

AN ENHANCED ROLE FOR THE UN IN PEACE & HUMAN SECURITY



September 2023

The Peacemaking Reflection Group (PRG) is an informal group of former international civil servants, who wish to make their collective experience available to today's decision-makers. While the Group fully realizes that the world today is different from the times of their active service, its members strongly believe that the UN Charter's principles and provisions remain valid. What needs to change is how these principles and provisions are being applied, as a standard for national and international politics and all interactions between and among state and non-state actors. The Group respects political diversity and wishes to advocate for innovative ways and means to apply the UN Charter, in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts and achieve sustainable development with human rights for all.

For more on the PRG, see <https://www.foggs.org/prg>

Publication Editors:

Paola Bettelli, Senior Global Governance and Sustainability Advisor, FOGGS

Georgios Kostakos, Executive Director, FOGGS

Yoriko Yasukawa, Vice-President, FOGGS

Technical processing, formatting and publication:

Manan Shah, Junior IT and Research Associate, FOGGS

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Rue Abbé Cuypers 3, 1040 Brussels, Belgium | www.foggs.org

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INTRODUCTION

UN Effectiveness in the Context of the “Twin Summits”: Refocusing on What is Important

Paola Bettelli and Georgios Kostakos¹

Introductory Note

The Peacemaking Reflection Group (PRG) is an informal group of former international civil servants, who wish to make their collective experience available to today’s decision-makers. While the Group fully realizes that the world today is different from the times of their active service, its members strongly believe that the UN Charter’s principles and provisions remain valid. What needs to change is how these principles and provisions are being applied, as a standard for national and international politics and all interactions between and among state and non-state actors. The Group respects political diversity and wishes to advocate for innovative ways and means to apply the UN Charter, in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts and achieve sustainable development with human rights for all.

The purpose of this editorial is to provide the PRG’s reflections and perspective on the deliberations leading up to the “twin summits,” i.e., the SDG Summit (September 2023) and the Summit of the Future (September 2024). Thus far, the expectation seems to be that the two summits should be complementary and their objectives mutually reinforcing, with the SDG Summit focused on the “what” – defining objectives, taking stock, and identifying challenges – and the Summit of the Future (SOTF) focused on strengthening capacities for action and implementation – the “how.”

Since the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020 and the Declaration adopted on the occasion by member states, the UN Secretary-General and his associates have produced a number of documents that include numerous UN reform proposals. Among them the Our Common Agenda Report (September 2021), the subsequent report of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (April 2023), and policy briefs on a variety of topics. In parallel, the UN General Assembly started informal consultations on the modalities and potential

¹**Paola Bettelli** is a Senior Global Governance and Sustainability Advisor at FOGGS. She is an attorney at law and has served in various national and international capacities, including as diplomat and technical negotiator on climate and sustainability issues for Colombia, as well as a UN Secretariat official.

Georgios Kostakos is Executive Director of FOGGS. He has a long experience in global governance, including conflict resolution, sustainable development and UN reform, both as a practitioner and as a researcher. He has held senior positions with the United Nations Secretariat, think tanks and the private sector.

outcomes of the “twin summits”. A common theme in the proposals put forward by the UN Secretary-General is the need to change the current structures, rules and procedures to eventually achieve a better functioning UN and global governance system sometime in the future. Apparently, however, there is no plan or initiative undertaken within the current context to get us closer to the wished-for future.

Although a diverse group with a variety of personalities and opinions, the PRG places a lot more emphasis on what needs to be done now, instead of postponing critical action on pressing matters for after the SOTF in 2024. The Group aspires to help the UN Secretariat and the international community come to the realization that only by acting with urgency now to confront the different crises at hand, on the basis of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and existing structural and operational tools, can we truly chart a path towards an effective multilateral system that works for all.

Immediate imperatives: Focus on a resolution of armed conflict and reallocate resources to achieve the SDGs

When the world is ablaze with climate change related wildfires, destabilized by the wars between Russia and Ukraine, in Sudan, Yemen, Ethiopia and elsewhere, and falls significantly short in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the UN should not wait until 2024 to take the necessary measures to address the impacts of these conflicts on global stability and development, nor to tackle other problems like the high indebtedness of developing countries and the non-provision of agreed funding for climate action, which directly affect the achievement of the SDGs.

What the international community needs now, is to bring the full weight of its efforts to mediate an end to the war in Ukraine. Proposals like those included in the New Agenda for Peace contain thoughtful long-term visions that can be discussed in due course. What is urgently needed, though, is practical steps such as convening an emergency summit, appointing a high-level envoy, and exploring avenues for good faith negotiations. Once progress is made on Ukraine and at least some of the other major conflicts, there will be an opportunity to implement broader improvements to prevent such conflicts from happening again.

In fact, several of the proposals falling under the New Peace Agenda or an Emergency Platform, as proposed by the Secretary-General in Our Common Agenda and subsequent policy briefs can be applied now to the Russia-Ukraine war and its global migration, food, fuel and economic implications, as well as to disasters brought about or exacerbated by climate

change. The lessons learned from the application of these proposals to the current multiple crises would increase our understanding of how UN governance could be enhanced and inform the Summit of the Future and its outcome document.

Given the amounts of money that is currently being syphoned into the Russia-Ukraine War, achieving the SDGs by 2030 is unlikely. Imagine if these resources now feeding the arms industries around the world were directed towards the eradication of poverty, the elimination of hunger, the provision of basic health services, education for all, fighting climate change and a more sustainable functioning of our economies, as per the respective SDGs. Other conflicts, such as those in Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan also greatly distract from the achievement of the SDGs in the countries concerned.

Hence, the UN and the international community would do well to get their priorities right: set wars on a path of resolution, at least an end to active hostilities, and in parallel identify means of strategically catalysing the implementation of the SDGs. For example, the UN could support countries to ascertain and select their own realistic SDG priorities and re-allocate funding within national budgets towards their implementation, while also encouraging the international community to increase ODA for SDG implementation. Re-directing funding to SDG implementation, both nationally and internationally, is necessary for the very reason that the SDGs are, in fact, the missing link for attaining sustainable peace and development.

The UN and its Charter, reformed as necessary, remaining at the centre of global governance

The UN Charter is now embedded in multiple UN international conventions and agreements that provide framework solutions for almost all aspects of our human coexistence. However, the implementation of these conventions and agreements is left to each member state. Full compliance and peace, in the most comprehensive sense, will not be possible, without a vision for a culture of peace at all levels of governance.

This means placing the peaceful resolution of conflicts, as foreseen in Article 33 of the UN Charter, front and center of any New Agenda for Peace and proposing ways and means to guide any peace- oriented action accordingly. Under Article 33, “the parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, of other peaceful means of their own choice.”

The peaceful settlement of a dispute should begin by ending the violence, in practical terms, as soon as possible, with proven violence interruption and containment methodologies. The peaceful settlement of a dispute does not mean that accountability for war crimes or the crime of aggression is forgone, nor that the territorial integrity or self-determination of nations is disregarded. Rather, settling a dispute according to international law involves a step-by-step approach and due process whereby the parties air their grievances and claims before an impartial entity with authority to hear and decide the case.

At the same time, leveraging the necessary resources for the 2030 Agenda, taken as a whole, will be indispensable to create the enabling environment where peace and development can be actualized. Creating momentum through urgent focus on strategic goals, identified by countries according to their own national priorities, could spur innovation and lift people out of poverty by aligning productivity with human development and environmental objectives. The UN could provide updated country level support on SDG strategic policy making, through UN country teams.

SDG 16, on good governance and the rule of law, is essential for peace, development and human rights, because it sets the foundations for effective and accountable institutions responsive to the needs of the people. SDG17 on partnerships acknowledges the rise of influential non-state actors and how they impact all aspects national and international life. This requires formal recognition of empowered civil society in roles related to decision-making and implementation within the global governance architecture, with greater support for women's leadership and initiatives, including in expanded early warning and early action systems, and engaging local actors in the humanitarian -development -peace building continuum.

