



## Emerging UN Sustaining Peace Effort – Experts Dialogue

December 14, 2017

2018 will be a crucial year for the United Nations in its efforts to address fundamental peace and security challenges of a rapidly changing world. Central to the 2016 peacebuilding resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council<sup>1</sup> are the preparation of a UN Secretary-General Report on Sustaining Peace and the convening, from April 24-25, 2018 in New York, of a UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. These are critical milestones in the United Nations’ path toward a strategy that sets peacebuilding and conflict prevention at the heart of UN programming.

In seeking to strengthen ties between the New York and Washington policy communities, and to feed expert perspectives from the Washington D.C. foreign policy, practitioner, and advocacy communities into preparations for the UNGA High-Level Meeting, the Stimson Center, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, and the United Nations Association National Capital Area convened an expert discussion at the Alliance for Peacebuilding. The consultation sought to uncover fresh ideas and distill lessons from concrete experiences dealing with the UN’s broad range of activities and instruments—each employed in collaboration with local, national, regional, and global partners—to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of violent conflict. It also included the related areas of innovative financing, governance, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The dialogue was co-facilitated by Melanie Greenberg (President and CEO of the Alliance for Peacebuilding) and Dr. Richard Ponzio (Director of the Stimson Center’s Just Security 2020 Program and co-chair of the UNA-National Capital Area Peace & Security Committee). It began with an overview presentation and exchange on the “Expectations and Broad Parameters for the forthcoming UN Secretary-General Sustaining Peace Report and UNGA High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace” by Dr. Henk-Jan Brinkman, Chief of Policy, Planning and Application at the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office. He was followed by Professor Joris Larik, Assistant Professor of Comparative, EU, and International Law at Leiden University and Senior Researcher at The Hague Institute for Global Justice, who provided a brief overview presentation on “Related Recommendations from the

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/ 2282

Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, the Independent Commission on Multilateralism, and 2015 UN Peace & Security Reform Panels/Studies.”

In concluding the dialogue, Ambassador Lynn Pascoe, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and a UNA-NCA Board Member, shared final reflections drawing on his years on the frontlines of the UN’s peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. Participants were also invited to take part in follow-on activities with an emerging community of scholars and practitioners interested in further advancing UN peace and security reforms and innovations in the lead-up to the UN’s 2020 Summit (September 2020 in New York) marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the world body.

*Organizations represented at the Emerging UN Sustaining Peace Agenda Experts Dialogue and/or contributing to this brief synthesis report include: Alliance for Peacebuilding, America University, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Center on International Cooperation, Council on Foreign Relations, fhi360, George Mason University, Georgetown University, The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, Leiden University, Mercy Corps, Peace Direct, the Stimson Center, United Nations Association-National Capital Area, United Nations Foundation, United States Agency for International Development, (former) United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, United States Department of State, United States Institute of Peace, and the World Bank*

*The following is a synthesis of major insights, experiences, and recommendations shared by participants during the dialogue grouped around three categories (1. Major Successes and Failures, 2. Integration, and 3. Financing/Mechanics/Capabilities/Leadership):*

### Major Recommendations

- For the United Nations to fulfill successfully the full potential of its new Sustaining Peace Agenda, it will require a **“systems analysis approach”**, whereby the goals and purposes of the UN system are carefully studied and the full capabilities of actors across the UN system and their international partners are understood and employed collectively **to maximize positive peacebuilding outcomes in an efficient manner**. There is concern, however, about the UN’s ability to apply systems analysis, especially as it requires strong political leadership skills, coherence and coordination, the effective use of new technologies, and a willingness to prioritize and shift currently allocated resources in response to the empirical evidence and analysis generated (both at headquarters and **in the field through a newly empowered Resident Coordinator system, where host country-level needs should dictate the UN reforms and capabilities required**).
- The UN Peacebuilding Commission has made important strides in its initial eleven years, including through innovating various configurations for engagement and a flexible integrated peacebuilding strategy instrument. However, consistent with the 2016 peacebuilding resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/ 2282), the Peacebuilding Commission should be formally entrusted with an additional **conflict prevention mandate and empowered with a new Peacebuilding Audit that serves as an important early warning and early action tool**, similar to the Human Rights Council’s country reporting mechanism—the Universal

Periodic Review—that gave substantive meaning to the Council’s upgrade, in 2005, from a less effective and at times controversial Human Rights Commission. This new kind of **“early warning”** and **“early action”** instrument and discussion within the PBC could work out an agreement on the signs and factors associated with possible mass atrocity events, and it could designate responsibility for analysis and warning within the newly proposed Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to enable quicker decision-making.

