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University for Peace

University for Peace

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The University for Peace was established by a multilateral treaty, the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace, as an academic institution with both academic and financial autonomy. The Agreement was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [35/55](#). The Charter of the University mandates it to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace and with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress.

For over four decades, the University has been dedicated to training leaders who are committed to the cause of peace. Through its master's degree and doctoral programmes, as well as its short-term training initiatives, a diverse alumni network of over 7,000 individuals has been established, with women accounting for more than 65 per cent of graduates. These alumni are now working around the world in a wide range of areas related to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, including with national and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, local governments, academia and the United Nations system.

The University for Peace is dedicated to equipping future generations with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of achieving and maintaining world peace. In order to face new challenges, including the climate crisis, political will and international cooperation are required. However, in the light of the current global climate, funds that were previously destined for education have been redirected, and we see a global decline in student enrolment in both undergraduate and graduate programmes.

* [A/79/150](#).

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Education can play a profound role in achieving lasting peace. As the world is rapidly evolving, so must the approach to education and conflict resolution. The University for Peace is committed to adapting and evolving and ensuring that its programmes remain relevant and innovative. It pledges to continue to promote research based on critical discourse analysis and to foster an environment in which ideas flourish and solutions emerge. The University for Peace remains committed to advancing its educational programmes and research initiatives to promote sustainable peace and conflict resolution on the global stage.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/73](#) and contains a summary of the progress made by the University for Peace during the period 2021–2024, which serves to highlight both its opportunities for growth and its challenges.
2. The report provides a summary of the key activities carried out at the headquarters of the University in Costa Rica and at its regional offices and associated institutions. It also serves to emphasize the University's partnerships and collaborations, including with the United Nations and its affiliated bodies, as well as with the host country, Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations and the private sector. In addition, the report provides an outline of the University's recent academic accomplishments and its projected outlook.
3. In its resolution [76/73](#), the General Assembly recognized that in 2020 the University had celebrated 40 years of educating and training leaders for peace, and its diverse activities and progress. In the resolution, the Assembly noted the University's focus on critical areas, such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and requested Member States and encouraged intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and interested individuals to provide financial contributions to the University, to support its work and its programmes, as the case may be. The Assembly requested the University to find viable ways to further strengthen cooperation with the United Nations system, and requested the Secretary-General to expand the scope for using the services of the University as part of his conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts through the training of staff. The Assembly invited Member States that had not already done so to formally accede to the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace, thereby demonstrating support for the University and its work.

II. University for Peace in 2024

A. Forty-four years of the University for Peace

4. The University for Peace will soon mark its forty-fourth anniversary. Established in 1980 and guided by the Charter of the University for Peace, the University has remained steadfast in its commitment to aligning its work with the core objectives of the United Nations. Over the decades, the institution has played a vital role in training new generations of professionals to equip them with the skills and expertise necessary to transform and resolve global conflicts through the fostering of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. As it continues to evolve and expand its reach, the University stands as an example of the power of knowledge and diplomacy to shape a future in which peace and harmony thrive.
5. The University helps to educate and train leaders in the field of irenology through its interdisciplinary approach, which addresses the core pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. Over 7,000 alumni from more than 120 countries have leveraged their experience gained through the University's programmes to make positive impacts globally. Notably, women account for the majority of the student body and alumni (over 65 per cent).
6. The University has expanded its non-degree capacity-building activities to include hundreds of certificate and diploma programmes, conducted in partnership

with United Nations entities, international organizations, academic institutions and government bodies.

B. Changes to the governance of the University for Peace

7. The following individuals joined the Council of the University for Peace during the reporting period: the former Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova, who currently serves as the President of the Council; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, Arnoldo André Tinoco, who currently serves as a representative of the host country; and the First Lady of Costa Rica, Signe Zeikate, who also serves as a representative of the host country.

8. The Council is composed of 17 members, 10 of whom are appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO and 7 of whom are ex officio members. Three positions on the Council are currently vacant. Pending appointment of those additional members, the Council currently comprises six men and eight women.

9. The current ex officio members are: the Chancellor of the University for Peace, Enrique Baron-Crespo (Spain); the Rector of the United Nations University, Tshilidzi Marwala (South Africa); the representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, Gabriela Ramos (Mexico); the Rector of the University for Peace, Francisco Rojas Aravena (Chile); and the representatives of the host country, Arnoldo André Tinoco (Costa Rica) and Signe Zeikate (Costa Rica/Latvia).

10. The current members of the academic community and experts in the field of peace and security are: the Executive Director of the Neem Foundation, Fatima Akilu (Nigeria); the former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Africa, Lalla Ben Barka (Mali); the former Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova (Bulgaria); the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ouided Bouchamaoui (Tunisia); the founder and Director of Women in Security Conflict, Management and Peace, Meenakshi Gopinath (India); the professor emeritus of history and strategy at the Royal Military College of Canada, Hal Philip Klepak (Canada); the former Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Finance and Budget, Controller, Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas (Uruguay); and the Executive Vice-President of the China International Council for the Promotion of Multinational Corporations, Xiaoyu Zhang (China).