Harnessing actors and resources beyond formal state-based channels, all the way down to the individual human being, is necessary to promote resilience, immediate response capabilities, and a whole-of-society, can-do culture and dynamic. Alongside Security Council reform, the representation of developing countries, "The Global South", in financial institutions, regional development banks and standard-setting bodies should also be strengthened.

Putting human security at the centre requires mobilizing state and non-state resources to address global challenges of a non-military nature. A Global Resilience Council, intergovernmental in its final decision-making but inclusive of all relevant actors in the process of getting to decisions and in implementation, could be the way to bring about new dynamism and end fragmentation in addressing challenges such as climate change, pandemics, food and water insecurity, biodiversity loss, increasing economic inequalities.

Concluding note

The UN and its Secretary-General need to strongly challenge member states and world leaders to adhere to the UN Charter or come up with proposals to make the Charter relevant again for conflict resolution, and also encourage the strategic redirection of funding from national and international sources towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These combined can lead to a new era of peaceful cooperation, sustainable prosperity, and resilience in the face of the numerous challenges that humanity is facing today. This is also supported by the papers that follow, written by former international civil servants, who remain committed to putting their knowledge and experience from around the world to good use, as responsible world citizens.



RETHINKING PEACE AND CONFLICT

Investing in Security does not Guarantee Peace

The Need for a Peace Architecture

Kerstin Leitner²

Toward a culture of peace

We often hear today that building a new security architecture will guarantee peace. However, a security architecture without a peace architecture will not work. Both are linked, although their foundations are very different:

- a security architecture is built on mistrust, freezing an underlying conflict while the intent of each side remains to eventually prevail on the other;
- a peace architecture is built on trust and the willingness to compromise for what both sides perceive as the common good or of mutual benefit.

The root causes of conflicts are political, economic, social and environmental disputes. A security architecture basically sets these aside, while a peace architecture addresses them squarely and seeks to find solutions by employing non-military ways and means.

The basic elements of settling a conflict according to a security architecture are a ceasefire, demilitarization, arms control or such agreement or agreements, along with verification or even enforcement mechanisms often involving military or police contingents. A peace architecture, though, is driven by social engagement at all levels of the society or societies concerned, leading to sometimes confusing debates and requiring a strong commitment to abide by existing generally accepted rules, and competent political leadership to steer a debate towards generally accepted solutions, and in the case of international conflicts towards a binding diplomatic agreement . Such leadership needs to be nurtured and groomed. A peace architecture needs as a foundation a robust education in the culture of peace, which permeates institutional settings, and ideally all levels of society, from school education through professional training and through many other training and coaching events organized by the variety of civil society actors in business and the media.

²**Kerstin Leitner** served with UNDP for 28 years. Among other functions, she was a Resident Coordinator in Malawi and China. After her UNDP service, she was for 2 years Assistant Director-General at WHO, Geneva, in charge of Health and Environment. She retired from this post in 2005 and now lives in Berlin, Germany. For a further elaboration of the subject of this article see Kerstin's blog at <https://www.kerstinleitner.net>

The differences between peace and security architectures are apparent, and yet the two are linked. Only if and when a culture of peace is strong, and political leaders trust each other in spite of persisting political differences, can arms control efforts be successful. Reduction of armaments and eventual disarmament is needed to free up funding and human resources for addressing goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Disarmament is also necessary in order to have funding available to strengthen through international cooperation the peace architecture globally and at national levels. In fact, such investments are required on a continuous basis, and may well change over time to align to changing circumstances.

For the peaceful settlement of a conflict, it is of utmost importance to scope the extent and content of the conflict, of underlying perceptions and interests. Only when these are known can workable compromises be obtained through negotiations, mediation or arbitration. The monitoring of conflict-generating parameters by UN system organisations has a lot of room for improvement. The currently made assessment of problems provided in specialized reports, followed by the setting of response measures which remain aspirational, is not sufficient. This approach lacks the clarity and motivational force, which is needed to trigger action.

A renewed commitment to the UN Charter

Since 1945 the world has the UN Charter as the foundation of a global peace architecture. Its provisions, especially those of Chapter VI (“Pacific Settlement of Disputes”), are as valid today as they were then. Virtually all existing countries have signed up to uphold the UN Charter as the guide for their behaviour on the international scene. Yet, we have seen many breaches of the peace mandate of the United Nations. What is worse, those who were responsible for those breaches often were not held accountable. This is particularly true for breaches committed by some of the “big powers”, and it is vexing, as they were designated to be the stalwarts of international peace and stability. If they can do it, lesser powers ask, why can we not do it too. Many peace-keeping and peace-keeping operations were stymied through such questioning of their rationale.

The end of the Cold War, after the initial celebration and optimism, led to a new era of unhinged pursuit of national interests in international politics. The UN as an organisation was too weak to withstand this pressure and assert its guiding principles, so it became embroiled in these power struggles. The history of the UN Security Council is a telling example of this embroilment.

In most discussions, in which the question is raised, how the UN can be strengthened, the focus is on institutional and procedural reforms. While these are likely to be needed, what we need first is a renewed political commitment to the principles and procedures of the UN

Charter, acknowledging the preponderance of the shared interests of humanity over partial national interests, including peace and security for all. Like any international treaty or convention, the 78-year-old UN Charter may have gaps or need updating. Guided by ethical and moral values of respecting the common good and cognisant of the diversity of human historical evolution, we can fill those gaps and do the necessary updating by consensus. The UN for good reason was built on the principle of one country, one vote. And the UN Charter has the built-in tension between the sovereignty of the nation state and the right to individual and collective self-determination. Despite its many shortcomings and past failures, it is the best that we have as humanity, and we have to make it work.

Traditional security is premised on defending the national interests. Peace is guided by shared human security and well-being. We need policies, polities and politics which support human security and are thus able to sustain peace locally and globally. To keep the tension between the common good and individual interests in check will remain a never-ending political struggle. The member states of the UN, the UN system organizations and their staff, as well as all other stakeholders will have to invest infinitely more time and energy into understanding and respecting the “otherness” of each other, and to seek solutions that are regarded as fair, just and in the interest of all.

Violence as Pandemic and Related Ways to Deal With It

Gary Slutkin³

Introduction

At this global crisis moment, when the world is experiencing a major war in Europe involving actors across most of the entire Northern Hemisphere, as well as several violent conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and other regions of the world, it is critical to look at violence from an entirely other angle, one based on the new science and proven new tactics. Violence – of all forms including war -- has the characteristic of spreading in the same way that a pathogen spreads; and likewise if left unchecked, the violence itself leads a life of its own. Therefore, the spread of violence needs to be interrupted similarly and with the same urgency – by putting in place measures that are used to curtail the spread of viruses.

The “Cure Violence Global” approach, an epidemic interruption method, based on the methods used by the World Health Organization to reverse the spread of infectious diseases, applies three proven epidemic control strategies to stop violence. Highly selected and trained workers interrupt the transmission of violence, prevent its future spread, and transform the norms related to continued spread. The approach has been successfully applied to many diverse settings, proving its effectiveness across a variety of communities, cultures, and ethnic groups. The methods have been used effectively in Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Trinidad, Syria, Iraq, the UK and the U.S. For example, in Cali, Colombia, in 2020 violent killings were reduced by 30% - 47% by this approach, and 90% drops were shown in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. It has also been applied to the N. Korea – U.S. conflict, as well as other conflict zones, and could be used now to contain the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine war and other conflicts such as in Sudan, Ethiopia and Congo, for example.

These innovative violence interruption models and methods should be an integral part of the new UN Peace Architecture - and could be a major game changer in terms of stopping many of the existing conflicts and other sources of violence.

³**Gary Slutkin**, MD, an infectious disease physician and epidemiologist, founded and for 25 years led Cure Violence Global (CVG). He previously worked at the World Health Organization (WHO), as responsible for epidemic control in cholera, TB, and of the epicenter in central and East Africa for the Global Programme on AIDS, and led the WHO Intervention Development Unit.