- **Inclusivity in holistic peacebuilding** approaches represents a significant goal, but it **can only be achieved through the removal of (sometimes long-standing) systemic barriers**, such as legal constraints and top-down approaches to governance. For government and international organization **engagement with local civil society and communities** to become more effective through, for example, **feedback loops** that employ innovative forms in communicating local needs and priorities to decision-makers and **bottom-up information systems** as UN advocacy tools, such approaches must be carefully coordinated, efficient, and responsive to both understanding and overcoming obstacles to local civil society participation in a conflict-sensitive way.
- Improving integration through the Sustaining Peace Agenda also requires UN Secretary-General António Guterres to **demonstrate that his recent peace and security Secretariat reforms strengthen the UN’s ability to harness and guide effectively the peacebuilding capabilities** of the entire UN system and other regional and non-state actors, whereas legitimate concerns have arisen that the newly proposed Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) could **subordinate the peacebuilding contributions of development, humanitarian, and other actors to political prerogatives**. Similar worries have also surfaced that the newly proposed—and likely well-resourced—Department of Peace Operations (DPO) may **subordinate lower profile prevention and peacemaking tools associated with Special Political Missions to the sometimes blunt, security-oriented instruments for conflict management associated with high-profile, yet often costly and political intrusive peacekeeping operations**. With these and other reforms, peacebuilding must continue to serve as an “over-arching concept” at the center of the UN system’s work.
- There remain challenges to selling the United Nations in Washington. U.S. policymakers may be more inclined to invest in the UN system’s conflict prevention and sustain peace capabilities, if there were **sustained evidence supporting what works and where the UN adds value in strategic ways**—whether individually or in partnership with other actors.
- The Sustaining Peace Agenda should **focus, over the short, medium, and long-term, on developing leaders, including women and youth**. Investing in youth will develop a bench of potential leaders, thereby contributing to future stability. Namibia demonstrates an unlikely case of relative stability today, for example, due to its prioritization of **investments in education** since the end of the Cold War. **Directly engaging youth groups** will also facilitate the implementation of this generational leadership-building agenda.
- Move towards greater **standing reserve capacities for rapid deployment of civilian specialist skills**: The Mediation Support Unit’s current Standby Team of eight mediators is a good initiative but represents only a start of what is needed. *Next step*: the development of a new roster and regular training of around **fifty top-flight mediators and experienced diplomats** in the latest negotiation techniques, who can step-in at short-notice as UN Special Envoys/Special Representatives of the

Secretary-General and provide leadership as an integral part of a new, rapid-response **UN Civilian Response Capability of approximately five hundred personnel**. Another 2000 UN system staff (including from the international financial institutions, as well as a select number of municipal administrators, engineers, lawyers, and others with specialized skills) could also receive training as part of a major reserve component of this new capability that would operate skillfully and nimbly alongside Blue Berets and UN Police.