C. Rodrigo Carazo campus, University for Peace headquarters

11. The University's main campus, located in Costa Rica, is named after its founder, a former President of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Carazo. It spans 303 hectares within a secondary forest reserve, thus showcasing the country's rich biodiversity.

12. In September 2023, the University officially inaugurated its new Kofi Annan Auditorium at its headquarters in San José, with the participation of the Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation, Corinne Momal-Vanian.

13. In July 2024, the University inaugurated its Nelson Mandela Auditorium at its main campus in Costa Rica.

D. Academic matters

1. Student enrolment

14. Student enrolment in on-campus master's degree programmes at the University has dropped significantly, in particular over the past two academic periods, due to factors including ongoing conflicts, which have affected access to funding and ease of travel. Notwithstanding, the University has managed to admit on average between 500 and 550 students globally for the three years covered by the present report.

15. The University has worked to find innovative ways to expand its academic footprint, including by offering programmes in Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Italy and Somalia. Partnerships with other academic institutions within the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and with global and local universities for certificate courses and dual-degree programmes are also proving to be good practices.

2. Master's degree programmes and certificates

16. The University remains committed to providing cutting-edge master's degree programmes in fields related to its mandate. Diverse perspectives on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion and class are integrated into all academic programmes. The following 14 master's degree programmes are currently taught at the University's main campus in Costa Rica:

- (a) Conflict resolution, peace and development (taught in Spanish);
- (b) Development studies and diplomacy;
- (c) Ecology and society;
- (d) Environment, development and peace, with specializations in environmental security and governance, climate change and sustainable food systems;
- (e) Gender and development;
- (f) Gender and peacebuilding;
- (g) Indigenous science and peace studies;
- (h) International law and diplomacy;
- (i) International law and human rights;
- (j) International law and the settlement of disputes;
- (k) International peace studies;
- (l) Media and peace (depending on enrolment, this is offered as a specialization);
- (m) Peace education;
- (n) Responsible management and sustainable economic development.

17. The University also offers the following master's degree programmes at its campus in Somalia:

- (a) Peace, governance and development;
- (b) Environment, development and peace;
- (c) International law and human rights;
- (d) Disaster resilience, leadership and humanitarian action.

18. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University expanded its online offerings, which now include the following programmes:

- (a) Master's degree and certificate in development studies and diplomacy (with UNITAR);
- (b) Master's degree in environment, development and peace;
- (c) Master's degree and certificate in gender and peacebuilding (with UNITAR);
- (d) Master's degree and certificate in international law and diplomacy (with UNITAR);
- (e) Master's degree and certificate in international law and the settlement of disputes (with UNITAR);
- (f) Master's degree in religion, culture and peace studies, supported jointly by the Muslim World League, the Pontifical Lateran University and the World Jewish Congress;
- (g) Master's degree in sustainable peace in the contemporary world.

19. The University also offers the following off-campus master's degree programmes in partnership with different institutions:

- (a) Master's degree in international law and human rights, in partnership with the Costa Rican Bar Association;
- (b) Master's degree in prevention of money-laundering and financial delinquency, in partnership with the Foundation for the Study of Money-Laundering and Crimes;
- (c) Master of laws in cybercrime, cybersecurity and international law, in partnership with UNICRI;
- (d) Master of laws in transnational crime and justice, in partnership with UNICRI.

3. Dual-degree and joint programmes

20. The University has an extensive network of partnerships with prestigious universities around the world, thus offering students the opportunity to earn multiple degrees. Through these innovative dual-degree and joint programmes, students can not only immerse themselves in complementary fields of study, but also expand their knowledge and credentials by studying at several academic institutions around the world, which thus empowers them to develop multidisciplinary skill sets, cultivate global perspectives and stand out in today's competitive job market. By leveraging the University's diverse international partnerships, students can maximize the return on their educational investment. Some of the University's partner universities include:

- (a) American University, United States of America: master's degree in international affairs from American University and master's degree in natural resources and sustainable development from the University for Peace;
- (b) Brandeis University, United States: master's degree in coexistence and conflict from Brandeis University and master's degree in International law and human rights from the University for Peace;
- (c) Costa Rican Bar Association, Costa Rica: master's degree in international law and human rights from the University for Peace (in Spanish);

(d) Foundation for the Study of Money-Laundering and Crimes, Costa Rica: master's degree in prevention of money-laundering and financial delinquency from the University for Peace (in Spanish);

(e) Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Republic of Korea: a master's degree from each institution in the fields of law, communications (media) and sustainable development;

(f) Pace University, United States: master's degree in ecology and society from the University for Peace;

(g) Pontifical University Javeriana, Colombia: master's degree in human rights and culture of peace from Pontifical University Javeriana and a master's degree of choice from the University for Peace;

(h) Ugandan National Police Force: master's degree in peace, governance and security from the University for Peace;

(i) UNICRI: LLM in transnational crime and justice from the University for Peace;

(j) UNICRI: LLM in cybercrime, cybersecurity and international law from the University for Peace;

(k) UNITAR: master's degree in gender and development, master's degree in development studies and diplomacy, master's degree in international law and diplomacy and master's degree in international law and the settlement of disputes from the University for Peace;

(l) UNESCO and IHE Delft Institute for Water Education and Oregon State University, United States: master's degree in water, cooperation and peace from Oregon State University and master's degree in environment, development and peace from the University for Peace;

(m) University of Rosario, Colombia: master's degree in international law from the University of Rosario and master's degree in conflict resolution, peace and development from the University for Peace (in Spanish);

(n) University of Santander, Colombia: professional certification programmes;

(o) Worldwide Indigenous Science Network, United States: master's degree in indigenous science and peace studies from the University for Peace;

(p) Muslim World League, World Jewish Congress and the Pontifical Lateran University: master's degree in religion, culture and peace studies from the University for Peace.

