

Input of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding¹ to the New Agenda for Peace²

15 March 2023

Over three decades after the release of the An Agenda for Peace (1992), the world finds itself in a dramatically different global landscape that is characterized by a state of polycrisis. While dealing with systemic shocks presented by COVID-19, the climate emergency, the cost-of-living crisis, a surge in conflicts including the War in Ukraine and their spillover effects globally, people across the globe are also faced with a rise in challenges and threats to peace, security and stability in many ways, such as radicalization and violent extremism, terrorism, online hate speech, polarization, and a surge in political instability and coups. These challenges are underpinned and exacerbated by inequality and exclusion and declines in human development and human security and therefore impact negatively the resources for peacebuilding financing. As such, the New Agenda for Peace is being drafted at a time where achieving it is most challenging, but incredibly vital.

Despite these rising challenges and the increasing number of fragile states, as reflected in the [2022 OECD States of Fragility report](#), conflict prevention and peacebuilding suffer from a chronic underinvestment. Peace continues to be underprioritized and under-resourced in the face of humanitarian need, with only 12 % of Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated towards peace, and a mere 4% allocated towards conflict prevention. Increasing military spending due to the War in Ukraine and rising geopolitical and geostrategic competition is further detracting from already stretched and shrinking funds for prevention and peacebuilding. The lack of effective, predictable and sustainable financing to peacebuilders and civil society organizations, in particular women peacebuilders and young people, continues to undermine conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts in contexts where they are most needed.

¹ Established in 2008, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) is a unique tripartite political dialogue platform whose members are committed to supporting country-owned peacebuilding and statebuilding as the cornerstone of development. The IDPS is comprised of the Group of Seven Plus countries affected by conflict and fragility (g7+), the Development Assistance Committee International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), and the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS). IDPS was the main architect of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (2011), a key policy agreement which proposes peacebuilding and statebuilding goals and identifies commitments and principles to build mutual trust and achieve impactful results. Through its unique configuration, IDPS aims to develop a shared vision to tackle the root causes of conflict and fragility and support countries in their efforts to exit fragility by strengthening their resilience and by seeking ways of providing better technical, political, and financial support, through facilitating dialogue, policy development and experience sharing.

² These inputs are based on the IDPS New Agenda for Peace consultation organized by the IDPS Secretariat bringing together IDPS constituencies with the New Agenda co-leads on 07 March 2023.

Evidence increasingly shows the correlation and interdependence between peace and development. Yet against the correlation between poverty, inequality and fragility, economic growth and poverty alleviation alone are not enough to achieve sustainable development and peace. It is vital for multilateral efforts to address the root causes of fragility and to recognize the centrality of conflict prevention to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The New Agenda, now more than ever, should usher a commitment to prevention and peacebuilding for a more ambitious and forward-looking engagement which is flexible, agile and adaptive, and gear towards national dialogue and ownership with the purpose of strengthening accountability and intergenerational collaboration. In doing so, the New Agenda should move beyond a traditional understanding of strategic risks and include a broader understanding of risks that affect human security, with a vision to promote global solidarity and overcome inequality and injustice globally. As such, the New Agenda should make a clear and conscious link to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The learning of IDPS constituencies demonstrates that a greater focus is needed on development-based alternatives to securitized approaches that focus on engaging in dialogue, promoting senses of belonging, reconstituting social contracts, and fostering trust within and between communities and nations. Placing development-based approaches that prioritize prevention at the center of the New Agenda for Peace is essential to addressing the root causes of fragility that enable conflict and violence to persist. The New Agenda for Peace also provides an opportunity to galvanize collective action across all pillars of the United Nations to meaningfully mitigate emerging risks and address root causes, external shocks, and other factors undermining peace. The New Agenda should therefore benefit from the political will and commitment of stakeholders to sustainable peace and development.

Peacebuilding is not a byproduct of technical solutions that can be delivered through international assistance only. Lessons learned in engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states and the experiences from g7+ countries, INCAF and CSPPS networks display that technocratic and externally-driven solutions alone are insufficient to meaningfully address social and political grievances and systematic weaknesses in governance. It is therefore essential that solutions are informed by national contexts and priorities, are based on inclusive national and local-level dialogue and reconciliation efforts, and are rooted in national capacities and institutions. The failure of institutions is a significant driver of the grievances and development deficits that fuel conflict. The New Agenda for Peace should leverage lessons learned from the statebuilding agenda on supporting inclusive, responsive, accountable and transparent institutions as a key pathway towards peace. The New Agenda should further consider the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States as essential building blocks to support the transition of countries from conflict and fragility and building peaceful states and societies.

While peace efforts should be grounded in national reconciliation and dialogue, multilateral actors should support interconnected and comprehensive efforts to address root causes and end needs on the ground. Multilateral engagement should be based in sound political economy analysis, conflict sensitive approaches, and working adaptively and flexibly to ensure maximizing positive results while minimizing adverse impacts. The New Agenda should therefore be underpinned by data, analysis and partnerships that are essential for prevention and peacebuilding efforts to be effective and sustainable. This should include for example, recognizing the positive role that non-traditional multilateral partners like the private sector can play in preventing conflict and building and maintaining peace, a resource that has largely remained untapped to-date.