## Other Important Issues and Recommendations Raised in Key Areas of Concern

### 1) Major Successes and Failures

- Many of the noted **“success” cases in sustaining peace** in a fragile and conflict-affected society **involved female leadership** in either civil society and/or formal political processes. The Sustaining Peace agenda, therefore, ought to align with UNSCR 1325 and the principles and commitments associated with the **Women, Peace, & Security Agenda**. The women’s empowerment gains often achieved during war-time need to be sustained and made irreversible during the post-conflict and rebuilding phase.
- Progress in multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations can be measured, in large part, by the degree to which they **implemented their mandate** before leaving the country or not, AND the degree to which basic **host country institutions stayed in place** after the mission (i.e., it would be shortsighted to only judge a mission’s success based on a narrow definition of “mandate fulfillment”, compared to the preferable and **more holistic goal of strengthened host country state and non-state institutions**). One recent comprehensive study documented ten cases of relatively successful peacekeeping (including Sierra Leone, El Salvador, and Namibia) and five cases where the UN’s shortcomings were amplified.
- Building a durable, inclusive, and just peace requires a host country and its international partners, including the United Nations, to **combine security assistance** (including security sector reform) **with basic social services, governance, and rule of law reform and strengthening**. In this regard, the Sustaining Peace Agenda should give attention to **local policing** in affected countries. Policing matters, but few international actors, including the United Nations, conduct effective training and mentoring that build strong local police forces capable of ensuring the security and safety of the local population (e.g., due to perverse incentives provided through donor assistance).
- Peacebuilders should understand that **building government legitimacy** in the eyes of a conflict-affected society **requires anti-corruption strategies built into capacity-building programs**, giving equal emphasis to personal and institutional integrity and ways to incentivize it. Reducing corruption is essential to building the effective rule of law, given that **corruption amounts to bending that rule at will**. External actors, such as the United Nations, should **avoid rushing a host country pre-maturely into elections**, which can sometimes have adverse, de-stabilizing effects.
- Beginning in 2008 (in advance of a planned election in Guinea-Conakry where concerns arose about possible violence between the government and opposition), **the Peacebuilding Fund has been employed strategically to avert the initial outbreak of violence**. This kind of targeted preventive

action—especially to facilitate local civil society and host government capacity-building to prevent the outbreak of mass atrocities—should be further encouraged and taken to a far greater scale.

## 2) Integration (including coalition-building, governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector, women, and youth)

- Consistent with the 2016 peacebuilding resolutions, a **diverse coalition of state and non-state actors**—including from regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental and community-based organizations, think tanks, universities, the media, social movements and religious organizations, and the business community—should be engaged actively both in **shaping the new UN Sustaining Peace Agenda and then implementing / realizing the new vision and approach** associated with this comprehensive, multi-actor agenda for building durable, inclusive, and just peace. In this regard, it is important to get the Sustaining Peace conversation out of New York and down to the regional and country levels.
- Improved integration and coordination across the UN system and with international partners requires, first and foremost, the **breaking down of silos through new incentives and competencies** (e.g., for UN Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and UN Resident Coordinators) **and working toward a shared analysis of a specific problem-set**. It further depends upon **shared tools for building resilient local** (host country/region) **institutions that increase the likelihood of “peacefulness”**—rather than simply reacting defensively to the immediate perceived causes of violent conflict and injustice.
- **The link between the Sustaining Peace Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, seems unclear**. Broadly speaking, the 2030 framework aims to reduce inequality and the drivers of violent conflict, so it will be critical to **clarify how Sustaining Peace reinforces and possibly transcends this agenda** (e.g., by offering new tools, resources, and strategies for conflict transformation through an emphasis on identifying/fostering inherent indigenous capabilities to build positive—inclusive, accountable, and just—peace in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions).
- The **“New Deal”** for engagement in fragile states was intended to reflect both UN and OECD perspectives, but in the end, it **was considered more of an OECD framework** (despite initial efforts, in 2008, to make the UN Peacebuilding Commission a full and equal partner in its development). The values of the New Deal were embedded into SDG 16, and the **lessons of applying the New Deal principles**, especially in “g7+ countries”, should be distilled and **drawn upon when rolling-out the outcome document/action agenda** at the April 2018 High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in New York (e.g., how to best prioritize peacebuilding and statebuilding goals, while avoiding the “process trap”). We should also work toward more effective coordination at the country level between UN missions, donors, civil society, and g7+ governments.
- Refugees and migration are two critical issues that should be acknowledged within the broader Sustaining Peace Agenda, and appropriate roles should be identified for UNHCR, UNFPA, and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in **teasing out important linkages, both positive and negative, between refugees, migration, conflict prevention, and sustaining peace** in the

run-up to both the April 2018 High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in New York and the December 2018 Global Forum on Migration and Development in Marrakesh.

