FuturePeace
A Global Network of Peace and Conflict researchers

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Chapeau

We are a network of experts in Peace and Conflict Studies from the North and the South. Based on our academic research, our practical peacemaking and peacebuilding work and the empirical data we have gathered, we offer the following analysis and recommendations.

We welcome this Civil Society consultative process oriented towards building the Pact of the Future, and we explicitly support the aspiration that its outcome must be based on **inclusion, interconnectedness and equality**.

Inclusion, equity, equality and gender parity need to represent central pillars of any process and outcome as the consultation process moves forward. This assertion is based on convincing data we have gathered demonstrating that processes are not only ethically more robust, but can be more sustainable both when they guarantee the inclusion of diverse actors and when individuals and collective groups are able to feel part of the process, part of the solution. Ensuring meaningful inclusion will reinforce the Pact's moral legitimacy, representative scope and its

resilience to withstand the global challenges of peacebuilding, conflict, security and climate change, among others highlighted in the Pact.

The process of building the Pact of the Future is itself of significant importance. Rather than pressing forward with the adoption of a conclusive formal document (the Pact), we urge the UN to **expand the consultative process of building the Pact of the Future** and to broaden the numerical scope and dimensions of participation. Wider inclusionary processes, that guarantee a meaningful role for participatory mechanisms, will ensure that people are listened to and their perspectives incorporated into the Pact.

In this regard, indigenous, women's, youth, ethnic, religious and other groups should be able to participate actively and meaningfully. It is important in this respect to ask:

- How can collective rights to participation be guaranteed within this consultation process?
- How can decisions at the local and community levels feed into the wider national, international and global processes?

At an age of growing polarization, creating an inclusive and accessible platform for dialogue on the Future is central in itself.

Research and data from the Uppsala Conflict DataProgram demonstrate an alarming rise in the number, diversity and severity of conflicts. Climate change, food insecurity, emerging and new technologies and health threats contribute to making the world more vulnerable.

We also face a more geopolitically contested world, which is undermining multilateral institutions. This indicates that the world's populations urgently **need a collective security system** that can better prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in both traditional and new domains, guided by principles based on **human rights, trust and solidarity.**

In this regard, we recommend that the Pact of the Future meaningfully take into account:

- The significant progress that has taken place in th**e localization agenda within government, intergovernmental and non-governmental practices and discourse**.

Civil society organizations, and especially academia over many years, have gathered important lessons learned from peacebuilding and conflict mitigation processes at the grassroots level, which have not filtered into the higher international and UN structures and mechanisms. Often, the UN's approach has tended to be disconnected from such important grassroots initiatives.

We urge the new UN Pact of the Future to consider the evidence gathered showing the importance of locally-owned processes of peacemaking, conflict and climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the relevance and usefulness of mediation and negotiations to garner their power towards a more effective international system of multilateral cooperation. Such a system would be shaped not only by international, state and government actors, but also embedded in local processes and practices and guided by the **principle of context specificity**, meaning that, in the end, **our global system is also crafted by local actors**.

Chapter II. International peace and security

It is commendable that the New Agenda for Peace rethink strategies of peace interventions that are multidimensional and locally supported. In line with this agenda, we recommend

- The UN should support dialogues, mediation, negotiations and collaboration with local leadership for peace.
- The Pact for the Future's Agenda for Peace and Security should advocate for processes that address context-specific root causes of violence and work with governmental and non-governmental actors at multiple levels to stabilize the affected countries.

In order to **encourage a bottom-up vision as central to the peacebuilding process**, which builds on and further contributes to trust, solidarity and ownership of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, we specifically recommend the following:

- In conditions of insecurity and violence, **civilians can play a vital role in maintaining a fragile peace.** Hence, the UN, and other international and national level policymakers, should co-design programs with relevant NGOs and community representatives that acknowledge and draw upon local knowledge and memory banks.
- To avoid reliance on armed actors as the only legitimate stakeholders within peace negotiations, international and national level policymakers should **use local knowledge to identify and support effective alternative dispute resolution mechanisms**, including engaging with local actors to build local spaces for inter- and intra-group dialogue.
- To address evolving conflicts, international actors and national/sub-national governments should facilitate ongoing dialogue between relevant powerbrokers at all levels (local, sub-national, sub-regional, regional, national), including armed and, where appropriate, criminal actors.
- International actors and governments should develop adequately funded programs to address conflict- affected and trauma-related mental health within communities. These should cover complex post- traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, interpersonal and inter-group trust and suicide risk.