The United Nations and international organizations are increasingly constrained by geopolitical competition among global powers, which has plagued engagement in fragile and conflict-affected settings. The New Agenda should therefore include creative mechanisms to ensure that multilateral support can be provided in a timely and flexible manner in contexts where they are most acutely needed.

Measuring the effectiveness of prevention and peacebuilding initiatives and policies remains a key challenge, particularly for development-based approaches such as increasing social cohesion and societal trust. The New Agenda for Peace should complement existing global measurement mechanisms and establish a common framework for measuring peacebuilding efforts to ensure complementarity and alignment among multilateral partners. This is critical to supporting evidence-based learning on which approaches are most effective in building peace and demonstrate the effectiveness of investments in peacebuilding and prevention.

The New Agenda should also pave the way for concrete progress on translating the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus to action that is anchored in human rights-based approaches and prevention on the ground. The [interim review](#) of the [DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus](#) identified that the link between development and peace remains weak. The New Agenda should support fostering synergies, alignment and complementarity across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, with a particular emphasis on coherent and integrated peace and development focus. This remains essential to ensuring that the multilateral system can create ways of working that are adaptive and effective in the context of a complex and multidimensional peace and crisis landscape. The New Agenda itself should not lead to further silos and ensure linkages across dimensions, such as climate and peace, and should be aligned with the recognized requirement of integrated approaches and conflict-sensitivity.

As stated in the [2020 Report of the Secretary General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace](#), civil society engagement and participation is indispensable to peacebuilding. Peacebuilding actors have developed a vast experience in dialogue and exchange with civil society in conflict-affected contexts, grounded in their knowledge of context, legitimacy, accountability, and their responsibility for managing mid- and long-term consequences of conflict such as transitional justice and social healing. Locally-led approaches adhering to the principles of inclusion, local agency, and ensuring the representativeness of power structures and decision-making processes, should be leveraged by the New Agenda for Peace. It is imperative to meaningfully engage and include the voices, perspectives and experiences of civil society, marginalized groups, and those most affected by conflict to ensure the sustainability, effectiveness, and responsiveness of peacebuilding policies and initiatives. In this regard, the space provided to civic actors, activists and local peacebuilders should underpin all conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

Yet, calls for inclusion have often been answered with approaches that limit parameters of success on the mere presence of women, youth and other marginalized groups, rather than those that foster their meaningful engagement. It is imperative to go beyond approaches narrowly focused on participation and instead tackle the root causes of exclusion by addressing gendered and generational social norms, power dynamics, and intersectional inequalities. These factors not only enable exclusion to persist, but they also contribute to cycles of violence, fragility, and insecurity. It is thus critical to adopt a multidimensional approach to peace that prioritizes the empowerment of women and girls and recognizes gender equality as a foundation of peace and exiting fragility.

Critical to facilitating this meaningful inclusion is protecting the spaces within which key local peacebuilding actors and civil society organizations operate. The [DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civic Space in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance](#), is being taken forward as the first international framework to support galvanizing action towards this end. With shrinking civic space globally, particularly impacting young peacebuilders, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders, a New Agenda for Peace should call for the systematized inclusion of civil society and local actors, that positions their engagement as a cornerstone to peacebuilding. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Youth Peace and Security (YPS), and the 2030 Agenda have provided key opportunities for civil society inclusion, but the New Agenda for Peace should go further by systematizing inclusion, including through promoting the operationalization of the WPS and the YPS agendas, anchored in the principle of Leaving No One Behind.

While global policymaking efforts have been prolific in producing new policy agendas, these agendas have not sufficiently translated into action on the ground. The New Agenda for Peace provides an important opportunity to rethink the current multilateral order from one that is characterized by division, mistrust, and competition, to an order characterized by inclusion, solidarity, transparency, and mutual support. For the New Agenda for Peace to be operationalized and translated into meaningful collective action towards peace, it needs to be complemented by a clear, intergenerational framework for inclusivity and accountability for its stakeholders, based on mutual commitment and meaningful promises.

As the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) and the engagement of its constituencies demonstrates, elevating lessons learned from fragile and conflict-affected settings and promoting effective South-South and Triangular cooperation is an indispensable complement to prevention and peacebuilding efforts. In particular, the Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation framework among the g7+ countries and the peer to peer support exercised via the CSPPS platform have been effective models of sharing tangible and first-hand experience and inspiring peace and stability. In this regard, the New Agenda should leverage the resources of the multilateral system to further expand the promise of South-South and Triangular cooperation on prevention and peacebuilding and ensure that the multilateral system is inclusive of the diverse actors, voices and expertise from conflict-affected settings.

IDPS is an ideal forum for building dialogue to bridge the siloes that currently characterize the multilateral system, by both offering a platform for candid discussions between development partners, civil society, and Member States, as well as supporting the operationalization of key global policy agendas in local settings. IDPS is well-positioned to building inclusive, transparent, and consultative partnerships, by offering a platform for continuous political dialogue. IDPS looks forward to continuing to engage in and contribute to the New Agenda for Peace process based on its experiences and learnings from engagement in conflict-affected and fragile settings.

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