Basic concepts

Violence is a disease, meeting the *dictionary definition of disease*: “changes in structure or function of an organ or systems, resulting in characteristic signs and symptoms, that cause disability and death”.

Violence meets the *dictionary definition of contagious* – as it “causes more of itself” – with the usual feature of *spread between people, groups, and countries*.

All population criteria of a contagious disease are met by violence with a) characteristic waves, b) clustering in time and space, and 3) transmission.

All forms of violence are contagious and “bleed” into or morph into each other: including community violence, violence in the home, mass shootings, political violence, and war. These are *syndromes of the same disease* and they cause each other. In other words, people with much exposure to and susceptibility to violence from childhood, in the community, home, or in war are more likely to be involved in any of the other types. Countries behave like individuals in this way as well. Most countries post-civil war tend to have high rates of homicides, not peace. Contagion continues unless abated.

Current conflicts and contagion channels

There is a natural propensity for violence to spread, grow, and worsen. We see this regularly in interstate and intrastate conflicts as we see in the ongoing conflicts at this and any moment. *These are epidemic processes*. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is clearly a relapse of World War I/II. Likewise for many other conflicts – epidemic relapses, variants, or new outbreaks. *The current world situation is a major pandemic of violence*, in that it is global in scope, ongoing and worsening. And with terrible effects and further risks. Tens of millions of people are directly affected and much of the world is destabilized because of the violence pandemic's unrelenting nature and waves going untreated and unmanaged. As for other epidemics, we have massive waves of effects including major food and energy crises, large migrations on multiple continents, political instability, fear and misuse of the fear. This pandemic is not being seen clearly nor is it being stopped with intensity of effort nor correct methods. The spread of the conflict and its multiple effects can be stopped, in the same way that an epidemic can be halted.

At this moment we are mostly “watching” or adding to the acceleration of spread of this disease. Most of the Northern Hemisphere and much of the world is a party to this conflict or at risk, and suffering – as a result of the disability, death and waves that surround these outbreaks. *We may actually be just at an early stage of some or all of the ongoing outbreaks* -

– Russia/Ukraine/NATO, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Myanmar, Venezuela, etc.

As a contagious disease we even know the biological underpinnings, which include the copying of behaviour; dopamine pathways for acknowledgment, attention, credit, or power; pain pathways that keep this going to avoid disapproval or even worse consequences; as well as the relationships between exposure and susceptibility. Interruption of spread uses methods to change these effects and stop further events.

Treatment of the epidemic: interrupting the violence

How do we treat epidemics, what have we learned about treating violence epidemics, and what should we do now?

Treating epidemics requires 1) detection and interruption of next events, 2) interruption of spread, and 3) changing community or country norms. This is applied differently for different modes of spread. Specific infrastructures and systems are built to do this; some epidemic systems can be used for others.

Methods of epidemic control are time tested, not always applied correctly but time tested and responsible for some of the major achievements of the last couple centuries.

How are violence epidemics treated and how does it work?

Regarding its application to violence, there is now 20 years of experience. More than twenty studies and evaluations show *40-70% drops in lethal violence for different forms of violence* in different countries including with non-state actors and with experience in major conflict zones. It works through having specifically recruited, trained and maintained highly selected violence interrupters as well as persons with other roles with very high access, credibility and trust among and specific to key belligerents. They are maintained as a system, not as ad hoc actors, and specific to each situation.

This works from having a *system which is already in place*, continuous, non-stop, nonjudgmental, independent of political forces, and confidential, which stops things earlier and/or at any stage called upon. This is a standing system. *Proven Effective violence interruption methods need to be urgently set up by the UN in parallel with other organizations to stop major conflicts - now and in the future.*

New Urgent System

We must be clear about our goal: to stop the violence first. Other things can be sorted out later. We need: infrastructure and networks, using some systems that already exist, building others – at multiple levels as for any epidemic (global, regional, country, community); the

right people (access, strong prior relationships, credibility and trust with those that need to be reached); *full time commitment* (not just delegations) but in highly persistent and continuous contact with the key actors or potential actors, those around them, as well as the new support system; the management and capacity to coordinate full time. There are training methods available that can be adapted for any conflict. Everyone involved in violence including those who appear to be causing it, are in a fix and need help through methods of perspective changing and shifts in emotional content, with key support.

Conclusion: A new approach and system

We have greatly misunderstood both prevention and violence itself. Prevention changes the now. It has urgency. Epidemic spread is slowed and stopped anywhere and immediately when there is effective interruption.

Violence needs to be considered outside of political and moralistic frameworks and as a contagious disease. This is not about mediation primarily but about cessation and interruption of violence; mediation is added about half the time. We focus on the processes, not the “bad people”, or blame.

This New System can be effectively built in part with or within the UN but mostly in parallel. It is too risky for the world to depend on one organization, even though it is the central organization we all love and respect and have worked for and need.

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Civil Society : An Active Force for Peace

Suvira Chaturvedi and Michael Heyn⁴

Introduction

The power of civil society as a key actor on social issues, in conflict prevention and resolution, humanitarian-peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery is of utmost importance. Civil society plays a vital role offering a space for bringing people together, facilitating networks and alliances, campaigning to solve pressing problems, providing services particularly to those who are otherwise marginalized, amplifying the voices of the powerless and enabling them to claim and protect their rights. Civil society contributes expertise, awareness raising, acts as a 'watchdog,' monitoring and reporting on human rights issues and violations. It challenges the shortfalls of current systems and works to improve society.

Roles vary depending on the context and challenges, but civil society stands as a pillar fostering democracy and good governance. In Ukraine we have witnessed the vibrant role of CSOs including women-led organizations in quick and creative responses in a harsh conflict environment.

In discussing civil society, it is important to recognize that civil society is not 'a singular voice.' CSOs, women's organizations and groups often diverge across political ideologies and on social issues. While the diversity of views is crucial in representing different groups/people, interests, and experiences, it can also pose a challenge.

But first, who is civil society? We draw here on the role played by civil society and local actors in Ukraine, with the term civil society spanning a wide range of individuals and groups. They

⁴**Suvira Chaturvedi** has more than 30 years international development experience, with the UN (UN Women, UNDP, UNIFEM, ILO, UNICEF), World Bank, USAID, DANIDA, including in senior management positions as UNIFEM Head of Office, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser, Senior Adviser, Team Leader, Staff and Consultant in countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Michael Heyn spent over 40 years working in international development for the United Nations and served in senior positions such as UN Special Delegate (Kosovo), UNDP Regional Representative (Asia, Bangkok), UN Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General for Emergency Relief Operations (Liberia), UNFPA Country Director (South Pacific, Nepal, Kenya), and UNDP Senior Adviser for Conflict Prevention (Yemen). This paper captures the many discussions held in the PRG on the role of civil society as a key partner in addressing the humanitarian-development-and-peacebuilding continuum in Ukraine.

include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women-led organizations, human rights activists, youth and local community-based organizations, and private-sector individuals and organizations pursuing public and social good.

Civil society: cross-cutting roles

- Women's Leadership, Enhanced Agency, and Participation Vital in Conflict Response, Recovery, and Peacebuilding in Ukraine

While there has been a significant and impressive outpouring of support from local, national, and international communities and organizations in response to the dire conflict situation, the highest proportion of frontline responses are being carried out by some 2000 largely women-led Ukrainian civil society organizations operating primarily on a volunteer basis.⁵

Ukrainian women-led organizations have played a pivotal role in providing humanitarian assistance and lifesaving assistance to residents despite a paucity of resources including that they are chronically underfunded.⁶ Nevertheless, they have demonstrated their solid grasp of community needs and have responded quickly and effectively. However, as outlined in the "Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine" undertaken by UN Women and CARE (May 2022)⁷ and important to note, is that while *women's organizations are playing a crucial role in the humanitarian crisis, they are largely absent from decision-making spaces and coordination mechanisms at the local and national level.*

Understanding the challenges that women-led CSOs and women's organizations encounter and the inadequacy of partnerships with UN and donors, it is timely to examine this issue and provide relevant support.⁸ It is equally important that local women/women's organizations, and civil society groups be at the table and meaningfully engaged in Ukraine Recovery Conferences where key decisions are being taken on Ukraine's postwar recovery and reconstruction.

