



2020 STOCKHOLM FORUM ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Sustaining Peace in the Time of COVID-19
11-22 May 2020**



**STOCKHOLM FORUM
on Peace and
Development 2020**



Foreword

It is our pleasure to send you the report of the 2020 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development co-hosted by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

In response to the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the 2020 Stockholm Forum was the seventh edition of the Forum but the first ever to be held virtually. We would like to thank our partners from all over the world for making this transformation with us. It would not have been possible without you.

The world is facing an explosive crisis: a pandemic with far-reaching economic, social and political consequences. COVID-19 has exacerbated the vulnerability of the least protected and the most exposed in our global society.

In the midst of this pandemic, and at a time when we see states turning inwards to fight the virus and to protect citizens, the enormous positive response to our move to a virtual format has shown that there is a longing and a need to meet, discuss and analyse our current situation.

The partnerships behind the Stockholm Forum demonstrate that crisis does not have to divide us; it can bring us together to solve problems.

Global challenges can never be overcome in isolation. The Stockholm Forum has offered all of us an opportunity to reflect on the problems of today and the world we wish to build after the pandemic.

Today's challenges are certainly serious. But now is not the time to be immobilized by them. Now is the time to work together and to find common solutions to common problems.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all participants in the 2020 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development and we look forward to next year's Forum.



Ann Linde
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Government of Sweden



Peter Eriksson
Minister for International
Development Cooperation
Government of Sweden



Jan Eliasson
Chair of SIPRI's Governing Board



Sustaining Peace in the Time of COVID-19

The original theme for the 2020 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development was the **Geopolitics of Peacebuilding**. This theme recognized the significant scale-up of political commitment and resources for efforts to sustain peace in recent years. It also encouraged the peace and development community to engage with the increasing number of conflicts since 2011 and the growing geopolitical tensions.

In recognition of the declaration of a public health emergency of international concern, in March 2020 the Stockholm Forum amended this theme to focus on **Sustaining Peace in the Time of COVID-19**.

The world is managing a severe and acute public health emergency, and millions of people are now faced with a more uncertain future. The Stockholm Forum provided an opportunity to look at how peace and development efforts engage with global challenges—from climate change to inclusion—and to draw conclusions about the global pandemic.

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and SIPRI also decided to change the format of the Stockholm Forum, proving that global dialogue could continue in the face of adversity, by going virtual. The main takeaway, whether from the conclusions of the many discussions or from the new format, is that there is now no turning back.

The 2020 Stockholm Forum was held as the world celebrated 75 years since the foundation of the United Nations. This anniversary framed discussions capturing the leading edge of research, policy and practice on peace and development.

The Forum sessions highlighted how much we collectively already know about both the immediate responses to COVID-19 and the need to ‘build back better’ in its aftermath. We must use this knowledge as we respond to the crisis, and to ensure that our global and national institutions are fit for purpose in managing future challenges.

This Forum report summarizes the discussions held in the High-level Interactive Dialogues and presents an overview of the main messages from the Stockholm Forum as we look forward from COVID-19.

The Move to a Virtual Format

Following the decision in March to change the format of the 2020 Stockholm Forum, within the space of a few weeks it moved from a single event to a series of online discussions and exchanges. The move to a virtual space enabled the Forum to leverage innovation and technology to bring together a global audience of partners, participants and panellists.

Between 11 and 22 May 2020 the virtual Forum worked with over 42 partners to convene over 44 High-level Interactive Dialogues, Public Panels and closed Partner-led Sessions. Throughout the Forum, the audience was able to engage with the sessions through moderated chats, questions and polling via a dedicated virtual conference landing page.

The shift to a virtual format enabled the Stockholm Forum to:

- **Democratize.** As of Friday 22 May, the Stockholm Forum had 3700 registered participants from 167 countries, with thousands more viewers on YouTube. The Forum reached not just more people but also a more diverse range of people, including youth groups, cabinet members and agency field staff.
- **Be more ‘green’.** By shifting to a virtual format, the Stockholm Forum demonstrated an effective way of reducing carbon emissions and the climate impact of international meetings.
- **Future-proof.** By going virtual, the Stockholm Forum and its partners have invested in innovation and tested new technologies, formats and topics, while ensuring that—for the first time ever—these discussions remain available for future viewing.

