, the UN has already accomplished a great deal in recent years. The integration of the human rights-based approach throughout the UN system is one of the most significant achievements in this regard. The Kingdom actively supports UN reforms aimed at strengthening the UN development system and invests in various initiatives, such as the Joint SDG Fund and the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) system, to ensure the UN remains fit for purpose. The Kingdom will continue to push for the consolidation and further implementation of these reforms both within UN institutions – by means of interventions and by exerting control over the relevant administrative and supervisory bodies – and at the overarching systemic level. It is important to promote these investments in financial, programmatic and management reform and generate wider support and long-term funding among UN member states at a time of declining Official Development Assistance (ODA) volumes and constant pressure on the multilateral system.

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The Kingdom is also working to reform and strengthen the WTO. Such efforts include the development of new WTO rules to ensure a global level playing field, the further integration of sustainability within the WTO and the restoration and reform of the dispute settlement system. The Kingdom also believes it is important to focus more within the WTO on key societal challenges, such as climate change and digitalisation (the recent agreement to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies is a good example of this). This could be achieved, for example, by concluding agreements on environmental goods and services and a plurilateral agreement on e-commerce. Finally, broad progress in the area of trade and health is a key priority. Decision-making within the WTO takes place by consensus. This means that a single member can block new agreements. The Kingdom therefore sees plurilateral initiatives – which allow WTO members to decide individually whether or not they wish to participate – as a way to reform the multilateral trading system in an inclusive and transparent manner in cases where multilateral efforts are unsuccessful. For example, a plurilateral agreement on e-commerce is currently being negotiated, and three plurilateral initiatives in the areas of sustainability, the environment and trade were launched in December 2021. The Kingdom supports these initiatives.

Objective 8: Invest in cooperation with non-governmental actors

A growing number of different non-state parties are active at multilateral level, and the Kingdom is all in favour of organisations that can make a useful contribution. Businesses are becoming more closely involved in solving societal problems, as demonstrated by their commitment to the SDGs and the shift in focus from shareholder value to stakeholder value. At international level, for example, the private sector is increasingly involved in making progress in international negotiations on the Paris Agreement. Knowledge institutions conduct research into societal challenges in order to find sustainable solutions, thus expediting the achievement of the SDGs. Trade unions and employers' organisations also seek to raise their profile by promoting various socioeconomic issues. Even young people and religious institutions such as the Vatican are taking on proactive roles in this area, respectively, by initiating climate protests and focusing specifically on Catholic countries, for example in South America. At the same time, it is clear that some authoritarian countries want to limit the participation of non-state actors as much as possible, including within the multilateral system. There are no rules on the participation of such actors within the UN. The Kingdom will have to continuously push for such involvement and urge the UN to develop inclusive processes, such as those that exist for NGOs that apply for advisory status within UN organisations. All this must explicitly be done in consultation with like-minded parties.

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At domestic level, the Netherlands pursues dialogue and cooperation with civil society, for example through its Power of Voices programme. In other countries, it will invest further, via the mission network, in efforts to deepen and broaden partnerships with non-governmental actors to protect fundamental principles and foster an effective and efficient multilateral system that can meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. For Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, building such partnerships is also extremely important.

Influential think tanks, researchers, the cultural sector, independent opinion makers and journalists uncover social trends and can contribute to behavioural change in the framework of social transitions. They can also help shape opinion in relevant countries and are indispensable in combating disinformation. When spread via social media, disinformation is a powerful tool for nurturing anti-Western and anti-democratic ideas. This new reality calls for a more inclusive approach to global issues. Technology companies such as Google, Facebook and Twitter play a major part in the dissemination of disinformation, and have a key role to play in tackling it too. They will have to be involved in addressing this problem.

Objective 9: Increase visibility of results

Research by the Clingendael Institute shows that there is support for multilateral cooperation in our society. This is particularly true when it comes to finding solutions to global challenges such as climate change and COVID-19, but also with regard to development cooperation. Nevertheless, such support needs to be earned every day, for example by making international cooperation more effective and raising its

visibility. Diplomacy no longer takes place exclusively behind closed doors. Strategic communication is crucial when it comes to defining our goals and results, informing the public in a transparent manner and influencing decision-making at international level. In addition to the efforts outlined under Objective 3, the Kingdom, the EU and multilateral institutions must start communicating more effectively and more proactively with the outside world, on the basis of stronger narratives and tangible results, including when it comes to protecting fundamental principles, promoting collective interests and disseminating truthful and factual information.

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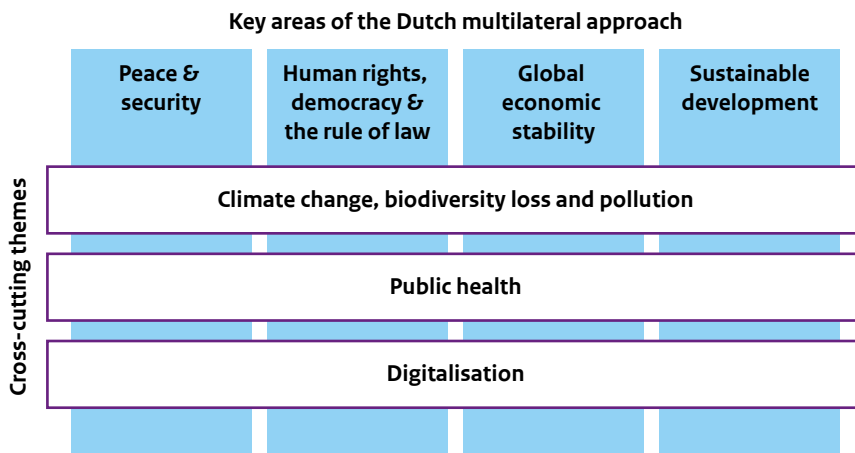
The Kingdom's policy efforts

Key objectives of the multilateral strategy:

1. The Kingdom will work to foster a modern system of inclusive and effective multilateral cooperation that places global organisations at the centre.
2. Alongside collective interests, the Kingdom will protect, promote and advance its national interests through the multilateral system.
3. At interministerial level, the Kingdom will promote a multilateral policy in which its strategic objectives, policy focus and use of the wide range of instruments at its disposal are closely linked and mutually reinforce each other.