4. Scholarship programmes

21. The University is currently the beneficiary of several scholarship programmes, including:

(a) Costa Rican Bar Association scholarship programme: the Costa Rican Bar Association allocates 10 scholarships to students who are enrolled in the off-campus master's degree in international law and human rights;

(b) German Academic Exchange Service in-region scholarship programme: scholarships for development-related master's or doctoral studies are granted to individuals who plan to pursue a career in teaching and/or research at a higher education institution in their home region or in their home country. The number of scholarships is determined on a yearly basis;

(c) A joint degree programme scholarship offered through the partnership between the University for Peace and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies: though this collaborative initiative, full scholarships are provided to students of the Republic of Korea who wish to pursue graduate studies at the University for Peace;

(d) The Alissa scholarship programme: through the programme, full scholarships are provided to 15 students, 5 of the Muslim faith, 5 of the Jewish faith and 5 of the Catholic faith, to pursue master's degree in religion, culture and peace studies at the University for Peace. The focus of this degree programme, which constitutes a partnership between the Muslim World League, the World Jewish Congress and the Pontifical Lateran University, is on fostering interreligious and interfaith dialogue.

22. The University for Peace offers a wide range of scholarship programmes to support students from diverse backgrounds. These programmes include the scholarship for LGBTQI+ activists, which covers 70 per cent of the tuition fee costs of master's degree in gender and peacebuilding, and the EmpowerHER scholarship, which covers 50 per cent of the tuition fee costs for women working on initiatives to prevent gender-based violence. In addition, the scholarship for rights defenders covers 50 per cent of tuition fee costs for human rights activists. Beyond those specialized scholarships, the University also provides one full scholarship per year for a resident of Ciudad Colón, Costa Rica, in consultation with the municipality of Mora; 50 per cent tuition fee coverage for professors from partner universities, Costa Rican citizens and legal residents, current full-time United Nations staff members and volunteers, and documented refugees and asylees; 30 per cent tuition fee coverage for University for Peace alumni pursuing a second degree, merit-based scholarships, citizens and nationals of States signatories to the Charter of the University for Peace, students with degrees from partner universities and students from Spanish-speaking countries interested in master's degree in conflict resolution, peace and development.

23. The Nippon Foundation has generously supported the University for over 16 years through the Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship Programme. Valuable support has also come from the Naveen and Anu Jain Family Foundation for the fellowship programme on peace, health and innovation.

5. Doctoral programmes

24. The University offers a residential doctoral programme in peace and conflict studies at its main campus, which is aimed at researchers who are committed to pioneering advancements in peace studies. In total, 19 participants have graduated thus far and a further 48 candidates are currently working on their doctoral research. This programme also enables practitioners to translate their practical experience into scientific knowledge, which can be systematized and published academically.

25. Through its Africa Programme, the University also offers a doctoral degree in peace, governance and development, which currently boasts 21 alumni, including the current President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

26. Since 2020, the University also offers a doctoral degree in Leadership and Sustainable Development through its China Centre in Beijing, with over 40 candidates enrolled at the present time.

27. In 2024, the University for Peace signed a memorandum of understanding with the GIOYA Higher Education Institute in Malta to offer a new joint executive doctoral degree in commercial diplomacy, licensed by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority, in which topics such as multilateral and multipolar economic and business relations, sustainable approaches to international business, the role of new

technologies in commercial diplomacy and financial instruments for international commercial diplomacy are covered.

6. University faculty

28. The University for Peace is home to a distinguished faculty that comprises both resident professors and a large contingent of visiting professors from around the world. There are currently 15 resident professors, who provide important academic rigour and continuity, but approximately 60 visiting professors per academic year. The higher number of visiting professors is by design, as the University experience is intended to be highly practical and experiential in nature. Students learn directly from leading experts, practitioners and policymakers who are actively engaged in the field.

29. The current resident faculty members are Karen Acosta (Costa Rica/Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Jan Breitling (Germany), Mariateresa Garrido (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Mihir Kanade (India), Stephanie Knox (United States), Mónica Paniagua (Costa Rica), Clara Ramin (Germany), Uzma Rashid (Pakistan), Juan Carlos Sainz-Borgo (Spain/Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Adriana Salcedo (Ecuador/United States), Marjolein Schaap (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Olivia Sylvester (Canada), Juan José Vásquez (Costa Rica), Maurício Vieira (Brazil) and Mirian Vilela (Brazil).