The move to a virtual format thus allowed the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development to demonstrate resilience in the face of crisis.

Looking Forward from COVID-19: Key Messages from the Stockholm Forum

The first two decades of the 21st century have been profoundly shaped by global crises—9/11, the financial crisis, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic are just a few examples. These crises have impacted the economic, military and physical security of countries all over the world and determined the development pathways of billions of people. As much as the shared opportunities of expanding global trade, travel and telecommunications are a product of our globalized world, so are such shared crises.

Over 10 days in May 2020 the Stockholm Forum brought together leading experts, international officials and government representatives to discuss how prospects for peace and development would be impacted by COVID-19. Participants from all over the world joined together to reflect on the policy frameworks, instruments and knowledge that have been developed, and to assess opportunities with regard to how we respond to the pandemic.

What follows are some key messages from these discussions:

Firstly, COVID-19 is a pivotal moment for international cooperation. The world was already facing many challenges at the start of 2020. Trust in the rules-based international order was fragile, and action to meet the Sustainable Development Goals was not advancing at the speed or scale required.

The magnitude and significance of the health, economic and political impacts of COVID-19 are only now becoming clear. The pandemic has drawn attention to the varied

capacities and resources available to people and countries to manage increasingly global risks.

The immediate impacts of the pandemic on conflict-affected populations and countries is of immense concern. With the number of people fleeing war, persecution and conflict reported to have exceeded 79 million in 2019, there is a real prospect of a major humanitarian emergency as the contagion spreads into camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Bangladesh, Syria and Yemen, and societies with weakened health systems such as Somalia or South Sudan.

Forum sessions underscored the commitment of many that, in an interdependent world, responses to these risks cannot be conducted in isolation. How leaders react will determine the trajectory of multilateralism and international cooperation as a response to global challenges, in the short and medium term.

Sessions considered numerous examples of new ways of working, both technically and diplomatically, and recognized the growing number of international organizations, regions and countries committed to efforts to sustain peace—from the African Union to the World Bank Group—in the face of COVID-19.

At the same time, all participants recognized that the pandemic had antagonized divisions in the international community. National responses have been uncoordinated and have, at times, taken on a divisive geopolitical hue. The pandemic has been used by authoritarian leaders to undermine democratic structures.



As countries turn inwards, close borders and disagree, the Forum recognized that we may be moving away from an easy system of globalization, where we could assume growing interdependence, a sharing of sovereignty and increased burden sharing. Across a large number of policy areas—from health to trade to aid—the world is now torn between unilateral action and international cooperation.

Secondly, COVID-19 has not replaced challenges to peace and development. It has compounded them. For many people and countries around the world, COVID-19 is just another risk added to a long list that they are already dealing with. A volatile decade has fuelled widening inequality across most societies and created populations that feel vulnerable in the face of ever-growing globalization without parallel investments in social protection.

With global threats such as climate change, loss of biological diversity and violent extremism intersecting with national patterns of marginalization and exclusion, the dynamics of opportunity and risk related to conflict were already changing. A number of countries were faced with protest movements stemming from a pervasive sense of economic injustice, others were navigating complex political transitions with uncertain prospects of support from international partners and some were seized with protracted insecurity in their peripheries.

Violence was increasingly perpetuated and fuelled by cartels and militias, with political

ideology muddled with interests in the material returns of violence.

Climate change was increasingly a challenge, impacting conflict-affected states disproportionately, and the proliferation of disinformation was changing the nature of peacebuilding work across the world.

The manifold impacts of COVID-19 overlay these existing issues. The pandemic makes difficult choices even more challenging. With the likely prospect of reduced resources, individuals, communities and governments must choose what to spend in responding to the immediate crisis and what to save for tomorrow. The diversity of threats has left many countries asking what support they need to manage a convergence of threats while maintaining sovereignty.

Thirdly, we are all shareholders in this system, both in the risks and in the benefits. The pandemic has accelerated a move away from binary categories of crisis-affected versus developing countries and created global awareness of the changing nature of threats to peace and security. According to the keynote speaker, Ilwad Elman, COVID-19 has given us a ‘crash course in empathy’.