The Kingdom intends to apply the new strategic framework described in chapter 3 to its current policy efforts in global multilateral forums. The present chapter describes the most urgent challenges in each area of multilateral activity and presents an initial attempt to integrate the three pillars described in chapter 3 into the new policy framework.

The Kingdom’s policy efforts in the field of multilateralism are based on the government’s coalition agreement, the Foreign Affairs Policy Letter and various policy documents including the FTDC-policy document, the Integrated International Security Strategy, the Global Climate Strategy, the Policy Document on Human Rights, the Digitalisation Strategy and the Global Health Strategy. The Kingdom’s policy efforts currently encompass four key areas and three cross-cutting themes (see illustration below). The SDGs serve as guidelines in this regard. The promotion of women’s rights and gender equality, including equal rights for LGBTQI+ persons and minorities, forms an integral part of the Kingdom’s policy and policy efforts in the field of multilateralism, as explained in detail in the government’s letter to parliament on its feminist foreign policy.



4.1 Peace and security

Russia's war against Ukraine and the global multilateral system

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter. By targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, Russia is also violating international law on a massive scale, resulting in untold human suffering. In addition, it is hampering the proper functioning of the UN system (e.g. by using its veto in the UNSC by abusing the rules and playing pure power politics. This is having a profound impact on international relations. While concerns about the integrity and future of the rules-based order are nothing new, this conflict is forcing the Kingdom and like-minded parties to change the way they relate to the global multilateral system, which remains vital to our security and prosperity.

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The global security structure has become more complex and difficult to navigate because the balance of power is shifting. A new order is gradually taking shape, in which certain actors both want and are able to present themselves more clearly, whether individually or through coalitions. In addition, a growing number of countries are purposely declining to join permanent coalitions, since it is important for them to be able to work with various partners given their political, economic and military dependencies. Those dependencies can change depending on the policy theme and/or the region.

The way conflicts are conducted is also changing: increasingly they take place in the hybrid domain. In the case of hybrid threats, almost any instrument can theoretically be used to effectively pressurise or harm another party. Examples of this include information and disinformation, foreign investment aimed at gaining influence in vital industries, military intimidation and deliberately creating migration flows.

Within the UN, decision-making processes in the field of security have not run smoothly in recent years. UNSC's role has been complicated by several factors, including a lack of political will to compromise and the repeated use of the permanent members' right of veto, especially by Russia.

The UN Charter codifies the major principles of international relations, such as the obligation 'to maintain international peace and security' (article 1). The UNSC is the primary decision-making body in various fields, including crisis management and prevention and the granting of mandates for UN peacekeeping operations, political missions and sanctions regimes. The UNSC also plays an important role in policymaking and the development of international law.

Although the UNSC is going through a difficult period, the Kingdom will continue investing in its relations with members of the Council in order to promote policy priorities and counteract the Council's dwindling effectiveness. In addition, the Kingdom and its partners are calling for the implementation of a resolution, adopted on 26 April 2022, deciding that the UNGA shall convene as soon as a permanent member of the UNSC has cast a veto. It is important that the UNGA is used as a platform to disseminate objective information, for example through briefings by Special Representatives of the UNSG, experts from UN agencies and organisations, and representatives of civil society. Meetings of the UNSC can be followed online by countries, civil society and the general public. The Kingdom wants to ensure that the UNSC's public presence can be used to call to account – and if necessary politically isolate – countries that violate international law or spread disinformation in the UNSC.

In addition to the UNSC and UNGA, the Kingdom attaches great importance to global multilateral treaties and their implementing organisations. Independent verification mechanisms, such as the IAEA and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), monitor international standards and in doing so promote international peace and security. Like other multilateral institutions, however, these forums are being adversely affected by the current tensions and obstructionism at international level. This became clear, for example, during the General Assembly of the IAEA, where various countries attempted to undermine the agency's independent status, with the ultimate objective of reducing its ability to monitor compliance with existing non-proliferation agreements. If these institutions are unable to perform their duties, the risk of impunity for grave violations of international treaties and agreements will increase.

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The Netherlands invests in UN peacekeeping missions and crisis management operations, both financially and by contributing military personnel, police officers and civilian experts. Its efforts focus primarily on the unstable regions on Europe's periphery, especially those where the security and interests of the Kingdom are at stake. The Netherlands also remains committed to reforming UN peacekeeping missions in accordance with the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the A4P+ priorities for 2021-2023.

The Netherlands works closely with international partners on counterterrorism, and preventing violent extremism and right-wing extremism, including through the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the Global Coalition against Daesh, within the UN (e.g. through the UN Office on Counterterrorism (UNOCT), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)), NATO and the EU.

4.2 Human rights, democracy and the international legal order

The preceding analysis presented in this policy document indicates that the fundamental principles of the international legal order are being eroded. Powers that prioritise the role of the state – using governance models built on extensive surveillance and control – are increasingly prominent in this order and are putting their own stamp on interaction and compliance practices. Existing international agreements that are not (or no longer) to their liking are being questioned, suspended or even abandoned. This also undermines the established international legal interpretation of human rights. One consequence of this is that relations in the UN human rights forums are now highly polarised and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to apply the standards as intended.