- Though it is important to **connect the private sector, economic development, and sustaining peace**, the **links are neither clear nor inevitable**. Some countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire, and the chocolate candy makers who rely on cocoa are attractive to multi-national corporations and foreign markets. An argument can be made that **investing in stability** in fragile and conflict-affected countries can also **result in jobs** in the U.S. and other countries where multi-national corporations operate.
- The new kinds of Peacebuilding Commission engagements in, for example, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and the Sahel region, are welcome developments, as is the further streamlining and innovation of the PBC's integrated peacebuilding strategy tool. However, one should **not overlook the important work of certain Country-Specific Meetings** (e.g., on Burundi and Sierra Leone in the early days of the PBC) and the **effective leadership and creativity exerted by their chairpersons** (e.g., Norway and Switzerland in the case of Burundi and The Netherlands in the case of Sierra Leone). A balance should, therefore, be struck within the peacebuilding architecture between innovation and reform, on one hand, and building upon progress when certain approaches have borne results, on the other.
- On the **role of regional organizations in advancing the Sustaining Peace Agenda**, there has been, for example, a **recent push in EU Defense cooperation**, with new 500m EUR defense fund and Permanent Structured Cooperation for more demanding field missions. It will be important to ensure that this links up to the Sustaining Peace Agenda and the requirements for effective UN integrated peace operations, especially as EU experience with civil-military ops develops further. In addition, in the cases of the **"hybrid" AU-UN peace operation in Darfur** and **ECOWAS-UN conflict prevention activities in West Africa**, there are now many lessons to distill and possibly take to greater scale in support of greater UN-regional/sub-regional organization collaboration.

### 3) Financing/Mechanics/Capabilities/Leadership

- A key concern for the Sustaining Peace Agenda—especially as it represents "unfinished business" from the 2016 peacebuilding resolutions—is the United Nations' interest in exploring and securing new innovative modalities for the financing of peacebuilding. However, the UN **Secretariat often appears ill-equipped to foster the creative and even disruptive kinds of change that may be required to achieve real innovation and new streams of sustainable financing for peacebuilding**. Moreover, **Member States are far from unified on basic positions about, for example, assessed and voluntary contributions to UN peacebuilding** and the structures and priorities most urgently needed in the delivery of peacebuilding assistance.
- Compared to peacekeeping and security operations, it remains difficult to secure funding for peacebuilding activities that build local resilience. **Data and analysis should be employed more effectively to demonstrate to prospective donors**—both in the public and private sectors—the actual **returns on investment** over the short, medium, and long-term from targeted investments in building durable, inclusive, and just peace in a conflict-affected country (e.g., through the new Global Alliance for reporting on Goal 16).

- Many lessons on innovative public-private partnership and private sector-led financing models can be tapped from the UN Global Compact's Business for Peace network of national chapters. At the same time, many private companies have identified strong ways to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, **except for Goal 16 where further guidance and illustrations of the business community's pioneering role in peacebuilding** are still needed urgently.
- Compared to the Nordics and other traditional donors of UN peacebuilding, **the U.S. is frequently on the wrong side of debates about the financing of UN peacebuilding activities.**
- **Non-traditional peacebuilding donors** (e.g., China, India, and the Gulf States and their Sovereign Wealth Funds) and **new development banks**, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank, are increasingly well-equipped to contribute to efforts to achieve sustainable peace.
- **Sustaining Peace** is about prevention and not simply the prevention of conflict recurrence. It **must adopt a broader peacebuilding understanding that stresses prevention before, during, and after violent conflict.** Just as sustainable development is about reconciling economic growth and environmental protection, **sustaining peace can be viewed as the reconciliation of security and justice, or "Just Security".**
- On one hand, sustainable, long-term plans essential to rebuilding conflict-affected countries require **credible, long-term mandates for peacekeeping operations.** On the other, when peacekeepers eventually withdraw, they should **create the space and conditions for even greater, civilian-led peacebuilding** that is necessary to build durable, inclusive, and just peace.
- Better integrate **the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Sustaining Peace Agenda**, for example: (i) by adopting a **protocol or outlining factors that could guide the UN Security Council** when it deliberates on the referral of a situation to the ICC; (ii) by sustaining a dialogue between the ICC and the Security Council by **allowing the ICC's president and prosecutor to brief the UNSC periodically;** (iii) by supporting ICC action against perpetrators, including **enforcing ICC arrest warrants and sanctions** (such as freezing assets); and (iv) by employing the **ICC to secure justice for sexual and gender-based crimes**, as called for in the 2015 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Global Implementation Study.
- To counter violent extremism, **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs should focus on social reintegration of ex-fighters** as much as focusing on immediate income support, and they could employ biometric data to build databases of individuals who process through DDR programs anywhere in the region.
- **Hybrid models of justice** combining customary, religious, and international human rights principles **can offer a realistic and cost-effective way forward for rule of law promotion** in fragile and conflict-affected environments.
- A new and much more robust **culture of prevention** has emerged since the 2015 AGE, HIPPO, and 1325 Global Implementation Study, combined with the leadership of UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the recently released UN-World Bank Study *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. The time has come to seize the opportunities created by this shift to **mobilize new resources and introduce flexible, high-impact, and integrative tools** toward the effective operationalization of the norm of prevention.