A growing number of middle- and even high-income countries with significant capacity are today facing crises that will impede or reverse development gains and that cannot (or will not) be dealt with by national institutions, policies or resources alone. To deliver results at scale, we are going to have to be nimbler and more self-aware.



Aid as a source of impact and innovation is needed. Approaches in support of peace and development must be fit for fragility, as a strategic necessity. This will require a more coherent approach within donor institutions and between donors and international financial institutions for financing peacebuilding. What we need is greater burden sharing and more sustainable resources for these efforts as well as more coherent dialogue.

Fourthly, working across organizations, sectors and countries, inclusive collective action must be part of the solution. An overarching theme of the Stockholm Forum was the need to scale up support of national visions for peace. To be effective, peacebuilding depends on national ownership and national responsibility. Peace depends on states working in partnership with their populations.

At all levels, inclusion is an active choice. We have to navigate the tension between the knowledge that peace is more resilient when built to be inclusive and the fact that resolving conflicts means accommodating interests.

Twenty years on from its adoption, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda remains a solid framework. However, more needs to be done to ensure its systematic implementation.

An inclusive approach must ensure that women's and men's situations are taken into consideration not just for conflict resolution but also when making plans for post-conflict recovery such as economic development and international investments, infrastructure and the justice system. Youth, as actors, must likewise be supported to decide their own future and participate in the policy decisions affecting their lives.

Fifthly, international cooperation is the new realism. We need to work on crisis response, but at the same time we need to reinforce our institutions and structures to help us to prevent further crises.

The Forum highlighted that we have the knowledge and the frameworks around which we could align, such as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sustaining Peace resolutions and the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

At the same time, states and communities are reaching out to the international community for support in the face of COVID-19. Diplomacy, as Sweden's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Robert Rydberg said, cannot be put in quarantine. Peacebuilding is about resolving disputes peacefully, while reinforcing institutions and structures to help us to prevent future crises.

In a session that highlighted that we need to respond to the crisis while mobilizing a constituency committed to building back better, one of the speakers reminded us that the term 'United Nations' was coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, three years before the UN came into being.

In a world of global risks, countries may turn inwards for a few years, but inevitably when the solutions are through international cooperation, they will have to return to the table. The Stockholm Forum and its move online have been an opportunity to galvanize shared discussion and shared ownership over these risks.

Crises do not have to divide us. More frequently they bring us together to discuss, to solve problems and to progress.



Summary of the High-level Interactive Dialogues

The first three days of the Stockholm Forum were focused on three High-level Interactive Dialogues, capturing the past, present and future of efforts to sustain peace, with a focus on the WPS Agenda, climate change and COVID-19.

The **Opening of the Stockholm Forum** was led by **Robert Rydberg**, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sweden; **Jessica Tuchman Mathews**, Distinguished Fellow of the Carnegie Foundation and member of SIPRI's Governing Board; **Dan Smith**, Director of SIPRI; and **Sigrún Rawet**, Deputy Director of SIPRI.

The opening session focused on the geopolitical ramifications of COVID-19, underscoring how COVID-19 was further blurring the distinction between hard security (dealt with by the military and diplomacy) and human security (managed by development and humanitarian action).

Robert Rydberg—Diplomacy cannot be put under quarantine. Discussions on peace, security and development are even more important today than they were yesterday

The opening session highlighted how the polarization of response, capacity and needs was both sharpening existing geopolitical tensions and exacerbating local conflicts, underscoring that diplomacy, dialogue, international cooperation and effective multilateral institutions are as relevant today as ever.

Jessica Tuchman Mathews—International organizations are only as strong as member states allow them to be

Twenty Years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Lessons from the Past, a Roadmap for the Future. Organized in partnership with International Alert and Kvinna till Kvinna, the session brought together **Charlotta Sparre**, Director of the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa; **Leymah R. Gbowee**, Founder and President, Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa; **Per Olsson Fridh**, State Secretary to the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden; **Åsa Regnér**, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Women; **Parfait Onanga-Anyanga**, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa; **Petra Tötterman Andorff**, Secretary-General, Kvinna till Kvinna; and **Ndeye Sow**, Head of Gender, International Alert.