The implications of the growing disregard for and alteration of international rules of conduct are potentially enormous. Russia's aggression against Ukraine shows what disruptive effects are wrought when even the UN Charter – the document on which many other international rules are based – is brushed aside. First and foremost, of course, Russia is denying Ukraine's population and government their fundamental right to govern their country as they wish. A further consequence is that other countries are obliged to take in large numbers of refugees.

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In addition to the above, actions such as ignoring international court rulings or investigations by the UN Human Rights Council and other international organisations, not to mention the routine violation of universal human rights, are contributing to the widening gulf between the theory and practice of a rules-based international order. At multilateral level, the Kingdom is working to maintain the international legal order and to that end speaks out in the relevant forums against human rights violations.

Human rights, democracy and the legal order are closely connected and form a key foundation of stable and prosperous societies. Promoting these values is not just a moral duty but also provides the Kingdom with a more predictable and secure international environment. At global level, the Kingdom therefore remains committed to protecting and promoting human rights, democracy and a strong international legal order in which existing agreements are respected (and where necessary enhanced) and new agreements are concluded.

Effectiveness is a key criterion, and the Kingdom always has a broad range of instruments at its disposal in this area (including various forms of public and quiet diplomacy). When deploying these instruments, the Kingdom will always take into account how other partners operate and how the impact of its efforts can be maximised through joint action.

Human rights

The Kingdom is fully resolved to continue investing in UN human rights forums and instruments based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this context, the Kingdom is again running for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council (for the 2024-2026 period). In order to guarantee the effectiveness and integrity of this body, the Kingdom has proposed that candidates for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council be required to present themselves to the UNGA and render account for their contribution to the promotion of human rights – both around the world and domestically – at the end of their tenure. In this context, it is important that ‘Western’ countries, in particular, continue to take a hard look at their own challenges in the field of human rights and their compliance with the relevant treaties. This also applies to the Kingdom. Openness on such issues could help increase the willingness of third countries to engage in a dialogue on human rights.

The Kingdom will actively seek to establish a dialogue with third countries and engage with them in a constructive and critical manner with a view to finding compromises based on reciprocal support. Examples of this include a more proactive approach to socioeconomic and cultural rights. In this context, the Kingdom needs to highlight more effectively the ways in which its international efforts – at bilateral and EU level – in the areas of inclusiveness, food security, healthcare, labour rights and education are contributing to the associated civil rights.

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Democracy, freedom of the media and the safety of researchers

Human rights defenders and journalists (media workers) play an important role in exposing human rights violations, protecting vulnerable groups and forcing governments to take responsibility. Promoting media freedom is one of the priorities of the Kingdom’s human rights policy. Diplomatic and political efforts are complemented by the use of financial resources in collaboration with civil society organisations. The Netherlands plays a leading role in the Media Freedom Coalition and the Freedom Online Coalition with a view to combating restrictions on media freedom and supporting efforts aimed at improving access to information and recognising disinformation. Media freedom is also a priority in the context of the Summit for Democracy led by the United States.

Scientists and researchers are increasingly under threat. This not only endangers their personal safety but also puts pressure on research and academic freedom. At the same time, however, international scientific cooperation is essential both for identifying and analysing major global challenges, and for finding sustainable solutions to such challenges. The Kingdom will therefore continue working at multilateral level to protect scientists and researchers.¹⁹

¹⁹ For example through UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Equal rights

In keeping with its feminist foreign policy,²⁰ the Kingdom is working to promote equal rights for women, girls and LGBTIQ+ persons as the foundation for an inclusive, open society based on democratic principles. The Kingdom is firmly committed to defending these rights and is leading efforts to counter the resistance of conservative countries to them by means of public and quiet diplomacy. One way it does so is via the Equal Rights Coalition. The Kingdom will continue to combat all forms of racism and discrimination at multilateral level. In this regard, it is important to increase public awareness of this issue. The same applies to the negative consequences of the colonial past that continue to affect society to this day. In this connection, the Kingdom supports the UNGA resolution on the International Decade for People of African Descent.²¹ It is important that all persons (including vulnerable persons) are fully able to exercise their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. In addition, the Kingdom is committed to promoting freedom of religion and belief. In order to achieve this, the Netherlands is actively involved in the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance, a diplomatic partnership between 37 countries, and the International Contact Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief, an informal platform that brings together national governments and the responsible UN Rapporteur on issues relating to freedom of religion or belief.

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Feminist foreign policy

The Kingdom's feminist foreign policy focuses on promoting the 'four Rs': *rights* (protecting women's rights), *resources* (funding must also benefit women), *representation* (women must be actively involved in the formulation and implementation of policy) and *reality check* (are there any unforeseen negative consequences for women).

Combating impunity

When it comes to bolstering the international legal order, efforts to combat impunity for international crimes and ensure accountability are an explicit priority. The international legal order will be strengthened by the prosecution of persons accused of war crimes, terrorism, crimes against humanity and genocide. Such efforts help restore the rule of law, have a deterrent effect, provide a measure of redress to victims and contribute to lasting peace. The gathering of documentation and evidence (as in the case of human rights violations in Syria and the criminal proceedings against those responsible for the downing of flight MH17) is very important in this regard. The Kingdom supports such activities both politically and financially. A recent example of this is the Netherlands' active role in

²⁰ [Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to the Senate of the States General on feminist foreign policy](#), Parliamentary Paper 35 697, 13 May 2022 (in Dutch).