## Annex: Discussion Questions: UN Sustaining Peace Experts Dialogue

### Major Successes and Failures

- What do you view as **success stories and “best practice”** among the UN’s **activities and tools to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of violent conflict**? Which actors (e.g., local, national, regional, and global non-state actors or governmental/intergovernmental bodies) were most effective in partnering with a UN department, program, fund, or agency to achieve positive results? How important are **leadership, capabilities, accountability, and strategic planning** to effective peacebuilding outcomes?
- What do you view as the **failures** and the **gaps** that need filling in the UN’s broad range of conflict prevention and management activities? Which actors (e.g., local, national, regional, and global non-state actors or governmental/intergovernmental bodies) did the UN system fail to adequately consult and partner with, thereby contributing to poor results?

### Integration (incl. coalition-building, gov’ts, IOs, civil society, private sector, women & youth)

- How can the UN Secretary-General’s Sustaining Peace Report and UNGA High-Level Meeting in 2018 focus greater attention on efforts to further advance the **Women, Peace, and Security Agenda**, as presented in UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000)? What are the **major gaps** remaining in the full and balanced implementation of Resolution 1325?
- How can the UN Secretary-General’s Sustaining Peace Report and UNGA High-Level Meeting in 2018 focus greater attention on efforts to further advance the **Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda**, as presented in UNSC Resolution 2250 (2015)? What are the **major gaps** remaining in the full and balanced implementation of Resolution 2250?
- What are some of the best discuss ways to **enhance cooperation between the UN and (sub-) regional organizations** in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding?
- How can **individuals and organizations** (e.g., within civil society and the business community), in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa, **best contribute to the preparations** of the UN’s emerging sustaining peace agenda? How can **inclusive coalitions** among Member States, civil society, and the private sector be encouraged to **reinforce recommendations** from the UNGA’s High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace and corresponding Secretary-General’s Report?
- How can the **private sector** be engaged better in peacebuilding and conflict prevention?

### Financing/Mechanics/Capabilities/Leadership

- What are some **innovative forms of financing** (e.g., new kinds of public-private partnerships) for UN-supported peacebuilding, peacekeeping operations, and special political missions that merit serious consideration or possible scaling-up? How can both traditional and non-traditional donors be encouraged (or better incentivized) to make multi-year commitments to the **Peacebuilding Fund**? What are some **non-monetary contributions** that can play a significant role in peacebuilding efforts?
- What are some innovative **news tools and activities in strengthening governance and rule of law** that the United Nations may consider for consolidating a durable and just peace in fragile and conflict-affected states?
- How can **relationships be understood, and mutually reinforcing synergies pursued**, between the emergent sustaining peace agenda and the UN’s two other major pillars: **development** (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals) and **human rights** (e.g., transitional justice mechanisms and the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review)?
- How can the **UN** work more effectively with organizations like the **World Bank** and the **OECD** on broad frameworks such as the **New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States**?