Leymah R. Gbowee—Peace is a gem and you have to put solid investment in peace

The session reviewed lessons learned since the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, highlighting how years of activism have guaranteed that protection from sexual violence, women's participation, female peacekeepers and gender parity are now seen as integral to achieving peace.

Per Olsson Fridh—Sweden is a shareholder of the UN and the World Bank, we have the power and responsibility to turn policy and knowledge into international law and action. Sweden has carried out that responsibility



The session concluded that while progress had been made, calls for further action were being amplified, with growing concern that the WPS Agenda needed to expand beyond security to mobilize investments in women's economic empowerment particularly in the context of violent extremism and shrinking civic space for women peacebuilders. Men should be engaged in the WPS Agenda; they should be aware that this is for humanity. Women should not be requesting permission to ask for their rights.

Syrian participant in Petra Tötterman Andorff's research—Women need to know that participation is a right and a duty towards their country and is not a gift given by men

Climate Change: The Other Crisis was the focus of the second day of the Forum, with a panel composed of **Dan Smith**, Director of SIPRI; **Peter Eriksson**, Minister for International Development

Cooperation, Sweden; **Raychelle Omamo**, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Kenya; **Hanna Tetteh**, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the UN Office to the African Union; **Hindou Ibrahim**, Sustainable Development Goal advocate and co-director of the World Indigenous Peoples' Initiative and Pavilion at COP21, COP22 and COP23; and **Margot Wallström**, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, Environment Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Commission.

Peter Eriksson—The world is in a desperate need for a new green deal, based on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement

The session emphasized that COVID-19 has tested international institutions, systems and leaders, with uncoordinated national action resulting in competition, and at times, polarizing political rhetoric. At the same time, all speakers acknowledged that lessons could be learned from the fight against COVID-19 for climate change.

Hindou Ibrahim—The seasons used to be our ally but they have turned into enemies. If the rains come we end with a flood, and if they don't there is a drought. We end up with food insecurity and people fighting among themselves

Like global pandemics, the facts and risks of climate change and biological diversity have been discussed for years. The session highlighted that faced with changing risks, countries and partners need to shift gears from responding to crises towards proactive financial investments to build resilience.

If we learn lessons, the negative impact of today's health crisis can—through political, social and economic change—improve tomorrow's prospects for addressing climate change. The demand for an integrated and holistic approach to assistance was a key request from partners dealing with a convergence of threats.

Margot Wallström—A crisis like this unveils the horrible consequences of inequality, between poor and rich countries, between men and women, between rural and urban areas. If we want to build back better we have to fight in all of this for democracy, human rights and freedom

Across Africa, for example, from health to climate and security, clarity is needed on what advice and resources are required for effective responses as part of efforts to build back better after the pandemic.

As part of this session, SIPRI announced its new Environment of Peace 2022 initiative, analysing practical steps that can be taken to address the negative impact of today's environmental crises so as to protect tomorrow's prospects for peace and security. The initiative's report—signed by an international panel chaired by **Margot Wallström**—will be released in 2022, to mark the 50th anniversary of the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, the first major intergovernmental conference on the environment.

Raychelle Omamo—What are the strengths that a state needs to have to be able to deal with threat convergence . . . maintain peace and security, provide public goods to its people, and engage with other states in a manner that expands its ability to be sovereign?

Sustaining Peace in the Time of COVID-19.

All these topics were brought together on the third day of the Forum. The day opened with words of welcome from **Jan Eliasson**, chair of SIPRI's Governing Board; remarks from the UN Secretary-General, **António Guterres**; a keynote address by **Ilwad Elman**, Director of Programmes and Development at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre; and an opening panel, with **Ann Linde**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden; **Ilwad Elman**; **Rosemary DiCarlo**, Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; **Thomas Greminger**, Secretary General, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; and **Jean-Marie Guéhenno**, member of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board on Mediation and member of SIPRI's Governing Board.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has underscored that in an interdependent world, national responses to global challenges cannot be conducted in isolation. From climate change to food insecurity to pandemics, collective global action must be the solution.

Ann Linde—COVID-19 poses risks for international peace and security; it both exacerbates existing conflict dynamics and creates new ones

As geopolitical tensions grow in the wake of the disease, new conflicts may erupt and existing conflicts may deepen. Authoritarian leaders may take advantage of the pandemic to push undemocratic agendas.