²¹ UN General Assembly resolution [69/16: Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent](#), Annex, para. 9(a).

gathering evidence and promoting accountability with regard to war crimes in Ukraine. In addition, the Netherlands is pushing for the conclusion of a new treaty aimed at enhancing international cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of international crimes.

Fighting grand corruption

Various forms of corruption, such as the misuse of public funds and powers for personal gain, are undermining democracy and the rule of law in a growing number of countries. This poses a direct threat to national and international prosperity, stability and security. The fight against petty and grand corruption has grown increasingly relevant, not least in the EU debate on the rule of law. A robust prevention and compliance-oriented anti-corruption framework is essential in this regard. Together with like-minded partners such as Canada and Ecuador, the Kingdom is therefore urging that this aspect of the international legal order be strengthened by reviewing international anti-corruption instruments to see what concrete improvements are appropriate and feasible.

4.3 Global economic stability and a reliable international trade system

Global economic outlook

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According to the IMF,²² the global economic outlook deteriorated sharply in 2022. Growth forecasts for the coming years have been downgraded, in some cases significantly. The current cost of living crisis, the tightening of financing conditions, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine are all weighing on the outlook. The growth forecast of 3.2% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023 is the worst since 2001, with the exception of the global financial crisis and the first acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to projections presented in the Regional Economic Outlook for the Western Hemisphere, the Caribbean will experience an uneven recovery from the pandemic and rising inflationary pressure.²³ Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues to impact the entire world economy by driving up energy and food prices. Rising inflation is leading to higher interest rates and causing turmoil in the financial markets. High levels of government spending during the pandemic and rising interest rates are restricting the financial scope of many countries to combat the growth slowdown. In addition to all this, international supply chains are experiencing disruptions.

The IMF notes that this situation is being exacerbated by the consequences of the war in Ukraine, the risk of a resurgence of the pandemic, the slowdown in China's economic growth and a rise in inflation and interest rates that has rendered rampant debt unsustainable. This is severely affecting the economic development of less developed countries in particular. The expectation is that the WB, the IMF and the regional

²² IMF, [World Economic Outlook](#), April 2022.

²³ IMF, [Regional Economic Outlook for the Western Hemisphere](#), April 2022.

development banks will be called upon to support the global economy in the coming years by providing emergency financing in their role as major systemic multilateral organisations. At the same time, these institutions are not immune to the effects of power shifts in the global order. In its report, the IMF accordingly draws attention to the risk that the global economy could break up into different geopolitical blocs – each with its own technological standards, payment systems and reserve currencies. In this context, the G20 is a key international coordination forum for tackling global economic challenges.

As a shareholder in various IFIs, the Kingdom works to ensure that these bodies have sufficient capital to perform their tasks and implement their programmes in order to promote global financial and economic stability and contribute to the economic development of less developed countries. Through multilateral and other channels, the government will focus specifically on the global debt problem, the impact of climate change and efforts to mitigate the effects of the war in Ukraine on global food security.

In addition, government policy will continue to focus on creating a future-proof trade and investment system that promotes a level playing field, economic resilience, open markets and the two transitions that will shape the economy of the future: digitalisation and sustainability.

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The global debt problem

Within multilateral institutions, the Netherlands is working to highlight the global debt problem, including the increasing use of complex debt structures and high levels of government debt. According to the IMF and the WB, more than half of all low-income countries already have, or are in danger of developing, unsustainable levels of debt. Although absolute debt levels are not as high as they were in the 1990s, the outlook is worrying. Climbing interest rates, rising food and commodity prices and a sharp increase in the value of the dollar are pushing up debt repayment costs. This not only affects low-income countries but increasingly affects middle-income countries as well. In 2021, for example, Ghana devoted 44% of government expenditure to paying off foreign loans, according to the IMF.²⁴ These mounting costs come at expense of vital investment in public health, poverty reduction and climate change.

In addition, the creditor landscape has evolved over the past few decades. In the past, Western creditors were united in the Paris Club, and IFIs such as the IMF and the WB were the largest creditors to developing countries. This homogeneous landscape made it relatively easy to conclude debt restructuring agreements. However, due to the ongoing

²⁴ [Ghana: 2021 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Ghana \(imf.org\).](#)

rise of non-traditional creditors, including private parties (particularly bondholders) and countries outside the Paris Club, such as China and India, debt restructuring agreements have become more complex.

In November 2020, the G20 and the Paris Club established the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) with a view to creating structural solutions to the global debt problem. In order to successfully tackle current debt vulnerabilities, it is imperative that all relevant creditors support the Common Framework. Concluding agreements on debt relief through this new multilateral framework has so far proved to be a slow process. The Netherlands will do its utmost at international level to improve the framework's implementation.

A future-proof trade and investment system

The rules-based multilateral trading system is vital to the Dutch economy. The WTO sits at the heart of this system and has demonstrated – through the adoption of a broad package of outcomes at the Ministerial Conference in Geneva in June 2022 – that it can cope with today's societal challenges. Nevertheless, like other multilateral institutions, the WTO is under pressure. Mistrust between developed and developing countries is increasing, and the legitimacy of existing rules is being called into question. Russia's war against Ukraine has made it even harder to achieve consensus within the WTO. In addition, due to the impasse over the appointment of new Appellate Body members in recent years, the WTO's dispute settlement system is not functioning properly.

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The Netherlands is pushing for a global level playing field, reform of the dispute settlement system and the further integration of sustainability within the WTO.

