



Sustaining Peace: Partnerships for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

A UN-led dialogue with governments, the private sector,
civil society, and academia

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

December 8, 2017, 9:30 am to 1:00 pm (registration opens at 9:00 am)
Faculty House, Columbia University, 64 Morningside Drive, New York, NY USA

Background

With its twin resolutions on review of the UN peacebuilding architecture in 2016, in both the General Assembly [A/RES/70/262] and the Security Council [S/RES/2282(2016)], the United Nations has made a commitment to taking a more comprehensive approach to peace. Following the high-level reviews of peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 in 2015, there is growing understanding that the international community often responds only after a crisis starts — when lives have already been lost and fragile social fabrics undone. As a counterpoint, the 2016 resolutions place prevention of conflict at the core of the UN engagement with peace, and they call for partnerships with all stakeholders in service to a common vision of peace. The emphasis on prevention also represents a new opportunity for non-governmental sectors to reaffirm their commitment to more peaceful and just societies, as well as to taking concrete steps to make the visions laid out in the resolutions a reality.

The President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, identified peacebuilding and sustaining peace as a key priority. In accordance with the twin resolutions, the President will convene a High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace on 24 and 25 April 2018. The main objective of the meeting is to assess efforts undertaken and opportunities to strengthen the United Nations' work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. With a view to assisting in the collective effort of rethinking the UN engagement with peace, President Lajčák launched a roadmap for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The main purpose of the PGA's roadmap is to bring visibility to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and it encompasses five priorities that will guide the President's work leading up to the meeting. These priorities consist of (i) outreach to the relevant stakeholders; (ii) supporting the work of the UN; (iii) focusing on experiences and best practices; (iv) making a strong financial case for sustaining peace; and (v) strengthening links to human rights and sustainable development.

While the primary responsibility for identifying and implementing priorities for sustaining peace pertains to Governments, the General Assembly acknowledged the role of a variety of stakeholders in assisting these national authorities fulfil their goals. The twin resolutions underlined that “the scale and nature of the challenge of sustaining peace can be met through close strategic and operational partnerships between national Governments, the United Nations, and other key stakeholders, including international, regional and subregional organizations, international



financial institutions, regional and other development banks, civil society organizations, women’s groups, youth organizations and, where relevant, the private sector”.

With this understanding, the President aims to engage in a dialogue with civil society, academia and the private sector to elaborate on these strategic and operational partnerships, which are indispensable elements in pursuing a comprehensive approach to peace as required by the new concept of sustaining peace.

Event Overview

The meeting “Sustaining Peace: Partnerships for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding” will serve as one of the critical events in the process leading up to the High-Level Meeting and a valuable platform for the relevant stakeholders to present their perspectives. The event will engage diverse stakeholders in discussion on preventing conflict and addressing its root causes. Participants will include university students and faculty, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, and government representatives.

This half-day dialogue will provide a platform for learning and exchange on this topic. It will foster conversation among all participants on challenges and opportunities for sustaining peace in practice. A summary of the discussion will be made available on the website “www.un.org/pga/72” and serve as input for the interactive segment of the High-Level Meeting. Through this event and subsequent meetings, it is hoped that momentum can be built and sustained beyond the UN, and that greater visibility will be given to this critical issue.

Draft Agenda

Opening Remarks, 9:30 am – 10:00 am

H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations

Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet, Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

Ms. Shamina Singh, President of Mastercard Centre for Inclusive Growth



Panel 1: Prevention in Sustaining Peace, 10:00 am – 11:15 am

In the first panel, we will emphasize how prevention plays a key role in sustaining peace. The twin resolutions define sustaining peace as “a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance”.

Panel discussants will unpack sustaining peace *in practice* and situate it in the context of mutually-supportive areas, such as sustainable development and human rights. Prevention, in this vision, is the broad set of activities that address root causes of conflict, in addition to the existing tools for conflict prevention such as mediation, preventive diplomacy, cooperation and dialogue. This approach dispenses with time-bound ideas of pre- and post-conflict environments, which can lead to path-dependent responses, and proposes instead a continuum in which all tools should be available at all time. The panel will also look at how different actors can best contribute to the preventive aspects of sustaining peace.

In this panel, we ask:

1. What are the specific ways that the sustaining peace approach is helpful in preventing conflict?
2. What is the relationship between sustaining peace and other regimes and frameworks, including those that have been developed in recent years, such as the SDGs, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Women, Peace and Security, or other relevant areas? Are they in competition or do they mutually support the aims of prevention and peace?
3. Where in the cycle of conflict do actors in your field (private sector, human rights, peacebuilding, etc.) typically engage or intervene in prevention activities? How does sustaining peace offer new ways to think about how and when to intervene?
4. How have a wide variety of actors, (the UN, private sector, civil society), already been using a sustaining peace approach in their work, whether they have called it that or not? What are some concrete examples?



Panelists:

Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General, Officer-in-Charge for Department of Political Affairs, UN

Mr. Narinder Kakar, Permanent Observer for the University for Peace (Costa Rica) to the United Nations

Professor Anne Marie Goetz, Clinical Professor, New York University Center for Global Affairs

Ms. Teresa Jennings, Head of Rule of Law Department, LexisNexis Legal & Professional

Mr. B. Abel Learwellie, Executive Director and Founder of Camp for Peace Liberia

Moderator: Ms. Paige Arthur, Deputy Director of New York University's Center on International Cooperation.

Coffee Break, 11:15 – 11:30 am

Panel 2: How Partnerships Can Support Sustaining Peace, 11:30 am – 12:45 am

Equal, inclusive, and sustainable partnerships with diverse stakeholders are essential for the promotion, development and maintenance of sustaining peace as these actors often possess localized expertise and institutional knowledge. They can also support contextualized analysis, strategizing, implementation, and monitoring of policy and actions for peace. They can further support and strengthen the capacities of local and national governments in their initiatives to build peaceful and inclusive societies.

The second panel will explore the many partnerships towards this goal that have emerged between UN and regional organizations, governments, International Financial Institutions, civil society, academia, as well as the private sector, and examine some case studies on what has worked well. Partnerships can provide the critical underpinning of nationally-driven approaches to sustaining peace. The UN resolutions acknowledge the importance of strategic and operational partnerships and call for inclusive national ownership, so that the needs and views of all stakeholders and communities are represented.



In this panel, we ask:

1. What are some concrete examples of both strategic and operational partnerships for building peace that have worked well? What factors supported these partnerships, and why? What can be learned from these experiences?
2. What are some challenges that you have faced with partnerships, and how have these affected the ability to deliver sustained peace, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized communities?
3. How do we make sure that all sectors of a society are meaningfully involved in prevention of conflict and promotion of peace?
4. What are the pathways and entry points for partnership for the private sector, civil society, and academia in supporting sustaining peace?

Panelists:

H.E. Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the UN

Mr. Owen Pell, Partner, White & Case

H.E. Mr. Hahn Choonghee, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN, Chair of UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

Mr. Henk-Jan Brinkman, Director of Policy, UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

Mr. Alexandre Marc, Chief Specialist, Fragility and Conflict, World Bank

Ms. Bridget Moix, US Senior Representative and Head of Advocacy, Peace Direct

Moderator: **Mr. Andrew Tomlinson** – Director and Quaker UN Representative, Quaker United Nations Office

Closing Remarks, 12:45 am – 1:00 pm

Office of the President of the General Assembly