Jan Eliasson—Today is not the time to be immobilized by seemingly insurmountable obstacles; today is the time to work together to find common solutions to common problems, and to realize that good international solutions are in our national interests

The global response needs to have more of a gender lens and the issue of the role of women must be raised. While women are at the forefront in the response, we see increasing levels of gender-based violence and a pushback on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Stockholm Forum's keynote speaker, **Ilwad Elman**, highlighted that this global crisis is a test of our shared humanity. As multilateral organizations, governments and societies mount increasingly successful responses to the health challenges posed by COVID-19, we must seize the chance to shape how the world recovers, to build back better in a more sustainable and peaceful way.

Ann Linde—Multilateralism is needed; we will not be able to fight this pandemic ourselves

The closing public session brought together **Carl Skau**, Deputy Director-General, Department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden; **Nancy Lindborg**, President and CEO of the United States Institute of Peace; **Gillian Triggs**, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; **Aya Chebbi**, African Union Youth Envoy; and **Jago Salmon**, Stockholm Forum convener and lead curator at SIPRI.

Jago Salmon—Peacebuilding depends on national ownership and national actors, but at the same time international resources and capacity are essential. We, all of us across the Forum, are stakeholders in this system, both in the risks and in the benefits

The closing session asked what is next for the international community. Drawing on the sessions of the Stockholm Forum and the panellists' own experience, the panel explored recommendations to governments, to multilateral institutions and to civil society that should be brought forward over the coming year.

Nancy Lindborg—The pandemic is confirming whatever assumptions we went into the pandemic with . . . we need to collectively be as creative in this, as imaginative, as we have ever been. This is that time. We have been talking about this for a while and now is the urgent moment to act

The scale-up of support for peacebuilding in recent years has led to more resources and more partners than ever before committing to efforts to sustain peace. At the same time, work on peace

and development is increasingly confronting new challenges, from climate change to displacement to technology—and recently also COVID-19.

The session highlighted that although international cooperation is confronted with the prospect of a prolonged period of contested multilateralism and geopolitical competition, COVID-19 can be a reset moment and an accelerating force for positive change.

Aya Chebbi—Intergenerational co-leadership could be an approach for conflict prevention. It is not about taking the torch from your generation; it is the possibility of a wider generational collaboration, based on experience sharing, dialogue and trust—allowing young people to thrive in their leadership potential without fear. We need your wisdom, but you need our innovation to take charge of our destiny

Panellists emphasized that although the initial focus had been on national responses, there were increasing signs of effective, collaborative international action.

From economic, social or legal perspectives, the pandemic can provide an exceptional moment to reaffirm core values and ideals that have animated the world for the past 70 years, while bringing in new leadership, reinforcing shared institutions, and rebuilding trust, both between states and within societies.

Gillian Triggs—What we are seeing is not only a social and economic crisis; we are also seeing a regression from norms that underpinned the 21st century approach to human rights. As we look to the future, we are going to have to rebuild some of those norms and standards that we took for granted



Extract statement by Ilwad Elman, Director for Programmes and Development, Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre

I'm joining you from Mogadishu, Somalia, and for the first time, when friends and colleagues call me from all over the world to ask 'How's it going?', I can answer 'probably same as on your end'.

If there is something that I think we can all agree on, or at least acknowledge as a consequence of COVID-19, is that we have all been thrown into a crash course in empathy.

A shared understanding of our fragility, and that man-made borders do not change how tragedy affects us as people.

That we all hurt when we lose our loved ones. We all flee when forced to seek safety and, where possible, we try to help each other.

There is little that I can say that has not already been said about the pandemic that was not only foreseeable but also widely foreseen.

What has not been talked about enough, however, is the crisis of multilateralism that COVID-19 has coincided with; how it has weakened the system of multilateralism and has even amplified the global trust deficit.

In many cases, countries have resolved to turning inwards, unilateralism, blame games and responsibility shifting.

On 23 March the UN Secretary-General launched his 'Appeal for A Global Ceasefire', and highlighted the impact and double-vulnerabilities of women, children, people with disabilities, and the displaced

I welcomed the call for a ceasefire and was moved greatly by the Secretary-General's leadership.