In addition, the Netherlands is pushing for the adoption of rules that facilitate new forms of trade, such as electronic commerce, within the WTO. Plurilateral agreements – known as Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) – are a way to achieve closer cooperation between like-minded countries in this area. For example, the JSI on e-commerce, through which the EU, the United States, China and other WTO members are seeking to facilitate electronic commerce and provide companies and consumers with greater certainty, is a priority for the Netherlands.

4.4 Sustainable development

International cooperation

For some time now, the world has not been on track to achieve the 17 multilaterally agreed SDGs by 2030. The COVID-19 crisis and Russia's aggression against Ukraine have led to a further, alarming deterioration in this regard and a rise in global inequality. According to the WB, more than 700 million people worldwide lived in poverty in 2020, partly as a

result of the pandemic.²⁵ The measures that countries are taking to achieve the targets set out in the Paris Climate Agreement and other multilateral environmental agreements are also still inadequate. The implementation of such agreements requires a commitment to multilateralism at policy level, including support for international development organisations and other bodies, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and implementation at national level.

The SDGs are a global compass for sustainable development, including efforts to combat poverty and inequality. The goal is to improve people's lives, with an emphasis on the individual and individual rights. The idea behind the SDGs is that no one should be left behind, and that everyone should be able to build towards a better future. This is expressed in the UN's 'Leave No One Behind' principle.

The UN development system assists the poorest member states in achieving the SDGs. The WB and the regional development banks are also indispensable partner organisations when it comes to achieving the SDGs in poorer countries and highly vulnerable SIDS. The development banks are equipped to make large-scale investments in developing countries in poverty reduction, infrastructure and global public goods, including climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, and food security. To this end, the Kingdom is an active shareholder in these institutions and focuses on promoting cooperation between the various organisations, based on their comparative advantages.

The UN is also instrumental in developing standards and norms that are essential to achieving the SDGs worldwide, including within the Kingdom. Besides making development assistance available, it is important that the Kingdom's policies are compatible with international efforts and promote – rather than hinder – progress on the SDGs in developing countries. At the same time, developing countries themselves should focus on building healthy, productive and sustainable economies that generate the tax revenue needed for investment. Private finance plays an increasingly important role in bridging the funding gap.

From aid to trade

An agenda that promotes coherence between aid and trade will also help tackle the root causes of poverty. Developing countries have long been of the opinion that the multilateral trading system is not up to this task, not least since the negotiations on the WTO Doha Development Agenda ground to a halt. Now they are experiencing the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine within their own borders. Many developing countries are requesting exemptions from existing obligations in the framework of ongoing negotiations. The Kingdom recognises the need

²⁵ WB Group, [Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course \(Overview\)](#), 2022.

to meet the demand for limited exceptions in this context, especially in the case of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS. If granted, these should be formulated on the basis of actual development needs. In principle, high-income countries and major economic and trading powers such as China should not be granted any exemptions.

The Kingdom promotes the integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system and collaborates with organisations such as the ILO, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) to help these countries improve their investment climate, comply with labour rights, support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) including women entrepreneurs, promote dialogue between employers and workers and facilitate decent work with a living wage. Here, too, the WB and the regional development banks are crucial partners when it comes to implementing the necessary economic reforms.

Emergency aid

Like so many multilateral environments, the humanitarian arena is becoming increasingly complex. The number of humanitarian emergencies around the world has reached a record high and continues to rise, mainly as a result of the increased number of conflicts. Climate change, inequality, infectious diseases and displacement are also playing an ever more significant role in this rise. However, increased demand for humanitarian assistance has resulted in a widening funding gap. International humanitarian law is also under pressure. Examples of this include the use of starvation of civilian populations as a weapon, and the increasing obstruction of humanitarian access and aid workers' room for manoeuvre by parties to armed conflicts.

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The Kingdom is therefore investing in enhanced multilateralism in this area too. UN organisations such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the WFP, UNHCR, WHO and UNICEF play a central role in the international emergency aid system, first and foremost by meeting people's immediate needs in cooperation with the Red Cross and other NGOs. At the same time, they serve as leaders in the wider humanitarian sector, work to maintain humanitarian norms and standards, and act as intermediaries when it comes to funding front-line aid workers. The UN's humanitarian mission has its roots in the ultimate example of multilateral diplomacy, the Geneva Conventions, which form the core of international humanitarian law.

Given the challenges facing the international humanitarian system and the complex nature of cross-border trends, the multilateral humanitarian system needs updating. There is a need for greater effectiveness and efficiency, and more attention should be devoted to the long-term impact of aid. This can be achieved, for example, by supporting and working with national and local humanitarian networks, promoting transparency on priority setting and increasing cohesion between development cooperation and emergency aid. Non-compliance with international humanitarian law and the violation of humanitarian principles are a cause for concern. The Kingdom will continue promoting compliance

with humanitarian law and the principles of humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality. This represents a major challenge in the shifting multilateral landscape.

Needless to say, the Kingdom will continue to fund emergency aid, with a focus on predictable and 'unearmarked' funding. This will help ensure that the UN and other humanitarian partners have timely access to resources that they can deploy in a flexible manner, where the need is greatest. This type of funding enables these organisations to quickly scale up their operations, as they did in Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Global food security

In 2020, an estimated 800 million people were chronically malnourished due to climate change, ecosystem degradation and conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine have further driven up food, energy and fertiliser prices and accelerated food insecurity. Following the invasion, the UN estimated that food prices could rise by a further 8-22% and that the number of people facing severe hunger could rise from 276 million to 323 million.