⁵ PRG-Support for a UN System and Civil Society Partnership for Peace in Ukraine (October 7, 2022)

⁶ If Not Now, When? An Open Letter to international donors and NGOs who want to genuinely help Ukraine", Global Fund Community Foundations (CFGF), August 24, 2022:

<https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/news/an-open-letter-to-international-donors-and-ngos-who-want-to-genuinely-help-ukraine/>

⁷Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine, 4 May 2022

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Rapid-Gender-Analysis-of-Ukraine-en.pdf>

⁸This is also pointed out by the Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace and Security in the article, 'Women and Civil Society Must Play Vital Roles in Ukraine's Postwar Recovery' by Melanne Verwee and Jess Keller.

For more than a century women civil society organization (WCSOs) have mobilized in support of peace and disarmament and there are numerous more examples of their activism.⁹ Additionally, examples abound in countries across the globe, shining a light on the courageous and stellar role of women in humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions.¹⁰

- A New Agenda for Peace and Civil Society based on a Partnership of People and Governments

Securing and sustaining peace requires building a partnership of people and governments /intergovernmental organizations working closely together at all levels. Top-down peace solutions have serious limitations, with conflict festering and ready to reignite even in the event of a peace agreement. It is time for a new, more holistic, inclusive, people-centered approach to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and sustainment, through concepts, strategies and practices that engage and channel the power of people to these ends. Elements of such an approach have already been introduced, de facto, in the work of the UN in the peace and security sector, including through the Women Peace & Security Agenda (UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000), the 2030 Agenda-Sustainable Development Goals (2015 – see in particular Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and strong Institutions), the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Agenda (2016), and the World Humanitarian Summit (2016).

- Inclusion of civil society at the heart of multilateralism and a new peace architecture

Engaging civil society can reinvigorate multilateral systems. “No issue received greater advocacy than the need to make the multilateral system more inclusive of groups that have been traditionally left out or marginalized.”¹¹ Multilateralism must engage and empower those outside government to play a far more influential and determinative role.

The UN, its Secretary-General, the UN Secretariat and UN Agencies in this regard have provided impressive leadership, work, and commitment over the past several years.

⁹See, for example, those collected in this article: <https://www.oecd.org/social/gender-development/1896464.pdf>

¹⁰Women building peace Accord Insight <http://www.c-r.org> Published by Conciliation Resources, to inform and strengthen peace processes worldwide by documenting and analyzing the lessons of women building peace.

¹¹High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB), A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future (New York: United Nations University, 2023). https://www.rfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UNU_HLAB_report_Final.pdf

They have done so in the spirit of what was involved in designing and detailing the SDGs which the Deputy Secretary General cited as an Agenda “of the people, by the people, and for the people” and which is expected to be implemented with the participation of “all countries, all stakeholders and all people.”¹²

A new peace architecture requires a bottom-up and locally led paradigm shift

The importance of engaging and empowering the role of people at community/village level as the cornerstone of peace and development cannot be over emphasized. The challenge here is to 'put the people in charge' of managing and achieving their own self-defined priorities, structures, processes, and results. The role of outside support is to facilitate and enhance this "localization" process. The UN could take a lead role in expanding the support for this new inclusive paradigm and in institutionalizing the process. There is a need for advocacy by the PRG.

Challenges and opportunities for an enhanced role of civil society¹³

In sum, some of the main challenges include: limited recognition and support for CSOs from the international community and governments; inadequacy of partnerships with UN and donors; absence of women-led CSOs from decision-making spaces and coordination mechanisms at the local and national level, inadequate funding and capacity building, weak localization practice and funding with ineffective results.

Within the current UN - civil society dialogue, there are also many opportunities and proposals for a more pro-active engagement, empowerment, and support for civil society and other local actors, including businesses.¹⁴

Firstly, a *UN Emergency Peace Service* could be fulfilled primarily by civil society organizations and actors in each country, focused on conflict prevention and otherwise humanitarian and recovery responses. It would institutionalize such efforts led by those who know best the

¹²<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/participation-consultation-and-engagement-critical-elements-effective-implementation-2030-agenda>

¹³Paper prepared for PRG: Support for a UN System and Civil Society Partnership for Peace in Ukraine 7 October 2022.

¹⁴Bahai International Community and Coalition for the UN We Need. Road to the Summit Discussion Series. Compilation of summaries from the various meetings held in the 'Road to the Summit' discussion series. Participation and Representation Better Connecting “We the Peoples” to the Multilateral System Meeting 4: 27 September 2022.

root issues and dynamics, and who with adequate and reliable funding could be effective in attaining and sustaining peace.

At the global level, and of particular relevance to a new peace architecture, instead of establishing as proposed a single UN civil society champion or unit, the challenge is to build civil society/whole-of-society into the structure and formal workings of the UN including roles, responsibilities, and powers. One possibility is the establishment of a permanent *UN Civil Society Advisory Body* within the Security Council framework with decision-making and resolution powers.

Thirdly, there is need for further empowering *women' leadership* for peace, security, and development work. The case for greater priority and more direct and substantial funding for them needs to be made and implemented concertedly.



DEALING WITH THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

For a new security architecture in Europe

Ariel François¹⁵

Root causes of the conflict in Ukraine

Understanding the causes of a conflict requires looking at the historical and geopolitical roots of the dispute, without which no intelligibility of the conflict is possible and no way out of the crisis is visible.

Ukraine's dilemma today boils down to its historical belonging to the Russian zone of influence and its desire at the same time to move away from it. Ukraine has fluctuated between East and West throughout the past four decades. These fluctuations would have been inconsequential if they had not been part of a new stiffening of East-West relations. At the heart of these tensions are NATO's creeping advance in Europe, the growing attractiveness of the Western European model and the deliberate marginalisation of Russia.

Logically, NATO should have been dissolved in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, not only has NATO not been put into end but its forces have been granted new missions of "law enforcement" in the world, under American tutelage. In addition, NATO's military apparatus has continued to expand in Europe, encircling Russia over the years.

The attractiveness of the European model within the former Soviet republics is the second factor of instability that led to the conflict in Ukraine. Middle classes and the young strata of the populations aspire to join the European Union. This attractiveness jeopardizes post-Soviet systems, which are based on authoritarian models, relying on order and tradition, and threatens to bring them down.

Russia's marginalization and even humiliation in the new world order is an additional factor of resentment towards the West. Largely propelled by the United States, this marginalization is the result of a double downgrading: diplomatic and military on the one hand, and economic and social on the other hand.

¹⁵**Patrice-Ariel (Ariel) François** is a retired senior UN official and essayist. After a decade of service with the French government, he got his first appointment with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1980, starting a 25-year career at the service of the United Nations in countries around the world.

The fourth factor of frustration on the part of Russia is the refusal of the Western countries to make progress in the field of collective security. The eagerness of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of the Baltic States to place themselves under the protection of the NATO is undoubtedly a key factor in this. But also, the very little enthusiasm shown by the United States to deprive themselves of a tool that ensures their supremacy in the world.

This war in Ukraine is neither just nor necessary but the result of a fatal series of fears, frustrations and excesses on all sides which lead to fratricidal confrontation. Europe is the plaything of a war of the United States against Russia, certainly by proxy but with the sole purpose of bringing Russia to its knees. In terms of *realpolitik*, the non-stated goal of the United States is to strike down Russia as a potential ally of China and of dragging NATO into a possible worldwide battlefield.

