



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

*Policy framework*

# Global Multilateralism

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

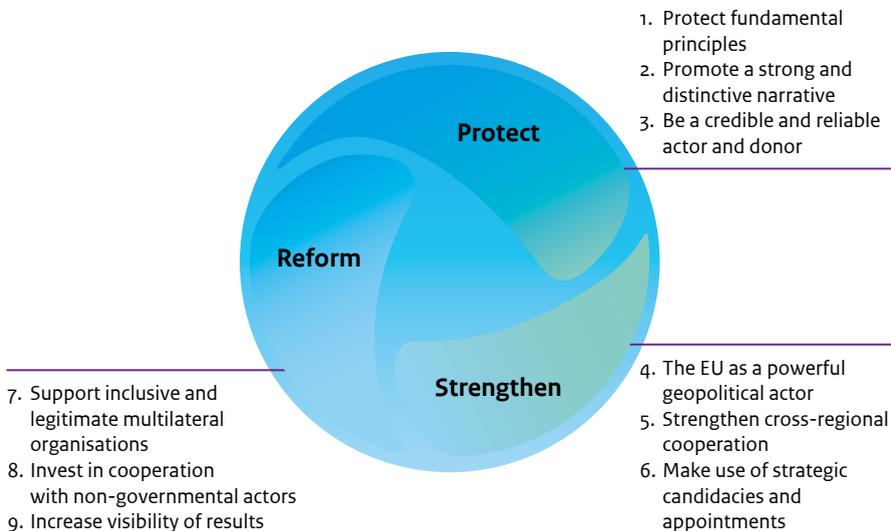
**Summary**



# Summary

Together with its partners, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is working to foster an inclusive and effective multilateral system, in which rules-based global multilateral institutions enjoy widespread legitimacy and remain anchored. The present policy framework 'Global Multilateralism: Defining the Kingdom of the Netherlands' Position in a Changing Multilateral Global Order' is a first step in establishing a broader basis for cooperation to support this goal. The strategic approach is based on three pillars: protect, strengthen and reform.

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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. 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. Despite the profound impact Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the violations of the international legal order have had on international relations, the international community has not been unanimous in explicitly condemning these clear violations of the international legal order. Within the multilateral system, a realignment of political spheres of influence is also evident as a result of the growing importance of emerging economic powers which is leading them to speak out more in multilateral forums and, increasingly, to demand more power and influence in key bodies.

In order to tackle major global challenges such as war, climate change, migration, poverty and inequality, we need a broader basis for cooperation. Together with our European Union (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, in order to effectively advance national and collective interests in the changing context of the multilateral system, but without compromising our values and standards.

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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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. This policy framework is linked to adjacent policy areas, including foreign trade and development cooperation policy (as set out in the policy document 'Do What We Do Best').

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will play a coordinating role in the government-wide implementation of the framework. Among other measures, regular interministerial coordination meetings will be set up to facilitate the implementation of the policy framework. 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 this policy framework.

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

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P.O. Box 20061 | 2500 EB The Hague  
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