The Kingdom is helping to achieve the targets of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by 2030. Efforts in this area focus not only on supporting organisations that work to improve food cultivation, but also on facilitating food trade more effectively. The multilateral channel plays an important role in this context. Besides supporting the WFP, the FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Kingdom works closely with IFIs such as the WB and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as well as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). In addition, it actively participates in multilateral platforms and initiatives in the field of food security, including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the follow-up to the 2021 UN Food System Summit.

The UN has assumed a coordinating role in the current food and energy crisis by establishing the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. In addition, the FAO, the WFP and IFAD are actively translating their analyses and recommendations into action. The Netherlands will urge other multilateral institutions, such as the G7 and the EU, to ensure that their initiatives are compatible with these arrangements.

Migration

As a result of the aforementioned global challenges, the world is witnessing a large number of migratory movements,²⁶ and more than 100 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide.²⁷ Countries of origin, transit and destination therefore face enormous challenges, and the achievement of the related SDGs is becoming increasingly unlikely. The European and Dutch asylum and migration systems are under pressure, due in part to the influx of Syrian and Afghan refugees. In addition, the Netherlands is taking

²⁶ UN News, [UNHCR: A record 100 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, 23 May 2022](#).

²⁷ Ministry of Justice and Security, [State of Migration \(in Dutch\)](#).

in large numbers of Ukrainian refugees. A security, socioeconomic, political and migration crisis is also unfolding on the Kingdom's Caribbean border, in Venezuela, with more than 7 million people leaving the country since 2015.

In addition to limiting irregular migration and promoting return, a multilateral approach that tackles the underlying causes of migration is crucial to gaining a better grip on this issue, as is direct multilateral cooperation aimed at improving and strengthening legal and regular migration. The UN Refugee Convention, the UN Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the UN Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) provide an international framework for cooperation between countries of origin, transit, destination and reception. By creating a shared narrative on which to build, multilateral migration agreements also serve as a basis for bilateral cooperation, including migration partnerships, and efforts at EU level.

Given the current balance of power in the multilateral system, it is clear that countries of origin, transit and destination need to step up their efforts not only in regard to focusing on human rights but also when it comes to the challenges associated with irregular migration and reaching concrete agreements on migration management. To enhance their credibility in other multilateral contexts, it is important that these countries participate actively and constructively in discussions on the implementation of the two UN compacts. The Kingdom invests in and works closely with UN organisations and international financial institutions to combat irregular migration and tackle its causes in countries of origin, for example by investing in stability and good governance, climate adaptation and better socioeconomic prospects. In addition, the Netherlands is one of the largest donors to IOM, and works closely with the Organisation on such matters as the prevention of human trafficking and people smuggling, as well as voluntary return and reintegration. It also works with international humanitarian organisations and development organisations to develop long-term reception facilities in the region. Against this backdrop, the Netherlands has launched a unique partnership – known as PROSPECTS – with UNHCR, UNICEF, the ILO, the WB and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to foster practical cooperation aimed at improving the effectiveness of aid to refugees and host communities. Besides the above-mentioned organisations, Curaçao and Aruba also work together with other bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF).

Promoting economic resilience

International standards are vital to the competitiveness of the Dutch private sector. Standards ensure the compatibility of technologies, goods and services, lower trade barriers, guarantee safety and promote innovation. Because international companies must conform to EU standards if they want to serve the EU market, those standards also have an impact on countries outside Europe and thus on the transmission of our rules and values.

In recent years, geopolitical considerations have started to play a greater role in international standardisation forums. The risk in this regard is the potential adoption of standards that are not compatible with EU rules and values, and this would have various implications, such as putting European companies at a disadvantage. European state and non-state actors are less active in international standardisation forums compared with other actors, resulting in a loss of influence and the emergence of potentially risky strategic dependencies.

In order to address these risks, the Kingdom favours a more strategic approach to international standardisation.²⁸ The new EU Strategy on Standardisation will help maintain and strengthen Europe's technological leadership, competitiveness, security and open strategic autonomy.²⁹ The Kingdom is pushing for enhanced cooperation on standardisation with like-minded countries and favours a more active approach in international standardisation organisations, such as the ITU, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). It also wants Europe to have a stronger – and more exclusive – say within the European standardisation organisations.

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The Kingdom and the EU also aspire to protect key principles, such as the right to privacy, through international standards. At international level, for example, the Kingdom advocates maintaining the internet as a global public communication network that is open, free and secure. In this way, it aims to promote multilateral norms and standards that enhance the core functionality of the internet and protect human rights. The government also supports the multi-stakeholder model, which targets closer cooperation with businesses, civil society organisations and knowledge institutions.

When it comes to the Kingdom's efforts in multilateral organisations, it is important to also take account of EU initiatives relating to economic resilience in relation to open strategic autonomy. European instruments, such as the anti-coercion instrument, must comply with WTO rules. In addition, it is important to ensure coherence between, on the one hand, the pursuit of open strategic autonomy and the reduction of risky strategic dependencies, and, on the other, policies on development cooperation and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC). In the context of RBC, the Kingdom is working to convince its implementing partners, such as the IFIs, to bring their instruments fully into line with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

²⁸ [Assessment by the Working Group for the Assessment of New Commission Proposals on the Communication from the Commission on a European Strategy on Standardisation](#) (in Dutch).

²⁹ European Commission, [An EU Strategy on Standardisation: Setting Global Standards in Support of a Resilient, Green and Digital EU Single Market](#), Brussels, February 2022.