What can be done to end the war

First, a lasting ceasefire should be established with a view of negotiations between belligerents. However, such a ceasefire will become possible only when the parties will be mutually convinced that they will have more to lose than to gain by prolonging the war.

Second, a lasting settlement of the conflict supposes that the status of Crimea and Donbass be the subject of a territorial settlement. It would be illusory for Ukraine to recover all the territory it inherited in 1991 and unreasonable for Russia to claim the forced annexation of the areas it invaded. We are dealing with two fundamental and sometimes conflicting principles of international law: the sovereignty of States and the right of peoples to self-determination.

The disputed regions should accordingly be subject to new referendums under the aegis of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Russia should commit to respect the borders that would result from such consultations, the resulting integrity of the Ukrainian territory and Ukraine's right to join the European Union.

Thirdly, Russia should compensate Ukraine for the destruction to which it has been subjected. The destruction of cities, basic infrastructure, the industrial park, and the countryside should be fully compensated.

Bringing security and peace to Europe

A short-term peace plan, as described above, should be followed by an effort to bring lasting security and peace in Europe.

The first part of this endeavour should be to establish a full-fledged defense system in Western Europe, which would no longer depend on NATO, which Russia considers an existential threat. This would amount to decoupling Europe from the United States for its defence and security. The Atlantic Alliance would no longer remain in the form of an integrated military organisation but as a mere alliance between Europe and North America.

The second part of this endeavour should be to revitalize the security and regional dispute settlement machinery under the aegis of the OSCE. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, played an important role in the past. But the OSCE, born out of this process, found itself relatively marginalized in the post-cold war context. It should be revived.

The third part of this endeavour should consist of constructive dialogue and increasing convergence between the European Union and the Euro-Asian entity, which Russia intends to set up in the place of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Although this new entity, currently going by the name Eurasian Union, is still in gestation, it is clear that Russia - with or without President Putin - would not wish to integrate the European Union as such.

Dialogue and convergence therefore require rapprochement and mutual recognition. It would also confer legitimacy to Russia's leadership in this part of the world and recognition to its role as a pillar of a multipolar world. This relationship should be placed under the aegis of the ten principles of the Helsinki Final Act (1975), including the sovereign right of the concerned States to choose freely the system they prefer, their commitment to refrain from proselytism and their willingness to move towards greater democracy and freedom, respecting the choices of each country and without intervention in their internal affairs. This dialogue and convergence should contribute to the search of common responses to the challenges of our world.

Peace Prospects in Ukraine

Tapio Kanninen¹⁶

When we reflect on peace prospects in the Russia-Ukraine War, we must first examine the causes and reasons given for the war, as it is these narratives that determine what kind of solutions to the war we may propose.

Opposing narratives

There are two competing narratives:

1. The prevailing narrative in the West is that President Putin is the only one to be blamed for the war. He has imperialistic goals to expand Russia's territory and influence. The solution, then, for peace to be achieved is the withdrawal of all Russian forces from occupied areas. If Ukraine then joins NATO, strong security guarantees would be in place. But is this a realistic scenario for a lasting peace, as - according to most military analysts - a battlefield stalemate is the most likely scenario rather than withdrawal of the Russian forces?
2. The competing narrative, the minority view, is that while Putin did start the war, and should be condemned for this aggression, the threat of NATO expansion to Ukraine that became a more definite goal for the Biden Administration and subsequently for President Zelensky as well, is the ultimate reason for the war. Therefore, a neutral status for Ukraine, negating its wish to join NATO, would provide a solution to end the war. Events during the first months of the war give support to the second narrative.

Then Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennet, in his mediation role only a week or so after the Russian invasion, thought indeed that the wish of Ukraine and the West to enlarge NATO by incorporating Ukraine was the "primary" reason for the invasion, as he said in a long interview on 4 February 2023. He got from Putin and Zelensky a promise for a ceasefire, if

¹⁶**Tapio Kanninen** is President of the Global Crisis Information Network Inc. and a founding member of Climate Leadership Coalition Inc. His earlier long career with the United Nations included his serving as Chief of Policy Planning at the UN Department of Political Affairs in New York and as Head of the Secretariat of Kofi Annan's five Summits with Regional Organizations that also included military alliances like NATO. This is an edited version of the presentation he gave on 22 June 2023 at the Annual Meeting of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) held at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., and online.

Zelensky declared that Ukraine does not seek NATO membership any longer. But according to Bennet, the West, in particular the US and UK, "blocked" the proposal as they thought the war should continue to weaken Russia.¹⁷

Similarly, in April 2022, in negotiations in Turkey, the peace was apparently even closer as Ukrainian and Russian negotiators tentatively agreed that Russia withdraws to the military situation of 23 February 2022 and Ukraine would not seek NATO membership.¹⁸ The pro-government Ukrainian newspaper *Ukrainska Pravda* reports, however, that during a surprise visit to Ukraine on April 9, then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Zelensky that the West would not support this peace proposal as a) Zelensky should not negotiate with Putin, a war criminal, and b) the West wanted the war to continue to weaken Russia.¹⁹ Peace talks collapsed soon thereafter.

A possible solution based on UN experience

Now the solution to the war is more difficult to find than in the early months of the conflict but not impossible. If there will be a military stalemate in the war, as most military analysts predict, both sides might be more open for negotiations.

What would be a solution that both sides can ultimately live with? And what would be a solution that would not reward Russia for its aggression?

I have presented in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, in its January 2023 edition, together with Prof Heikki Patomäki from the University of Helsinki, a solution that is both creative and pragmatic.²⁰ It is not a new idea, however. It is based on the United Nations experience of over 70 years of peacekeeping, with over a million men and women having participated in various forms of UN peace operations, whether in demilitarization, creating buffer zones between warring parties, monitoring ceasefires, and undertaking transitional administrations and post conflict peace-building efforts.

In our article Heikki Patomäki and I propose that the areas occupied by the Russians in Eastern Ukraine should be put under the auspices of the United Nations, demilitarized, and governed temporarily by the UN. The Security Council could declare a binding ceasefire and

¹⁷See <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/former-israeli-pm-west-blocked-russo-ukraine-peace-deal/>

¹⁸See <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/world-putin-wants-fiona-hill-angela-stent>

¹⁹See <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/05/5/7344206/>

²⁰See <https://mondediplo.com/2023/01/02ukraine> or <https://patomaki.fi/en/2023/01/towards-a-negotiated-peace-agreement-in-ukraine/>

would thus be frozen, as has been done many times in the Middle East, former Yugoslavia, and many other places around the world.

The UN has directly managed certain larger areas, at least temporarily, for example East Timor. The tasks of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (1999-2002) included maintaining security and order, providing humanitarian aid, assisting in rebuilding physical infrastructure, administering the territory based on the rule of law, and assisting in the drafting of a new constitution and conducting elections. I believe there could be agreement that these kinds of peace-building operations are also needed in Ukraine.

It is interesting to note that the Indonesian Defense Minister, Prabowo Subianto, made a quite similar proposal for ending the Russia-Ukraine war at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in early June 2023.²¹ And we recall that it was Indonesia that occupied East Timor from 1975 to 1999.

Minister Subianto proposed:

- A multi-point plan including a ceasefire and establishing a demilitarized zone by each party withdrawing 15 kilometers (nearly 10 miles) from its current forward position.
- The demilitarized zone should be monitored by a peacekeeping force deployed by the UN, while a UN-administered referendum should be held "to ascertain objectively the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of the various disputed areas".

He also proposed that the Shangri-La Dialogue find a mode of voluntary declaration, urging both Ukraine and Russia to immediately start negotiations for peace.

A step-by-step approach

It would have been easier to achieve a ceasefire in the early days of the conflict before positions between the parties and within the UN Security Council hardened. At the current stage, though, an innovation would be to use General Assembly resolutions to bring peace to Ukraine, as has been done earlier in a major war in the Middle East. During the Suez crisis in 1956 it was the General Assembly that mandated a peacekeeping operation, called UN Emergency Force, UNEF, during an emergency special session provided by in the 1950 "United for Peace" Resolution, as the Security Council was also in stalemate then, because of British and French vetoes.