7. Other academic activities

30. In November 2021, the University established an office on the University of Santander campus in Bucaramanga, Colombia, to offer training and diploma courses for State entities, social organizations and communities, with a focus on peace, citizen coexistence and human rights, as a way to contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Colombia.

31. In February 2022, the University officially launched an office that offers free legal aid for journalists, with a view to providing support, including legal counsel and accompaniment, for journalists who are victims of assault, threats, undue restrictions or pressures in the exercise of their duties.

32. In February 2023, the Rector of the University for Peace, Francisco Rojas Aravena, and Permanent Observer of the University for Peace to the United Nations Office at Geneva, David Fernández-Puyana, took part in the third Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum, organized by the Royal Commission for Riyadh City.

33. In August 2023, the University implemented, in collaboration with the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at George Mason University, a scholarship programme for democracy and anti-corruption defenders, which is intended to provide citizens of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras with an opportunity to enhance their capacities in strengthening democracy and combating corruption and impunity in their respective countries.

34. In January 2024, the University developed a diploma in development of capacities for social reintegration in El Salvador, which is aimed at training professionals of civil society organizations, Government and international organizations on issues related to human rights, violence, conflict, social reintegration and restorative justice and peace, in order to provide them with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide effective social support and guidance in the context of post-prison reintegration for persons who have served a prison sentence.

35. In February 2024, the University signed a memorandum of agreement with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia to formulate courses in which topics related to peace and restorative justice are addressed.

36. In July 2024, the University participated in the second meeting of the Quito Process, which was convened for the first time under the pro tempore presidency of Costa Rica in San José. The Quito Process is an initiative of 15 Latin American countries that is aimed at seeking solutions for regional migration challenges, in particular those arising from the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

8. Accreditation

37. Since 2008, the University for Peace has been part of the National System of Higher Education Accreditation in Costa Rica and, therefore, a continuous and systematic external evaluation of all its master's degree programmes has been carried out.

38. The following master's degrees programmes are currently accredited under the National System of Higher Education Accreditation: environment, development and peace (2014), international law and human rights (2016), international law and the settlement of disputes (2016), international peace studies (2024), international peace studies with a specialization in media, peace and conflict studies (2024) and gender and peacebuilding (2024).

9. University alumni

39. The University for Peace has an extensive network of over 7,000 alumni, who make significant contributions to peacebuilding in a wide range of sectors. Most of those alumni work in peacebuilding capacities, often operating on the front lines of conflict situations both in and outside their home countries. A significant proportion of the University's graduates are employed by NGOs, while many others have gone on to work within the United Nations system or in other international roles. In addition, a notable number of alumni have transitioned into academic positions, teaching at the university level or working for educational institutions. Another substantial group of the University's former students have joined national Governments, contributing their expertise in diverse fields such as international affairs, electoral affairs and environmental policy. A significant portion of the alumni are currently pursuing doctoral degrees at the University or other academic institutions.

40. Some of the alumni who have recently assumed positions related to the University's global mission include:

(a) Sandra Noriega Urizar de Kugler, MA in international relations, cooperation, integration and peace: Ambassador of Guatemala to Costa Rica;

(b) Pamela Marquez, MA in sustainable peace in the contemporary world: National Officer for Processing Deployment for Resettlement Support Centers under the United States Refugee Admissions Program, International Organization for Migration (IOM);

(c) Mahmoud Abdou, MA in international law and the settlement of disputes: Rule of Law Programme Manager (the Gaza Strip) and Governance Programme Analyst (Riyadh), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

(d) Thais Moraes, MA in sustainable peace in the contemporary world: Head of National Office ad interim, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Dominican Republic;

(e) Maffi Devadoss, LLM in transnational crime and justice: Governance and Justice Coordination Officer, United Nations Viet Nam;

(f) Pushpi Weerakoon, PhD in peace and conflict studies: focal point for gender and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse for the Pacific region, IOM;

(g) Hamish Low, MA in media, peace and conflict studies: Global Programmes Lead, New Zealand Red Cross;

(h) George Esunge Fominyen, MA in sustainable peace in the contemporary world: Deputy Director, World Food Programme in Italy;

(i) Diana Stoecklin, MA in international law and human rights: Head of Office, International Committee of the Red Cross in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(j) Samrawit Tibebe Zenebe, MA in international peace studies: Manager, Humanitarian Action and Peace Education at the Global Support Centre of the World Scout Bureau in Kuala Lumpur.

41. One of the University's most influential recent graduates is the current President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who received doctoral degree with a specialization in peace, governance and development for his dissertation entitled "Examining the challenges of clan politics in State building: a case study of Somalia".

42. In 2024, the University for Peace Alumni Association was established and immediately sought to sign an agreement with the University to foster initiatives that promote peace education, enhance alumni engagement, facilitate professional development, encourage research, support current students of the University and undertake other activities that align with the respective missions of both entities.

10. Publications

43. The University contributes to advancing knowledge and fostering sustainable peace worldwide through its extensive research and publications in various fields of irenology. The University seeks not only to enrich global discourse but also to equip stakeholders with essential insights and strategies to address contemporary challenges and cultivate enduring peace across communities and nations.

