Ideas and Global Platforms for Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace on the Road to 2020

Side Event during the UNGA High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace
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Conflict Prevention & Sustaining Peace: Recommendations from
Just Security in an Undergoverned World and
The Albright-Gambari Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance

Thank you, Your Excellencies, Ambassadors Itegboje and Grant, distinguished panelists and participants. I too am delighted to have this opportunity to contribute to this important, forward-looking conversation, designed to take the commitments made at this week's High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace onto the Road to 2020 and the United Nations' 75th anniversary commemoration.

As this informed group is aware, the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations made 2015 a watershed year for international efforts to renew and strengthen how the international community copes with the many challenges to sustaining peace. These efforts included the UN-initiated Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, the Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. Each of these reports made important contributions to the evolution of UN policy on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In 2015, first at The Peace Palace in The Hague, and then here at UN Headquarters, Secretary Madeleine Albright and I also launched our Commission's report, entitled "*Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance*." Underscoring the intersection of security and justice in global governance, our report offered a vision of what we called "Just Security," a framework of analysis to ensure that neither justice nor security imperatives are neglected by

critical international policy debates, such as those we are having here, this week. The Stimson Center and The Hague Institute for Global Justice have continued to develop this framework, most recently in a companion volume to the Commission's report, entitled *Just Security in an Undergoverned World*, brought out earlier this year through Oxford University Press.

In my brief remarks this afternoon, I wish to highlight three recommendations from these works whose implementation would reinforce the UN's Sustaining Peace agenda, and to highlight just two "vehicles for reform" to help take this agenda forward between now and 2020.

First, the United Nations is in urgent need of **greater conflict mediation capacities**, beginning with a cadre of senior mediators and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General, who would be on call to serve as the senior echelon of a larger professional civilian capacity for UN mediation efforts and field missions. While I am proud to have overseen the establishment of DPA's Mediation Support Unit in 2005, and it is encouraging to see demand for its services growing, fundamental peacemaking and preventive diplomacy skills must be requirements for all senior-level UN staff deployed to the field, buttressed by regular, state-of-the-art training opportunities. Such targeted and cost-effective investments will also go a long way toward *operationalizing* the Secretary-General's laudable emphasis on "preventive action" as a central tenet of the UN sustaining peace agenda.

Second, although the UN Peacebuilding Commission has made important strides in its eleven years of operation, innovating various configurations for engagement with member states, and developing flexible integrated peacebuilding strategy instruments consistent with the 2016 peacebuilding resolutions, the Commission should also be formally entrusted with **a mandate for conflict prevention, and** be empowered with **a new Peacebuilding Audit tool** to promote early warning and early action**.** Such a tool would be similar to the Human Rights Council's country reporting mechanism—the *Universal Periodic Review*—which has given substantive meaning to that Council's work since its reform in 2005. This new kind of **early warning** and **early action** instrument and discussion within the PBC could lead to agreement on the signs and factors associated with growing potential for a mass atrocity event. Responsibility for analysis and warning could be assigned within the Secretary-General's newly proposed Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to enable quicker decision-making.

Third, our research strongly suggests better integrating the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Sustaining Peace Agenda, for example: 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; by sustaining a dialogue between the ICC and the Security Council, **allowing the ICC's president and prosecutor to brief the Security Council periodically**; [and] by increasing Security Council support of ICC action against perpetrators, including by helping to **enforce ICC arrest warrants and by having the Security Council enact sanctions, where appropriate.**

In terms of "vehicles for reform" to help take this agenda forward between now and 2020, one vehicle is to organize in the run-up to the United Nations' 75th anniversary a series of discussions that are both *intergovernmental and multistakeholder*, leading to the convening, in September 2020, of a **Leaders Summit on UN Renewal, Innovation, and Reform**. The 2020 Summit is already expected to include a five-year review of progress toward meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. It further has the potential to take a step back to contemplate the international system and its institutions, anchored around the United Nations, with a view toward system-wide reforms, building on the Secretary-General's existing proposals, that seek greater coherence, reduced waste and duplication of effort, and mutually reinforcing linkages between several, interdependent issue areas. My fellow panelist, Mr. Fergus Watt, will share details on a new civil society-led effort, the UN 2020 Initiative, dedicated to making this ambitious goal a reality in little more than two years' time.

A second "vehicle for reform" is the proposed creation of an online Platform on Global Security, Justice & Governance Reform. Operating predominantly through virtual meetings, this new and informal global network will aim to harness the expertise found in think thanks, universities, activist organizations, businesses, governments, and international organizations to generate innovative global governance reform proposals for the 2020 Summit and other multilateral processes for progressive change.

As the United Nations knows all-too-well, reform and renewal for any organization needs to be continuous, well-researched, and well-designed and executed. Combining some of the recommendations I have shared today with other forward-leaning ideas; with other new, dynamic, and progressive global platforms and networks; and with the reform-minded leadership of the Secretary-General and key Member States, we can, together, better confront the challenges to further strengthening how the UN conducts peacebuilding,

conflict management, and the prevention of deadly conflict. The international community's collective progress this week will also signal that further, more ambitious efforts – *intended to renew, innovate, and reform our shared world body* – are possible and, indeed, a moral and practical imperative on the Road to 2020 and beyond. Thank you.