4.5 Cross-cutting themes

Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges facing the world today. It affects every country and every continent. This planetary crisis is closely linked to two others: biodiversity loss and pollution. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are basic prerequisites for a healthy economy, public health and an effective climate change strategy. They also form the basis of our planet's resilience to the effects of climate change. Soil, water and air pollution pose a direct threat to human health. Tens of millions of people die every year from the effects of air pollution, and water pollution – like climate change and biodiversity loss – contributes to the decreasing availability of drinking water, especially for the world's poorest people. International scientific cooperation through multilateral forums is crucial for finding sustainable solutions.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) guides international efforts to combat climate change and limit global warming, in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement. The Kingdom attaches great importance to these multilateral agreements on the grounds that climate change requires collective action and because it is important for open economies like our own that we take international steps jointly. Examples of this include the creation of a level playing field for the private sector, as well as measures to promote the security of climate-vulnerable countries on Europe's periphery, such as in the Sahel and North Africa and the Middle East, as well as the SIDS. For these reasons, the integrated approach to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution remains a key theme of the Kingdom's efforts vis-à-vis the multilateral banks. The funding provided by the banks, which is conditional on the conclusion of policy agreements with developing countries, is essential in helping these countries accelerate their climate transitions. In line with one of the policy efforts listed in the new FTDC policy document, the Netherlands is urging multilateral banks to be more ambitious in this area. In addition, the Kingdom is asking multilateral investors to promote solutions to climate problems and increase private sector access to multilateral climate finance. The Kingdom will work to ensure that financial institutions are transparent about risks and impacts, and that they bring their investments into line with the Paris Climate Agreement and the new Global Biodiversity Framework.³⁰

The EU Council conclusions on climate diplomacy³¹ and our contribution to the Team Europe Initiatives³² are a result of the Kingdom's efforts to strengthen multilateralism via

³⁰ For example via the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action and the Swiss-Dutch Initiative on Paris Alignment of Financial Flows.

³¹ [Council conclusions on EU Climate Diplomacy: Accelerating the Implementation of Glasgow Outcomes](#), Brussels, 21 February 2022.

³² See [Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programming tracker](#) on the EU's knowledge-sharing platform for international cooperation and development (Capacity4dev).

the EU. In addition, within the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) leader groups and through strategic alliances, the Kingdom seeks to encourage G20 countries to further enhance the ambitions outlined in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), while at the same time supporting low and middle-income countries in the implementation of their NDCs.³³ The Kingdom will continue contributing to global climate funding for developing countries in a proportionate manner, in part by using public funds to mobilise private climate investment, and will work to mobilise private investment for global climate investment packages such as the EU Global Gateway and Just Energy Transition Partnerships.

In addition, the Kingdom is also taking the lead in scaling up international ambitions in the field of adaptation finance, for example through the Champions Group on Adaptation Finance. These ambitions include increasing the level of adaptation finance, achieving a better balance with mitigation finance and working to improve the quality and accessibility of adaptation finance specifically for LDCs and SIDS. It is important to maintain a political dialogue with the SIDS, not least because of their extreme vulnerability to climate change and the fact that the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom are SIDS. The Fourth International Conference for Small Island Developing States, which is scheduled to take place in 2024, will adopt the next 10-year programme of action to promote international assistance to address the challenges faced by SIDS.

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Public health

The global response to COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of international cooperation in the area of public health. It also revealed that health systems in many countries are not adequately equipped to respond to pandemics, and that global access to healthcare, medicines and medical equipment is unevenly distributed. The pandemic also exposed the vulnerability of the multilateral institutions concerned. The secondary impact of the pandemic on women and girls in particular has proved substantial, as have the indirect health effects.

Global health has been incorporated as a policy theme in various international frameworks, including the SDGs, Universal Health Coverage (UHC), agreements concluded in the framework of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR). WHO plays a central role in the international health architecture and sets standards in the area of public health. It is vital to improve coordination and coherence within the global health architecture. The Kingdom will step up its cooperation with WHO, supporting the organisation via additional fixed contributions. The Caribbean countries within the Kingdom will continue to work closely with organisations such as the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO),

³³ For more information on these partnerships, see [Letter of 28 May 2021 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy to the House of Representatives on global climate diplomacy](#) (in Dutch).

the specialised international health agency for the Americas which serves as the WHO's Regional Office for the Americas.

In addition to the above, new international frameworks are needed to ensure that appropriate global action can be taken immediately in the event of a new pandemic and that equal access to health is more effectively guaranteed. The Kingdom is pressing for the conclusion of multi-sectoral international agreements under the auspices of WHO. On behalf of the European region, the Netherlands co-chairs the WHO's Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), which is responsible for drafting an international WHO instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The Kingdom is committed to improving coordination and governance within the global health system so that the next health crisis can be tackled more decisively, more coherently and with greater mutual solidarity and trust.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global problem. No individual government or agency can single-handedly cope with the threat of future pandemics. A pandemic prevention, preparedness and response instrument under the auspices of WHO will enable countries to increase their capacity and resilience in respect of future pandemics at national, regional and global level.

When it comes to this issue, it is also important to make the link to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Healthy ecosystems are the best defence against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and pandemics, as outlined in the One Health approach. In addition, the Netherlands is committed to making scientific research publicly and freely available through multilateral bodies. This promotes the circulation of knowledge, scientific breakthroughs, innovation and the global democratisation of scientific information.

Decades of progress in the field of public health faces stagnation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and long-standing agreements on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including HIV/AIDS, gender equality and equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people, are under increasing pressure from revisionist and conservative UN member states. In response to these developments, the Kingdom is combining financial support with diplomatic and political action. The Kingdom is a major donor in the field of public health and SRHR, and plays an active role in the governing bodies of organisations such as the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to ensure that in practice they can carry out their mandates in a coherent manner. In addition, the WB's Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) focuses on reproductive health and rights in 36 low-income countries and works to strengthen primary health systems. The Netherlands is a prominent and increasingly major donor to the GFF.