Data from the University of Notre Dame's Peace Accords Matrix (PAM) evidences that **Peace Accords are the only sustainable way to end armed conflict and prevent further violence.** The UN should support regionally, sub-regionally and locally crafted peace accords and facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of said accords. Under such conditions, the UN should act as mediator and/or coordinator of mediation and facilitation efforts of local, national and international actors.

For Peace Accords to be successful, they need to fulfill three main conditions:

- Peace accords **need to be comprehensive in a wide range of policy domains,** moving beyond security provisions and integrating social, justice, development and other reforms.

- Peace accords need to be **inclusive, bringing diverse stakeholders** to the negotiation table. Stakeholders - including those most affected by conflict, and particularly women - should be guaranteed a mechanism through which their voices are heard and their demands/needs included in the design of the accords' provisions. Specifically, attention should be paid, moreover, to **the victims of war.** War and political violence affect civilians in a disproportionate way. For the implementation of peace agreements to be successful, it requires that victims feel themselves to be owners and beneficiaries of any and all peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts.
- Peace accords have a 47% higher rate of success when their implementation is supported by third-party, independent and trusted external implementation monitors to the conflict parties. **Civil society organizations,** such as the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM), **including women's grassroot organizations**, are key for maintaining the momentum of implementation that contributes greatly to the prevention of conflict recurrence between former conflict parties. At the same time, third party actors can play a crucial role in facilitating coordination between implementation agencies and fostering accountability of the implementation process towards transparency of the resources invested by the international community. As such, the UN should adopt innovative principles to ensure that accord implementation involve more diverse actors beyond states and international actors.
- The reforms set in place to implement a comprehensive agreement must be properly funded and consider the needs and demands of a diverse population. This is particularly important for ensuring continuous popular support of the peace process over time and in relation to realizing the potential of **gender provisions** which often are given lower priority.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

- At the core of contemporary conflicts is the lucrative supply of arms by multinational companies supported by their countries. Given such conditions, we recommend the establishment by the UN of a fully operational program to reduce the proliferation of small arms. The UN should also establish an effective mechanism for tracking legal arms sales and end user adherence to non-proliferation of the bought arms. Local knowledge and capacities could be fundamental to such a program, providing data and contextually-specific expertise.
- Digital warfare through the use of drones and computerized technology needs to be regulated and subject to multilateral policy review and accountability. We recommend that the UN - with the support of Civil Society actors - develop an innovative normative framework to regulate such developments.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

The Policy Brief of Meaningful Youth Engagement acknowledges the crucial role played by the youth in national building and their concomitant vulnerability to recruitment to armed groups. We recommend:

- Empowering youth through skill and capacity building, education and innovative technology to strengthen most nations and societies and reduce their vulnerability to violence.
- Where feasible, we urge the UN to support consultation processes with children, whose experiences can shed light on the ongoing, long-term impact and legacy of violent conflict, and yet whose voices are rarely incorporated into formal policy agendas.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

Given the current challenges faced by global multilateral institutions, we recommend the following:

- The UN has to ensure continuous support for the promotion and protection of Human Rights, without hesitation or compromise.
- Communities themselves may have ancient forms of conflict and dispute resolution, which are frequently highly effective and perceived as legitimate. Such local mechanisms of justice administration ought to be taken into account by the UN and national governments in order to strengthen socio-political accountability. Hence, the UN should support local, sub-national, national and regional mechanisms of justice aimed at reconstructing affected communities over externalized forms of justice, such as those advanced by the International Criminal Court (ICC).