²¹See <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/indonesia-defence-minister-prabowo-proposes-demilitarised-zone-un-referendum-for-ukraine-peace-plan>

This time a somewhat similar process could be undertaken in stages. First, the General Assembly could ask the Secretary-General to undertake a fact-finding mission to Russia and Ukraine, and to propose various options for a peacekeeping and peacebuilding operation based on the UN's vast previous experience in the field. A reference could be made to the Indonesian proposal in the Assembly resolution as well.

After the Secretary-General's report of his mission to the war zone and the capitals of those involved in the conflict, and his proposals for peacekeeping, demilitarization and transitional administration options in Ukraine, international momentum could start to build for the use of the UN's forgotten tools to make peace in Ukraine. Eventually, the Security Council might also pass a resolution on ending the conflict.

The beauty of this proposal is that it does not reward Russia for its invasion and gives security guarantees to Ukraine against further Russian aggression. It is the UN rather than NATO that should give such guarantees to Ukraine.



RENEWING THE UNITED NATIONS FOR PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY



From Vision to Implementation: Realizing the UN's New Agenda for Peace

*Jordan Ryan*²²

In 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali presented the forward-looking Agenda for Peace, seizing opportunities for cooperation in the post-Cold War era. Three decades later, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has proposed an ambitious New Agenda for Peace²³ intended to strengthen and expand the capacity of the United Nations amidst increasing global fragmentation that complicates collective action. However, while setting forth admirable priorities, the current proposal could benefit from a more detailed implementation plan to transform principles into pragmatic action.

The New Agenda promotes a shift from traditional peacekeeping to a comprehensive 'sustaining peace' approach, concentrating on the root causes of conflict such as inequality and social exclusion. It aptly identifies the need to address conditions that lead to marginalization and discontent. A more thorough exploration of the complex, multidimensional connections among inequality, governance issues, and conflict risks would further strengthen this proposal.

While advocating for a reinforced commitment to global norms, the New Agenda perhaps places undue emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It could provide more tangible solutions for nations striving to meet these universal benchmarks within a challenging 15-year timeline, especially when basic security and stable institutions are yet to be established. In addition, accountability within member states provides the essential foundation for meaningful norm implementation. Robust domestic checks and balances not only support internal governance but also reinforce the international system, creating a synergistic effect that strengthens both the national and global landscapes.

The New Agenda does not yet appear to have involved an inclusive drafting process, which could bolster its legitimacy and collective ownership. However, it notes intentions to consult

²²**Jordan Ryan** served for over twenty years with the United Nations, reaching the level of Assistant Secretary-General / Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery at the UN Development Programme (UNDP). After retirement from the UN in 2015, he joined The Carter Center as Vice President for Peace Programs. He is currently an independent consultant focusing on leadership and effectiveness of the UN in crisis settings.

²³See <https://dppa.dfs.un.org/en/a-new-agenda-for-peace>

stakeholders on context-specific implementation strategies. Ensuring participatory processes to develop actions plans can lend credibility on the ground where it matters most. Any substantive Charter updates should involve comprehensive global consultations, to ensure its continuing relevance.

To enhance early warning and conflict prevention, the UN Secretary-General should actively employ tools available under the UN Charter. These include appointing envoys, initiating fact-finding missions, and invoking Article 99. Such robust utilization is crucial for stimulating collective action before tensions escalate into violence.

Embracing partnerships beyond the formal UN system, through coordinated and context-specific initiatives, acknowledges the unique strengths of different stakeholders in preventing and mediating disputes."

A critical challenge is enhancing integration and coordination within the UN system. Concrete steps are required to mend divisions and minimize fragmentation, duplication, and resource competition. Though previous reviews have proposed sensible reforms, the current document needs to articulate specific measures for organizational and behavioural changes.

Furthermore, the document insufficiently addresses the rise of influential non-state actors and how they impact modern conflict prevention and sustaining peace efforts. While embracing technology is mentioned, specifics on capabilities required for robust 21st century early warning and early action systems are absent. Rapid technological change is transforming the nature of violence within and between societies. The New Agenda could develop a deeper understanding of these shifting conflict dynamics.

There is also inadequate focus on innovative partnerships with regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector to amplify capacity. Harnessing networks beyond formal state-based channels is essential to promote resilience. However, few tangible partnership initiatives are outlined.

In conclusion, the realization of the New Agenda's potential demands dedicated leadership, collaboration, and resolve from both the Secretary-General and member states. Transcending divisive geopolitics to operationalize reforms that bolster peace-sustaining capacities is essential. The fulfillment of the UN Charter's noble promise requires unwavering commitment, courage, and collective action. The present moment calls for cooperation over politics, audacity over caution, and action over indifference. Peace, indeed, demands nothing less.

Peace, Security and the UN Resident Coordinators / Country Teams

Tore Rose²⁴

Without referencing particular cases, this note briefly presents certain structural impediments that the UN System faces in more effectively working for peace and security in conflict/fragile states. Highlighting these impediments could serve to further improve the performance of the UN System in carrying out one of its most important functions under the UN Charter. These observations are not intended to reflect negatively on how the UN System has actually performed in specific countries.

Basic structures and decision-making / reporting lines

UN Country Teams (UNCTs), headed by a Resident Coordinator, are made up of the UN System Agencies, Funds and Programmes that have in-country offices and typically number about a dozen in smaller countries and a half-dozen more in larger countries. UNCTs must deal with peace and security issues in three contexts:

- Where they represent the totality of UN in-country presence. This means that the Resident Coordinator (RC) is the senior UN official, appointed by the Secretary-General. UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes each have mandates from their respective governing bodies, and their in-country heads are appointed by their own hierarchies.
- Where there is a Special Political Mission mandated by the Security Council headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) who is the senior UN official. Normally, the RC is appointed Deputy SRSG. UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes function as before.
- Where there is a Peacekeeping Mission mandated by the Security Council with UN troops (blue helmets) headed by a SRSG; again the SRSG is the senior UN official and the RC is normally the DSRSG. And again, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes function as before.

SRSGs and RCs are appointed by the Secretary-General but have quite different mandates and career paths, and this matters in terms of their engagement in peace and security issues. Their reporting relationships with UNHQ also differ: SRSGs report to the UN Department of

²⁴**Tore Rose** has held senior positions in OECD and at UN Headquarters, and has served for eleven years in conflict countries as UN Resident Coordinator. He had an earlier career with the private sector in developing countries, and continues as a conflict/peacebuilding, post-disaster recovery, and development consultant after leaving the UN.

Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), which has been integrated with the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and report directly to the Secretary-General, whereas RCs report to the Development Coordination Office (DCO) both directly and through DCO Regional Directors, and the DCO reports to the Deputy Secretary-General.

UN operational engagement in conflict/fragile countries is in principle coordinated at UNHQ level through a UN Executive Committee comprising the heads of relevant UN Departments and UN Funds and Programmes. It meets several times a year in variable configurations and recommends action for the UN System in the countries on its agenda; decisions are endorsed in the name of the UN Secretary-General (UNSG). Note, however, that UN Funds and Programmes have their own governing structures and mandates even if they are under the ultimate administrative authority of the UNSG. Even more so, the Specialized Agencies of the UN System have their own governing structures and mandates; and do not fall under the UNSG's administrative authority. The impact of Executive Committee decisions, especially outside core UN Departments, is therefore unclear.

Lines of authority and accountability

This complex architecture means that lines of authority and accountability are structurally sub-optimal between headquarter levels and UN field offices. This can undermine the quality of actions and results at the country level.

Consequently, at the country level, the UN System requires proactive collegiality horizontally, across the vertical structures described above, a shared vision of what needs to be done, and an acceptance of responsibility. It also requires the right incentives: career “carrots and sticks” are particularly important.