44. The University's Ideas for Peace platform serves as a dynamic forum for innovative thinking and dialogue on global peace and sustainability. It provides a collaborative space where scholars, practitioners and students can exchange ideas, propose solutions and inspire action towards creating a more peaceful and sustainable world.

45. The 2021 report on the safety of women journalists in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, which was prepared as part of a project funded by the International Programme for the Development of Communication of UNESCO, served to underscore the urgent need for stronger legal protections, improved safety protocols and greater support services to address the systemic barriers and gender-based discrimination that jeopardize the safety and freedom of the press for women journalists in Central America.

46. In *The Journey to Gender Equality: Mapping the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*,¹ the long and non-linear journey towards gender equality was discussed, with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which action was called for in 12 key areas to ensure equitable environments for women, highlighted as a critical milestone. In the publication, however, it was noted that despite the commitments made 25 years ago, no countries had achieved full gender equality and the need was emphasized for reflection on progress made, how the Declaration had been implemented and the ongoing challenges.

¹ Available at <https://upeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Rashid-The-Journey-to-Gender-Equality.pdf>.

47. In their manual for a global citizen, published by University for Peace Press in 2022, Roberto Savio and Giuliano Rizzi provide a set of core ideas for reflection on major international topics.² The manual provides a basis for new conversations to deepen the understanding of essential universal themes related to life and death on the planet. Awareness of these challenges is fundamental for generating early warnings and making crucial decisions for survival and for creating the resilience necessary to face emerging risks and threats.

48. Published in 2022, the journal article entitled “Multilateralism, human rights and diplomacy: a global perspective”, includes contributions by the former President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado Quesada, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, the former President of the European Parliament, David Maria Sassoli, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Christian Guillermet-Fernández, the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Alissa, and the Ambassador and Chair of the International Civil Service Commission, Larbi Djacta, among other international contributors.

49. In *Mapping Online Gender-Based Violence*, the challenges of gender-based violence in the digital age are discussed, with the widespread use of information and communications technologies and social media highlighted, as well as the need to understand both their popularity and the disparities in access and use between genders. The publication serves to emphasize the prevalence of online gender-based violence, the individual, social and societal impacts thereof and the importance of addressing the role that Internet-based platforms play in fuelling the cycle of violence, while underscoring the role of international regulations, community engagement and trust in creating safe online spaces.

50. In 2022, the University for Peace published the *White Paper on Illicit Economies and Organized Crime in Africa*, which is aimed at promoting dialogue among different stakeholders, including government officials, civil society, researchers, academics and the private sector, on the issue of countering and preventing illicit economies and organized crime in Africa.

51. In *A Missing Piece for Peace: Bringing Together the Right to Peace and Freedom of Conscientious Objection to Military Service*, which was edited by Michael Wiener and David Fernández-Puyana and published in 2022, the positive influence of young people in maintaining peace is highlighted and recommendations are made for the peace and security community to collaborate with young people in novel ways.

52. In 2022, the Rector of the University for Peace, Francisco Rojas Aravena, and Secretary-General of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, Josette Altmann, co-edited a publication on whether there is political will to build a different future in Latin America, which provides a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the current state of Latin America.³ In the publication, historical trends in the region are covered, as well as global interconnections, political systems, social and economic factors and environmental challenges, and the complex dynamics in the region and opportunities and obstacles in building a better future are examined.

53. In 2023, a team from the University’s office that offers free legal aid for journalists prepared the *Freedom of Expression in Costa Rica: A Look into the 2022*

² Available at <https://upeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Savio-y-Rizzi-Manual-Ciudadano-Global.pdf>.

³ Available at <https://upeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Rojas-y-Altman-America-Latina-voluntad-politica.pdf>.

Electoral Process report⁴ by monitoring the media to identify situations that could endanger the exercise of freedom of expression in the country during the 2022 general elections and after the conclusion of the electoral process.

54. In 2023, in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation, the University published a book on a multidimensional approach with respect to access to justice, which was edited by the Vice-Rector of the University for Peace, Juan Carlos Sainz-Borgo. The book is a compilation of papers from events held in Costa Rica and Colombia in 2018 and 2019 and serves to address the broad topic of access to justice in Latin America from multiple perspectives.

55. Published in 2023, *Global Approaches on State Fragility and Organized Crime*, which was edited by the Head of the Chair on Countering Illicit Trade and Preventing Transnational Organized Crime, Maurício Vieira, serves to address the key challenges posed by organized crime and the dynamics thereof, as well as perspectives on State fragility.

56. In 2023, the University for Peace and Reichman University in Israel partnered to produce *The Shimon Peres Legacy of Peace through Fourteen Historical Speeches: On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Shimon Peres' Birth*, which was co-edited by the Permanent Observer of the University for Peace to the United Nations Office at Geneva, David Fernández-Puyana, and the associate professor at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy of Reichman University, Daphne Richemond-Barak.

57. In 2024, the University, in collaboration with the Foundation for the Study of Money-Laundering and Crime, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the University of Santander, Estrategos and Editorial Diké, published *Criminal Economies: Multidimensional Approaches*, which presents an exhaustive and interdisciplinary examination of pivotal issues pertaining to diverse criminal activities, with insights provided by representatives of various academic disciplines.