Digitalisation

In a world characterised by exponential technological progress and shifting power relations, digitalisation and new technologies have become geopolitical themes of the highest order. The digital transition is both a new issue in its own right and a feature of many existing policy themes, such as security, human rights, development cooperation, health, education, trade and climate change. The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) is accelerating this development and also raises many new policy issues and ethical questions that are viewed differently in different parts of the world. Digitalisation accordingly affects many of the fields of activity of multilateral organisations.

On the one hand, new technologies enable multilateral organisations to plan and implement their programmes more efficiently. On the other hand, they entail many new challenges, as little to no regulation exists in this area. The need for new treaties, organisations, standards and partnerships creates a dynamic in which existing players need to adopt fresh positions and new players are demanding a seat at the table. As a result, there are widely differing views on this issue in multilateral technical forums such as the ITU, and countries such as China and Russia are trying to increase their influence within them. These organisations, which used to be primarily technical in nature, are thus acquiring an increasingly geopolitical character. For instance, the aforementioned countries are working hard to internationalise their national digital strategies, in part by advancing proposals in the field of facial recognition and promoting a new internet protocol that takes most of its inspiration from their own national security policies. This is potentially incompatible with values such as privacy, freedom of expression and open access to the internet, values that the Netherlands supports.

Another challenge that can result from digitalisation is increased inequality between and within countries. Countries that lack a robust digital infrastructure and highly developed human capital will benefit less from the digital transition. In the security domain, new technologies can also be used in military applications and lead to a rise in cyber threats and disinformation. In addition, not everyone in society benefits equally from digitalisation. For example, men and women are not equally represented in the labour market in the underlying sectors, and many technological applications are designed from the perspective of highly skilled heterosexual men, which means that some developments may amplify discrimination in society.

At multilateral level, the Kingdom works closely with the EU and third countries and is committed to protecting agreements on cybersecurity, the responsible use of AI, including legal safeguards to protect the public from high-risk applications,³⁴ and an open, free, secure and interoperable internet, based on respect for human rights and democratic

³⁴ The Council of Europe is currently also drafting a convention on AI.

values.³⁵ These ambitions are reflected, for example, in the Kingdom's active role in the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Responsible State Behaviour, which discusses the normative framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, and the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime, in which the Kingdom is calling for a new UN convention on cybercrime that is effective in practice, contains robust human rights guarantees and does not undermine existing legal frameworks. The Kingdom is working to increase its own earning capacity and international competitiveness, as well as that of the EU and developing countries, in the global economy and global society, which are increasingly data-driven. In addition, it is bolstering international cooperation to tackle global societal challenges in the framework of the digital transition, the transition to sustainability and the global promotion of digital inclusion.

³⁵ On the recently adopted European Council conclusions on digital diplomacy, see '[EU digital diplomacy: Council agrees a more concerted European approach to the challenges posed by new digital technologies](#)', press release, 18 July 2022.

5. Implementation

Multilateral cooperation takes place in a wide range of areas and in many different forums. Dutch line ministries operate autonomously and sometimes bear primary responsibility for the Kingdom's activities in various organisations. As a result, the strategy will be implemented within the existing policy frameworks of the relevant government organisations. At the same time, the ministries in the Netherlands and the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom will conduct coordination meetings on a regular and timely basis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will take the lead in this regard.

This memorandum will be implemented within the limits of the established financial framework, using the existing instruments of the various ministries concerned. Existing funding from the BHOS portfolio will be maintained.

An evaluation will be conducted in 2025 to determine whether the Kingdom's efforts need to be adjusted in the light of new developments, insights and experiences. This will ensure that the memorandum remains relevant and effective, both now and in the future.

Annex I

Abbreviations

A4P	Action for Peacekeeping
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AIV	Advisory Council on International Affairs
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
AU	African Union
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South-Africa
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CASCF	China-Arab States Cooperation Forum
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
COE	Council of Europe
COP26	UN Climate Change Conference 2021
DSSI	Debt Service Suspension Initiative
EAC	East African Community
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN)
EPC	European Political Community
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FTDC	Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
G20	Group of 20
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GCF	Global Compact on Refugees
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
GDI	Global Development Initiative
GFF	Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents
GSI	Global Security Initiative
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International Financial Institution
IHR	International Health Regulations

ILO	International Labour Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IMEC	Industrialised Market Economy Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IMPACS	Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
INB	Intergovernmental Negotiating Body
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JSI	Joint Statement Initiative
KNMI	Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer and those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDB	New Development Bank
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organization of American States
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PADF	Pan American Development Foundation
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
QSD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
RBC	Responsible Business Conduct
RC	Resident Coordinator
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations

UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	UN Environmental Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNOCT	UN Office on Counterterrorism
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSG	UN Secretary-General
WB	World Bank
WEOG	Western European and Other States Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

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AbujaColomboRabatAtheneDublinSydneyKobeBogotáPraagOuagadougouAlgiersKingstonStPetersburgAmmanMilaanMexicoTeheranAbuDhabiFrank
AmMainBelgradoTorontoAddisAbebaAnkaraSarajevoPortOfSpainAiresStockholmAmsterdamAbebaTripoliLaPazKairoManaguaBagdadLosAngelesK
AnkaraColomboWarschauRomeBernKingstonLissabonBoedapestBoedapestNewYorkMaputoColomboNewYorkRiyadBamakoTelAvivKingstonMonte
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