The need for proactive collegiality by field-level staff on the one hand, and the normal human response to career incentives on the other, pull in opposite directions. Proactive collegiality is horizontal and must focus on identifying and responding as “One UN” in the areas where the UN as a whole can best strengthen peace and security in the country. But career incentives lie vertically within the individual's own organization: obtaining positive annual assessments and gaining promotion, promoting the parent organization's mandate, and raising funds for the organization's in-country projects as well as promoting its visibility. So the UN system is structurally unsuited to working as one, and it requires exceptional individual qualities, and a devotion to the UN and its Charter, to foster proactive horizontal collegiality.

The UN's Janus syndrome: Politico-military vs development

Where there is a SRSG, additional elements come in to play. SRSGs have an explicitly political

role and by the nature of their job they must at times say and do things that displease the national authorities. They must also interact with civil society and the political opposition. Their key competence will be to operate in a stressful political milieu.

A Resident Coordinator on the other hand will normally have come through the ranks of a UN development/humanitarian organization, and a key competence will be the ability to focus on the SDGs in the context of the specific challenges faced by the country of assignment. Furthermore, UN agencies, funds and programmes all work on the basic premise that the national government sets policies and priorities. That means that that they do not do, or say, things that may seriously displease key senior government officials. The same broadly applies to the in-country heads of the UN Country Team, with differing emphasis depending on their mandates.

Integrating a Special Political or Peacekeeping Mission with the UNCT under the RC therefore poses formidable challenges in terms of culture and modus operandi. There is a further structural problem: when the SRSRG is absent and the RC/DSRSG needs to function as head of the Mission vis-à-vis the national authorities, s/he may need to act in ways displeasing to the authorities – contrary to how s/he normally interacts with the authorities as RC.

In Mission countries it is not unusual for international Mission staff to outnumber international UNCT staff. This is because Missions typically create units to deal with specific issues that are not directly political or military, following their Security Council mandates (e.g. good governance, human rights, trafficking, security sector reform etc.)

From a “One UN” perspective, this is unhealthy for a number of reasons. Most importantly, there is nearly always a UN agency, fund or programme that is able to work on such issues, and creating units within the Mission doing similar work can result in duplication of initiatives, overlapping competencies, and friction with the UNCT.

Presumably, the rationale for a wide-ranging Security Council resolution is that assessed funding for the Mission follows a SC resolution, whereas UNCT funding is voluntary and uncertain, and subject to each organization’s world-wide priorities. The solution seems to be simple: assessed funding that comes with a SC resolution should be earmarked, in the resolution, to the UNCT. It would follow that international Mission staffing be limited to the strictly political – and also military in the case of Peacekeeping Missions.

In terms of personnel management and without going into detail, issues that arise and potentially cause friction between international staff in Missions and in the UNCT include

different rotation policies, reassignments, medical facilities, benefits, and use of official vehicles. Slimmed-down Missions could to some extent make differences less visible.

Looking forward

To be clear-eyed about the UN System's structural impediments in working with maximum effectiveness in conflict/fragile countries is useful, but hoping for changes that will bring greater coherence, clearer lines of authority, and accountability can only be a longer-term desideratum. But there are two things that can quickly be put into practice:

- That the mandates provided by Security Council resolutions be clear that the Mission itself and its staff should only be concerned with political and military questions, and all other SC concerns should be mandated to the UNCT accompanied by assessed funding for operational activities, including for adequate staffing in the RC Office and the UNCT. Such assessed funding could be made available to the UNCT through a basket fund managed by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).
- That there be reflection and brainstorming about the tension between the RC role and the DSRSG role especially when the DSRSG becomes acting Mission head. This could result in the development of guidance to the RC/DSRSG.

The UN Must Stand Up to Power

Yoriko Yasukawa²⁵

An opportunity for change

When the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September of 2015, this represented a unique opportunity to make a leap forward toward a more prosperous, sustainable, just and peaceful world.

The 2030 Agenda is unprecedented in a number of ways. One of them is its explicit aim to contribute to peace building by addressing the root causes of conflict, including poverty, inequality and exclusion. This in turn implies a clear ethical shift in how we pursue development. That is: that the powerful among us share more of our power with the powerless and the wealthy among us share more of our wealth with the poor, and for humans to be more caring of the planet we share with other forms of life.

The United Nations can and should play an important role in shepherding these – in its own words -- ‘transformational changes’ required to build the kind of world that the 2030 Agenda calls for. And that requires the UN to fully engage in the task of coaxing, helping and at times pressuring nations to muster the collective political will to take difficult decisions and actions that will often threaten the interests of those in power and earn their ire.

In particular, the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) must be at the forefront of this crucial endeavor -- the United Nations has Country Teams, led by UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs), in 130 countries, covering 162 countries where there are United Nations programmes. However, in order for this to happen, the UN System as a whole must change the culture of risk averseness and deference to power that is keeping UNCTs from consistently fulfilling this responsibility.

²⁵**Yoriko Yasukawa** is the Vice-President of FOGGS. She has worked for over 35 years in efforts to advance inclusive and sustainable development, human rights and cultures of peace, within and outside the United Nations system. She is currently a facilitator for dispute resolution for the Inter-American Development Bank Independent Investigation and Consultation Mechanism.

Risk averseness has consequences

The long-prevalent tendency in the United Nations System toward avoidance of conflict and complaisance of member states has in turn led to self-censorship when it comes to calling out wrongs or omissions committed by governments and other powerful political actors. This is of course understandable in an institution whose highest authority is exercised by the governments of member states, many of which are wary of the UN System interfering, and particularly speaking out publicly on issues which they consider to be the exclusive purview of national governments.

But it is not okay to accept these limitations as inevitable when the inability of UN Country Teams to transcend them can have grievous consequences, especially for the most vulnerable among us.

A tragic example was the inaction of the UN when faced with attacks against civilians by the Sri Lankan government which led to the deaths of thousands during the civil war. More recently, there has been a great deal of criticism against the UN System for not being more outspoken in defending the Rohingya population against genocidal violence by the Burmese military.

In the report commissioned by the UN Secretary General on the Sri Lankan case, the authors point out: ‘Throughout the conflict, some UNCT and UNHQ actors sought to separate the humanitarian response from what they termed “political” issues...Issues appear to have been defined as political not because they had a political aspect but rather because UN action to address them would have provoked criticism from the Government.’²⁶

Yet achieving the kind of ethical transformation called for by the 2030 Agenda requires engaging precisely with the kind of development issues that are ‘political.’ In simple terms, the UN needs to get better at helping countries to ‘do the right thing.’ This does not mean activism for activism’s sake, but rather engaging in proactive and strategic diplomacy that builds relationships of trust with national actors while also challenging them to do better.

Change must start at the top

For this to become consistent practice among UNCTs, there needs to be clarity within the UN System that Country Teams have the obligation to stand up for the ethical principles the UN

²⁶Report of the Secretary-General’s Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka, November 2021, p.19 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/737299?ln=en>

is meant to represent, and particularly for the rights of the most excluded and marginalized, even if this may entail the risk of entering into conflict with the host government. And this message needs to come from the Secretary General himself as well as all heads of UN agencies and entities – clearly and consistently.

During the many years I spent within the UN System, seven of them as a UNRC and eight as a UNICEF country rep and two as a UN Population Fund Regional Director, this was not the case. The predominant message from senior management to country level staff was, whether explicitly or implicitly, to play it safe and keep away from ‘sensitive’ issues.

The ‘political issues’ that need to be resolved to advance sustainable development and further peace normally do not take such extreme or clear-cut forms as the massacre of civilians in Sri Lanka or the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar. The great injustices and deprivations humanity faces today are often the result of numerous, often mundane seeming political decisions large and small taken in various spheres. These may have to do with policies or legislation that undermine equitable distribution of wealth or gender equality or universal access to health and education without discrimination based on ethnicity or religion.

