

TOWARDS A NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE PEACE PROCESSES

INSTITUTIONAL LEAD

Interpeace

MODERATOR

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THEMATIC FOCUS

To design and implement peace processes that can successfully address the underlying root causes of violence and make peace more sustainable, the way the international system approaches peace processes needs to fundamentally change. This includes overcoming silos of different peace and security interventions and casting them more coherently in the context of the longer-term framework that sustainable peace requires. The panel discussed the need for new mechanisms, practices and norms in peacebuilding and peace processes and showcased examples of how this can work in practice.

SUMMARY

The panel highlighted the importance of inclusion as an underlying principle of effective peace processes, but it nuanced what must be understood by ‘inclusion’. Inclusion must have as its guiding principles being truly representative of society, seeking broad-based legitimacy, and ultimately achieving collective ownership of policies and decisions.

The panel also underscored that, while there are numerous policies and resolutions that address parts of the challenge of pursuing peace, few if any provide clarity on how various siloed efforts must articulate with each other as part of a whole, on who is best placed to lead on each area of work and at each level of society, on when such efforts are appropriate, premature or too late, and, most importantly, on how it all adds up. Moreover, even fewer provide a reference point against which to assess progress, over time, towards the greater capacity of a society to manage its own conflicts non-violently and the growth (or deterioration) of social and political trust.

Peace processes as currently designed remain overly focused on the negotiation table, which keeps attention on a narrow and elite-driven track 1 process primarily composed of the actors of violence. This, in turn, can reinforce the notion of rewarding violence (‘prime à la violence’) as a pathway to securing a seat at the table. There are many other moments and levels of engagement that are equally important and that demand as much, if not more, attention in order to move the overall society closer to peace.

Making meaningful change in how peace processes are conceived and run must start by reframing peace processes as longer-term (20+ years, as this is the length of time that instilling durable peace generally requires), multilayered (working at several layers of society) and multi-stakeholder in nature. In the pursuit of these objectives, the panel recognized that peace is not the exception. Rather, conflict is. Hence the need to recognize and enhance the factors of positive peace in society, rather than focusing primarily on the factors of violence. In this way, peace processes can overcome their current tendency to give greater attention to conflict resolution rather than peace enhancement.

The panel also noted that the actors focused on short-term objectives (elections, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and ceasefire negotiations, etc.) will need to be far more closely

coordinated with, and even guided by, those that keep their attention on the longer-term goals. The present short-term funding cycles, staff rotation, political election calendars and media attention fatigue currently result in an inconsistent attention to the overall peace process agenda in the concerned country. This leads to poor follow-through and implementation of peace processes.

The panel recognized the need for new standards and mechanisms to bring the needed coherence to the design, monitoring, re-adjustment and assessment of peace processes, understood as re-cast in their longer-term framework. Several critical elements were cited in terms of criteria for assessing progress in a peace process, namely the degree to which they move the needle positively in terms of the empowerment of local actors, the improvement of a social contract between the people and between the state and its population, the perception of a fair security and justice system, and equality of rights and development opportunities for all.



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During panel event on "Principles for inclusive & sustainable peace" at the #SthlmForum, President of Interpeace @Scott_M_Weber, shared 5 key problems about how peace is currently done:

"1). The focus on fragility rather than what already works and what could be enhanced.

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"For #Sweden, local ownership and leadership is always crucial in peace processes, but sometimes this comes at the expense of the role of women. We need to include women in peace processes and have a long-term perspective and local partners." Gunnar Aldén @SweMFA #SthlmForum

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"The focus on supporting the peace process in #Liberia has been diminishing. There was a lot of focus at the formal peace process but now the work on the implementation and sustaining peace needs to happen." Victoria Wollie, Women in Peacebuilding network, Liberia #SthlmForum

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