58. In 2024, the University published a book on restoring the memories, customs and traditions of the Huetar culture, which serves to showcase the cultural heritage of the Quitirrisí community. In the book, which is the result of a project initiated by Olivia Sylvester in May 2022, the rich traditions of the Huetar people are curated through authentic storytelling and art, thus preserving this valuable cultural heritage and making it accessible to all.

E. Regional offices and affiliated institutions

1. Regional offices and programmes

59. During the reporting period, the University continued to strengthen and expand its global reach through the work of its regional offices across Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe. These strategically placed outposts have allowed the University to deepen its engagement with local communities worldwide, thus fostering cross-cultural dialogue and collaborative solutions to pressing peace and sustainability challenges.

60. There are Permanent Observers of the University for Peace at United Nations Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Office at Geneva. The University also has regional offices and representatives in Addis Ababa, Beijing, Belgrade, Manila, Mogadishu, Rome, Santander (Colombia), Tegucigalpa and The Hague.

⁴ <https://upeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Freedom-of-Expression-in-Costa-Rica-A-Look-into-the-2022-Electoral-Process.pdf>.

61. As part of the University's mission, its regional programme for Africa, based in Addis Ababa, supports peace in the region. Through active collaborations with over 30 universities, the programme encompasses teaching, research, preparing publications and community outreach, which through capacity-building initiatives has contributed to strengthening the efforts of regional organizations and national Governments in Africa.
62. In September 2021, the University officially inaugurated its Somalia campus, which is currently the largest country programme in Africa, with an opening ceremony during which 76 graduates were honoured.
63. In 2021, the University's centre in Honduras organized a training course on citizen participation, advocacy and social oversight to support the institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Social Development, the National Youth Institute and UNDP.
64. In 2022, the University's centre in Honduras organized a training course on citizen participation, with an emphasis on ancestral conflict resolution and the promotion and protection of human rights for Indigenous Peoples and persons of African descent. The course was targeted at local and national justice officials, members of civil society organizations and local councils, institutions engaged in electoral processes and key community leaders dedicated to safeguarding the rights and customs of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples.
65. In 2022, the University's centre in Honduras also organized, in conjunction with IOM, a workshop to provide training for trainers, the participants of which were awarded a diploma in institutional strengthening, managing migration and protecting migrants' human rights.
66. In 2022, the University for Peace Centre The Hague, which was established to promote and facilitate its programmes and activities in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and other European countries, announced the launch of a Netherlands Scholarship programme, which is intended to support aspiring students who are interested in pursuing their degree at the University's headquarters in Costa Rica. The first recipients of the scholarship were two Ukrainian refugees, who graduated in May 2023.
67. In early 2023, following the graduation of the President of Somalia from the University's doctoral programme, Qatar Charity signed an agreement with the University to financially support over 100 Somali doctoral students.
68. In late 2023, the University's centre in Honduras awarded its certificate in conflict resolution, complaints and disputes of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples, following the training of 31 participants, including 5 from the Miskito, Lenca and Tolupan communities, on tools for protecting the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples, with emphasis placed on the importance of ensuring access to justice in Indigenous languages and the need to strengthen State justice systems.
69. In April 2024, Ambassador Ramu Damodaran officially took office as a Permanent Observer of the University for Peace to the United Nations and presented his letter of appointment to the Secretary-General. During their meeting, they discussed the vital role of the University's mission within the United Nations and its commitment to advancing peace education to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Ambassador Damodaran replaced Ambassador Narinder Kakar, who served as Permanent Observer of the University for Peace for over two decades.
70. Since May 2024, the University's centre in Honduras has been offering a certificate in conflict resolution, social cohesion and human mobility in collaboration with UNDP and IOM, focused on conflict resolution, social cohesion and the

protection of human rights for individuals in situations of human mobility, in particular vulnerable populations. In total, 30 participants are enrolled in the programme, including representatives of various Honduran government institutions and civil society organizations that are focused on migrant rights and staff of UNDP and IOM.

71. In June 2024, under the Indonesian chairpersonship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Permanent Observer of the University for Peace to the United Nations Office at Geneva organized a field mission to Nay Pyi Taw where he met with high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, the Special Envoy of ASEAN on Myanmar and representatives of Indonesia and Malaysia and the Embassy of Switzerland in Yangon.

72. The University is in the process of establishing a centre in Rome that is dedicated to exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on society, including addressing ethical issues. In addition, the centre will strengthen ongoing work with the Holy See on interfaith dialogue and the implications thereof for peace.

73. The University for Peace China Centre organized a series of seminars with special guests and a series of visits to prestigious Chinese universities. Representatives of Hebei International Studies University and Beijing Foreign Studies University visited the main campus of the University for Peace in Costa Rica to sign cooperation agreements.

74. During the reporting period, the University for Peace signed agreements with a large number of diplomatic academies around the world.

2. Affiliated centres

75. The Earth Charter Centre for Education for Sustainable Development focuses its efforts on two primary domains: providing training and conducting research on education for sustainable development, with a view to building the capacity of educators and empowering young people. These initiatives are in line with the commitments made as part of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. The Earth Charter Centre aims to foster a renewed sense of global interconnectedness and collective responsibility for the well-being of humanity, the broader community of life and future generations.