UNCTs should not necessarily intervene in all such decisions, nor, when they do, always speak out publicly. What is important is for the UN System to do everything possible to help governments and societies at large to make ethical decisions and act accordingly, guided by the universal principles and values that the UN represents and that also underpin the 2030 Agenda.

What is unacceptable, yet happens too often, is simply to assume that the UN cannot touch an issue because it is ‘too sensitive.’

The first step toward changing this culture of self-censorship is for the leaders of the UN System, particularly the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General who is tasked with leading the UN Development System and hence the UNCTs, to call for that change, squarely recognizing that the issue exists, and talking openly about it.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, in his recent policy brief on a New Agenda for Peace as well as his report, *Our Common Agenda*, which sets out his vision for a strengthened multilateralism, has called for a renewed effort to build solidarity and trust as necessary conditions for building and sustaining peace. Toward this end, he has committed the UNCTs to an active role in helping countries to build renewed social contracts ‘between

Governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights,'²⁷ including accelerated progress toward the SDGs.

If this is to happen, there must also be a commitment on the Secretary General's part -- a commitment to support his Country Teams to engage with the kind of 'sensitive' and 'political' issues that such an endeavor will inevitably entail.

The 2030 Agenda demands this. And the people whom the UN has the duty to serve – particularly the most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded – deserve this commitment.

²⁷Our Common Agenda, Report of the Secretary General, 2021, p.4
<https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>

The Case for a Global Resilience Council (GRC)

Georgios Kostakos²⁸

While the world is facing several mega-challenges of an environmental, social and economic nature, there is no intergovernmental machinery to ensure effective action across agencies and sectors, even though we have adequate multilateral action frameworks, like the Paris Agreement for climate. To ensure that efforts at SDG implementation bear lasting fruit, we need to tackle mega-challenges like climate change, pandemics, food insecurity and inadequate financial arrangements for sustainable development and resilience that undermine those efforts.

Today's mega-challenges cannot be dealt with by the UN Security Council, because they are outside its scope, even though they may also have traditional security implications, if left unattended. They cannot be addressed by ad hoc arrangements either, because they are not emergencies that arise one day and subside a few days later, but they are structural and deeply rooted in the way our global governance system, our economies and societies work.

That is why FOGGS proposes the establishment of a Global Resilience Council (GRC), which could be a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, potentially also of ECOSOC and the Security Council, and would be able to address the root causes of such mega-challenges. The GRC could also be recognized as subsidiary body of the intergovernmental assemblies of UN specialized agencies and multilateral agreements, thus being fully legitimized to coordinate implementation of decisions reached in specialized intergovernmental bodies like the UNFCCC and the WHO, for climate and pandemics respectively.

The proposed GRC would be intergovernmental at its core, consisting of 20 to 30 member states or regional integration bodies, like the AU and the EU, if their respective member states agreed to be represented collectively. Without veto-yielding members and with broad regional and functional representation, it would be a more representative and legitimate

²⁸**Georgios Kostakos** is Executive Director of FOGGS. He has a long experience in global governance, including conflict resolution, sustainable development and UN reform, both as a practitioner and as a researcher. He has held senior positions with the United Nations Secretariat, think tanks and the private sector. For more details on the proposed Global Resilience Council see the dedicated webpage: <https://www.foggs.org/grc-global-resilience-council/>

body than the UN Security Council, as the latter stands today.

Moreover, the GRC would systematically involve in its deliberations the entire UN system, other multilateral bodies, as well as various non-state actor constituencies, from civil society organizations to scientific unions, parliamentarians and local authorities, indigenous peoples and the private sector. All of these actors would also be part of the implementation of decisions taken by the Council in a verifiable way.

The establishment of such a body could be a break-through outcome of the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and could reverse the current geopolitical drifting towards discord and confrontation by emphasizing the joining of forces to address shared threats to human security.

Our Proposal for UN Security Council Reform²⁹

Any reform plan or proposal for the Security Council of the United Nations should be based on a clear assessment of the current and future state of the global community.

The Security Council should be constituted so that they are representative of and accountable to the global community through the General Assembly. To overcome the dysfunctionalities caused by the permanent status and the veto power enjoyed by some members of the Security Council, it is hereby suggested that the number of the Security Council members be increased by ten immediately at the Summit of the Future in September 2024.

This reform proposal presents a realistic and achievable reform and can be carried out in two stages:

1. The number of seats in the Security Council should be increased by ten with an amendment of the UN Charter to be adopted by heads of state and government at the Summit of the Future in September 2024.
2. Any effort to curtail the use of veto power through further Charter amendments should continue to be made, and the decision should be taken no later than 2045, when the United Nations marks the 100th anniversary of its founding. This advice is made on the recognition that any effort to limit or eliminate the veto power of the permanent members at this point would prolong the fruitless debate and reduce the prospect for the immediate expansion of the Security Council membership.

²⁹This proposal was initially elaborated by **Sukehiro Hasegawa**, currently a Distinguished Professor at Kyoto University of the Arts, President of the Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan (GPAJ), Director of ACUNS Tokyo Liaison Office, and Director of the Kyoto Peacebuilding Center. He formerly served as Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Rwanda, Western Samoa, and Timor-Leste, among other positions with the UN. In its current form, the proposal includes suggestions made by the co-signatories, whose names have been included at the end of the proposal.

In more detail, the specific changes to be made as of now, through the Summit of the Future decision, should include the following steps.

1. The total number of non-permanent members of the Security Council should be increased by ten to realize more representation of Africa, Asia and other regions. More specifically, the ten new Council members will consist of two groups. Recognizing the Ezulwini Consensus, the first group of six seats with a term of ten years includes two from Africa. It will also provide two seats to Asia, one to Western Europe and Others, and one to Latin America/Caribbean. The second group of four seats will have a term of five years and be composed of one each from Africa, one from Asia, one from Latin America/Caribbean, and one from Eastern Europe. Members occupying any of the ten new seats should be eligible for reelection upon expiration of their current terms to enable their presence in the Council with the consent of the majority of UN members, while those occupying any of the initial ten non-permanent seats for two years should not be eligible for immediate re-election, to provide the opportunity for a larger number of member states to serve on the Security Council.
2. Both the member states of the United Nations and intergovernmental regional organizations should be eligible for non-permanent membership in the Security Council to enhance regional representations at the Security Council. If any intergovernmental organization is elected, its seat may be assumed by any single member state for the full duration or rotated by multiple member states.
3. In recognition of the need for expanding the membership of the Security Council immediately, which requires ratification by the current permanent members of the Security Council, the latter should be allowed to remain until 2045. However, according to Article 109, the General Conference of the Member States of the United Nations should be convened well in advance of 2045 for the purpose of reviewing the Charter as a whole, to review the efficacy of maintaining the veto and other prerogatives of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and converting their status from permanent to a 20-year term.
4. In electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council for longer terms of five and ten years, the General Assembly members should consider the population, economy, and military strength, as well as the contributions made by the respective countries and regions to the United Nations. However, ultimately, the member-states should decide on which member states or regional organizations should be elected as non-permanent members of the Security Council.
5. Article 27 of the Charter should be amended to enable the efficient and effective functioning of the Security Council. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters should be made by an affirmative vote of fifteen out of twenty-five members.

Decisions on all other matters should be made by affirmative votes of fifteen members, including the concurring vote of five permanent members, with abstentions not considered as vetoes. If a veto is cast by one or more permanent members of the Security Council on any substantive matters, they should be accountable and explain to the General Assembly the reasons for which the veto was cast within the period of ten days, as per General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/262.

Victor ANGELO

Francis Martin O'DONNELL

Paola BETTELLI

Patrice-Ariel FRANCAIS

Stephen BROWNE

Tore ROSE

Suvira CHATURVEDI

Jordan RYAN

Sukehiro HASEGAWA

Michael SCHULENBURG

Michael HEYN

Peter SCHUMANN

Mats KARLSSON

Gary SLUTKIN

Kerstin LEITNER

Vladimir ZHAGORA

Georgios KOSTAKOS



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