

Delegation from The Republic of India
Position Paper for the Security Council

The issues before the Security Council are: Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security; and Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts. The Republic of India is committed to work actively towards ensuring peace and security, as well as improving the living conditions of all people and points to the words of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, intellectual and political leader of the Indian independence movement in stressing that "non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

I. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security

More than two years ago, COVID-19 began spreading across the globe and developed into a global pandemic of historic proportion. Several waves of contagion paralyzed the global trade and the daily lives of people around the world. The Republic of India is more determined than ever to fight this pandemic and stop the rapid spread of COVID-19. The distribution of vaccines being part of the Indian *Universal Immunization Programme* plays the key role in achieving this goal and helped the Indian citizens to control the rapid spread. On the 21st of October of 2021 we reached the goal to administrate one billion vaccine doses to the Indian population. The government of India donated 200,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to UN Peacekeeping personnel worldwide. To provide developing countries with the highly needed vaccines, India is currently working together with the vaccination program *COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX)*. However, the threat of global pandemics is no way averted. The occurrence of COVID-19 mutations and the potential emergence of new diseases is a constant threat for the international community. Therefore, the Republic of India wants to lay the focus on assessing and evaluating the management of the pandemic. Without the necessary steps, the situation would have played out even more dramatically. It is our task to prevent future crises, instabilities and violent outbreaks linked to the side effects of global pandemics of any kind by preparing for upcoming pandemics in time.

The Republic of India reiterates the importance of the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* introduced by the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. India especially highlights SDG 3 on good health and well-being. These collective goals are of high priority regarding future development and underscore the importance of functioning and quickly reacting healthcare systems in a future scenario. We reaffirm the significance of the General Assembly Resolution 74/307 (2020) on a *United response against global health threats: Combating COVID-19* that laid the foundation on how to cope with the pandemic and called for multilateral cooperation and international solidarity. Urgent short-term actions and first steps out of the crisis were promoted, but India is concerned about the lack of long-term solutions for fighting new COVID outbreaks and similar respiratory diseases. Resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021) dealing with the *Maintenance of international Peace and Security* must be addressed as well. The establishment of cease fires in conflict zones and a fair and effective distribution of vaccines are necessary to combat this crisis. However, the Republic of India addresses the lack of future pandemic adaption strategies. Additionally, India shifts the focus towards regional organizations trying to stop diseases from emerging, such as the *Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED)*. However, India is concerned that this regional assistance group is insufficient to fight future COVID-19 mutations and disease outbreaks.

The Republic of India proposes to proactively start the preparation for new COVID-19 variants and other diseases. To achieve this goal the open-ended *Working Group on COVID-19 Data Analysis (WGCD)* should be established with the WHO and their experts comparable to the APSED. This project will be financed with contributions by participating member states, as well as the WHO budget on special programs. Key for this working group is to manage and transfer knowledge on potential mutations to new datasets. Mathematical models on the spread of potential COVID-19 mutations are part of the current research front, but not sufficiently implemented in current policies. Failure analyses of coping mechanisms and improvement proposals for healthcare systems based on this data are an important step towards less harmful impacts, and a more adapted society. The goal of this working group is to support countries all over the world with individual feedback on how to cope with new mutations, which strengthens national healthcare systems, coping strategies and adaption plans. Knowing flaws in healthcare systems, is the first

step for countries to adapt national action plans and work towards better coping with future outbreaks, if new mutations occur. An adequate preparation today results in a lower probability of societal conflicts and stable economies tomorrow.

II. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts

The structure of war has changed overtime. While interstate conflicts were mostly common in the first half of the 20th century, inner state conflicts and terrorist groups are on the rise. Today, terrorism is one of the largest threats for civilians in armed conflicts. Densely populated areas are a specific target for extremist groups. Suicide bombings and other forms of detonating explosive weaponry result in high numbers of civilian deaths. Terrorist groups target these specifically to increase their media coverage and extort their goals. Fast and effective counterterrorism measures in urban areas are of high importance to minimize the harm. The quicker the response mechanism functions, the higher is the probability of citizens to survive the attack. In 2008, India experienced a disastrous event, when terrorists carried out attacks in multiple locations in Mumbai, killing 166 innocent civilians of 15 different nationalities. The Republic of India is therefore strongly underscoring the importance of counterterrorism initiatives. In the words of Ambassador T.S. Tirumutri: "India has been at the forefront of global counter terrorism efforts, has taken part in all major global initiatives against international terrorism and is party to all United Nations' sectoral conventions relating to terrorism." As there is no retrograde development in relation to terrorism, and urbanization accelerates, civilians are especially exposed and should be better protected.

The Republic of India emphasizes the importance of the *Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (1949). This convention established a clear definition on who must be protected in armed conflicts and laid the foundation for the subject of protecting civilians, as well as establishing rules and norms of conflict in the international system. Its binding character is the first and a necessary step towards a safer future for all people. India also reiterates the importance of Resolution 1265 (1999) on the *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts* being the basis for all further resolutions. It condemns the targeting of civilians, works towards ensuring humanitarian aid and addresses the role of United Nations peacekeeping missions. Resolution 2286 (2016) on the *Protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict* addresses especially humanitarian and medical aid, as well as their means of transport and equipment. However, the Republic of India is concerned about the lack of a clear emphasis of the dependency of healthcare workers on deployment plans and functioning infrastructure to quickly reach attack sites and provide lifesaving measures as quickly as possible. Most importantly India underscores Resolution 2753 (2021) on the *Protection of civilian infrastructure in armed conflicts*. The Republic of India supports the thematic expansion of the subject of protecting civilians but locates weaknesses in this resolution. Urban transformation strategies and risk reduction in densely populated areas have not been taken into account. Lastly, India reiterates the important work of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and their *Global Programme on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets* (Global Programme), which evaluates security systems and works on reducing the exposition towards terror attacks in much visited sites and tourist attractions with the goal to reduce the time of healthcare workers to get to the location of attack and speed up the time for support and medical aid to arrive.

The Republic of India encourages states to further evaluate their work on vulnerabilities of security systems and work on specific infrastructure projects not just taking especially exposed targets into account but also affected areas. Therefore, India proposes to expand the task area of the UNOCT. In detail, India wants to broaden the scope of tasks of the Global Programme to transform infrastructure especially in big cities towards a better response system, as well as expanding security systems and CCTV. It is important to not just focus on vulnerable targets, but on areas. There is an increasing need for transforming cities to cope better with terrorist attacks. It is necessary for fast and effective humanitarian help to solidify the structure of all humanitarian aid projects and especially their attack response mechanisms to protect civilians and health workers at the same time. Without effective counter-terrorism measures in often affected areas it is not possible to protect civilians adequately. Additionally, these security systems can have a multifunctioning purpose. Functioning security systems reduce the crime rate as perpetrators can be identified more easily and additionally victims of sexual violence or organized crime can receive aid faster. Therefore, citizens can live in a safer environment, even if the country is currently not involved in any armed conflicts.