76. The University for Peace Human Rights Centre was established in alignment with the Charter of the University for Peace, in which the promotion of understanding, respect and tolerance and the universal advancement of human rights are underscored. The Centre fulfils its mission through specialized human rights education, training, capacity-building and awareness initiatives, by employing a practitioner-based approach that integrates theory with practice. It is also spearheading a collaborative e-learning project that is aimed at operationalizing the right to development within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and collaborates on mainstreaming the right to development in voluntary national review reporting. This initiative is conducted in partnership with the Right to Development Section of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations University International Institute for Global Health.

77. The University for Peace Centre for Executive Education offers innovative training programmes and courses that are designed to develop participants' leadership capacities and foster positive change among professionals. Located in Costa Rica, the Centre focuses on providing executive education programmes, the emphasis of which is on social impact, sustainability and global citizenship. It includes online and in-person workshops, certificate programmes and customized training sessions,

which are all aimed at equipping individuals and organizations with the skills and knowledge needed to address complex global challenges effectively.

F. Local and community relations

78. The relationship between the University for Peace and the local communities of El Rodeo and Ciudad Colón is robust and mutually beneficial. The University contributes significantly to the economy of both communities by employing a considerable number of residents. Through its housing platform, the University connects its students with local property owners. In addition, University authorities, faculty members and students actively participate in and enrich the cultural activities of those communities. As part of this partnership, the University also awards an annual scholarship to a deserving resident of Ciudad Colón, thereby further strengthening community ties and support.

79. The current Mayor of the municipality of Mora, Alfonso Jiménez, who was recently elected for his second term, graduated from the University with master's degree in conflict resolution, peace and development.

80. In 2023, Angie Cruickshank Lambert, who graduated from the University with master's degree in international law and human rights, was elected as the Ombudsperson of Costa Rica.

81. In 2023, the University launched the Proyecto Construye initiative with funding from the United States Embassy in Costa Rica. Led by the University for Peace, this initiative is aimed at strengthening local adaptive capacities to combat climate change through enhanced adaptation governance, building the technical skills of authorities and developing tools to promote adaptive actions. The approach used as part of the initiative is also documented in three publications, so that it serves as a model that can be replicated for other municipalities across Costa Rica.

82. In 2023, the University launched the POLKA project in collaboration with the prestigious IHE Delft Institute for Water Education and other leading institutions, as an initiative that is designed to revolutionize the relationship between policy and practice to boost sustainable food production and ecosystem preservation in sub-Saharan Africa.

83. In November 2023, the University hosted representatives of the Government of Costa Rica, including the President, Rodrigo Chaves Robles, ministers, legislators and mayors within the Province of San José, for an executive meeting. The event marked the President's first visit to the campus.

84. In June 2024, the University hosted the third working session to develop a management plan for the Garcimuñoz Interurban Biological Corridor, involving representatives of the local committee, the National System of Conservation Areas of Costa Rica and the project on the transition towards an urban green economy, with valuable contributions from the municipalities of Alajuela and Mora, academic staff of the University and Earth Charter International.

G. International relations

85. In August 2022, the University awarded the degree of doctor honoris causa to the founders of the Unification Church of the Republic of Korea for their lifelong commitment to fostering a culture of peace and unity worldwide.

86. In November 2022, the University hosted a seminar on leadership for peacebuilding in Central America in collaboration with the Fulbright Association and

the United States Embassy in Costa Rica. Over 20 Fulbright scholars representing Costa Rica and various Central American nations participated in the event, including two former Presidents of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera and Óscar Arias Sánchez.

87. In September 2023, the University conferred the degree of doctor honoris causa upon the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro Urrego, in recognition of his leadership in promoting social justice, sustainable development and human rights in the country, as well as his dedicated pursuit of lasting peace. The ceremony marked the official inauguration of the academic year 2023–2024.

88. In September 2023, the University signed a memorandum of understanding with Zhejiang International Studies University, which is designed to promote mobility among Zhejiang International Studies University students who are interested in pursuing their graduate degree at the University for Peace.

89. In November 2023, the University took part in the Special Envoys and Coordinators Combating Antisemitism forum, an initiative of the World Jewish Congress, held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

90. The University's agreements with the University of Santander and the Pontifical University Javeriana in Colombia have enabled the development of educational activities that are focused on post-conflict studies, which has contributed to the peace process in Colombia.

91. The partnership between the University for Peace and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture has deepened cooperation in the area of sustainable agriculture. At the 2024 graduation ceremony, the Director of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, Manuel Otero, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices and the role of education in advancing agricultural innovation.

92. In December 2023, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain announced the country's pledge to offer a high-level academic programme on peaceful coexistence diplomacy. Implemented together with the University for Peace, the academic programme is designed to provide participants with knowledge and skills related to conflict studies and enhance peaceful coexistence and is directed at diplomats, government employees, academics, researchers and entrepreneurs in Bahrain and the Middle East and North Africa region.

93. In July 2024, the University signed an agreement with the International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders in Málaga, Spain, to develop, with the support of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence and the GIOYA Higher Education Institution, a new postgraduate diploma programme on peaceful coexistence and the strengthening of human rights, peace and development.

H. Relations with the United Nations system

94. In 2021, the University for Peace was declared a hub for Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) by the United Nations Academic Impact. Over the years, the University has promoted extensive research and study with respect to the right to development, including through e-courses that are aimed at providing training for stakeholders on the normative, theoretical and practical relevance of and mechanisms to operationalize the right to development in the implementation of the Goals.

95. The Head of the Chair on Countering Illicit Trade and Preventing Transnational Organized Crime engages with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime by

participating in constructive dialogue on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In addition, the Head of the Chair contributes to the discussions of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes.

96. In March 2022, the University conducted a workshop on leading in complex and challenging times, during a regional meeting of United Nations Children's Fund, held in Panama City, with the participation of the Rector, Francisco Rojas Aravena, who provided insights into current developments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

97. In March 2023, the University hosted the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, for a global launch event of the guide for policymakers on addressing hate speech through education, which was organized by the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, the Resident Coordinator Office in Costa Rica, UNESCO and the University for Peace.

98. In September 2023, the Vice-Rector of the University for Peace, Juan Carlos Sainz-Borgo, and the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Maritza Chan-Valverde, met with the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed, to discuss the joint work agenda and the University's contributions to the new peace and security agenda.

99. In January 2024, the Permanent Observer of the University for Peace to the United Nations Office at Geneva, David Fernández-Puyana, presented the work of the University at an executive briefing convened by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, for Member States and United Nations entities. Also in attendance were the Rector of the University for Peace, Francisco Rojas Aravena, and the Chancellor of the University for Peace, Enrique Baron-Crespo.

100. In March 2024, the Permanent Observer of the University for Peace to the United Nations Office at Geneva met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Rebeca Grynspan, to discuss strengthening the collaboration between the institutions with a view to promoting peaceful coexistence, fostering dialogue and advancing diplomatic efforts.

101. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, the Rector of the University for Peace participated in the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

102. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, the University for Peace was honoured with the Living Integration Seal, which is awarded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Costa Rica, for its work carried out on behalf of refugees in the country.

103. During the reporting period, the University worked on implementing both academic and humanitarian programmes with the following United Nations entities: UNDP, IOM, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNICRI, UNITAR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

104. The University for Peace is an active member of the United Nations country team and actively participates in regular and special sessions, events and summits. Its contributions support both national and regional objectives and play a direct role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

I. Financial situation and governance

105. The University aims to achieve financial independence by leveraging revenue from its educational and training programmes and initiatives, donations and special initiatives that support its operations, as well as contributions from Member States. The University is particularly grateful to its partners and donors, which have been instrumental in advancing key projects.

106. Notwithstanding institutional efforts, conflicts across the globe, together with attacks on multilateral institutions, have resulted in a severe decline in cooperation and funding for development and education. In this environment, international travel restrictions have intensified due to new visa requirements and the rising cost of living has led to a decline in the number of students pursuing postgraduate programmes.

J. Development strategy

107. The University will align its work agenda with that of the United Nations, under the stewardship of the Secretary-General, with a view to identifying and harnessing the synergies necessary to effectively implement its mandate.

108. The University is currently working to establish cooperative relationships with private philanthropic institutions, developing initiatives to promote innovation in education and building its capacity to accredit the third-party programmes of other entities, while also undertaking diplomatic work.

109. The University continues to expand its reach and impact worldwide. Through its regional offices and representatives, it is extending its educational programmes and research initiatives to new locations, while ensuring that they are more accessible to and relevant for diverse communities.

110. In addition, the University is pioneering innovative topics related to the study of peace and conflict. Its work remains closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recent advancements in areas such as gender equality, human rights, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and climate change.

111. The international community has demonstrated its strong support for the University, as evidenced by General Assembly resolution [76/73](#). In the resolution, Member States that had not already done so were invited to accede to the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace, thereby demonstrating their support for an educational institution devoted to the promotion of a universal culture of peace and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

112. The University for Peace is committed to further strengthening and broadening the outreach of its programmes and activities and fostering increased cooperation and capacity-building among Member States in the areas of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The University continues to call upon intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, interested individuals and philanthropists to contribute to its programmes and core budget, in order to enable it to continue its work around the world.

III. Conclusions

113. The promotion of peace remains a paramount objective of the ever-changing international agenda, as underscored by the United Nations. In order to achieve this goal, a focus on political and peacebuilding dimensions of peace is necessary to mitigate ongoing conflicts, prevent emerging threats and address both global and

national polarization. Strengthening multilateralism requires the collective effort of all stakeholders.

114. It is essential to educate leaders to promote a culture of peace and increase their understanding of the underlying causes of conflict. This imperative underscores the importance of the work of the University for Peace over the past 44 years.

115. Reaffirming the University's commitment to peace, solidarity, compassion, cooperative multilateralism and humanity is the path forward. The underlying principles of irenology and peace education will serve to guide the University as it fulfils its mission and reinforce its role as a beacon of peace and non-violence.