The early momentum from the countries that answered the call also demonstrated the widespread support for this move.

But that momentum slowed almost as fast as it came.

Let us be real: there is not much to celebrate.

A lot of lives have been lost and more people are fighting for theirs right now.

And the reason why we are here, convening online, as a global community of policymakers, practitioners and just concerned people is because we know how dire the situation truly is.

Around 1.54 billion children are out of classrooms—many of them, particularly girls, are unlikely to return.

The economic uncertainty and hopelessness that young people feel for their future and the very real risk that 42 to 66 million children face of falling into extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19 terrify me.

As a child of Somalia, I am by extension a child of war; in my 30 years of life my country has been and is still at war.

I know what we are risking by not acting faster. We are risking another lost generation, mental health impact and devastating consequences for deepened inequality.

If we fail here, this is something that we won't recover from.

And this is why it is so important we do business differently now and open doors for young leaders.

I'm proud of the young women and men who are exemplifying and innovating in their responses to COVID-19.

We know that there are many good people doing good things right now.

We see some governments celebrating domestic wins and allocating funds for development and innovation.

But we also see governments that have used the pandemic to advance restrictions and attacks on human rights.

Protecting health and human rights should never be mutually exclusive.

Allow me to just paint a picture for you of where I am right now in Somalia: a context that could be best described as a disaster within a disaster.

COVID-19 is just one among many life-threatening crises.

There is a significant increase in conflicts, hunger and poverty, with the spectre of famine in many fragile regions now looming.

And this re-emphasizes the importance of the development and security nexus.

A country like Somalia needs sustainable long-term investments in healthcare and climate-resilient economies if our peacebuilding efforts are meant to last.

Only then, can countries like mine and the many others in similar situations be in a better position to respond to a crisis like COVID-19.

One quote we have repeatedly heard from different leaders and influencers of sorts is that 'the virus does not discriminate'.

This is only half the truth: the virus may not discriminate but our world sure does.

Across the globe, including in wealthy nations and those that were initially lauded for a good COVID-19 response, we have seen that death rates have been vastly higher among communities of colour and migrant communities. Stockholm is even an example of that.

The world knows and sees, and history will remember the leaders who are trying to push partisan and divisive agendas at a time like this.

But what peacebuilding in Somalia has taught me and asks of me is to be perpetually hopeful.

It has also taught me to be realistic and tangible in my efforts.

And because we are not gathered here to agonize but rather to organize, I will conclude by sharing some actionable and realistic ideas.

The COVID-19 pandemic is both a public health emergency and a human crisis, and it poses a considerable risk to hard-won peacebuilding gains around the world.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund has the infrastructure and demonstrated impact to be operationalized during this crisis.

Supporting this fund means leaving no one behind and ensuring countries in conflict can also survive and rebuild from this.

We must remember we have more answers than we think, and it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel.

We have been preparing and waiting to be activated in the event of a pandemic like this.

The Women and Youth Peace and Security legacies combined with the digital innovations we are blessed with today have given us a bigger and greater community of actors available to deliver the practical and realistic actions that we need now.

So I urge you to move the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and the Recommendations from the Missing Peace Report from policy to delivery.

We have a real opportunity to do business differently; and I don't mean just switching to Zoom calls.

I conclude with my deepest condolences to everyone who has had to bury a loved one—or actually could not even bury their loved one in a dignified manner because of this situation.

And I express my profound gratitude and admiration for frontline and essential workers everywhere.



Welcome remarks by António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

It is a pleasure to greet the Stockholm Forum. You gather as the COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the world into an unprecedented crisis with devastating consequences for people, economies, and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The world's most vulnerable populations are most in jeopardy. And women are experiencing a double damaging impact: they make up the majority of the most-affected sectors and face an increased risk of violence as they are often trapped at home with their abusers.

The COVID-19 pandemic also poses a threat to international peace and security, hindering our

ability to engage in diplomacy, and potentially leading to an increase in social unrest and violence. This demands a global, coordinated and decisive response. I have appealed for a global ceasefire. We have launched plans to help countries to deal with the socio-economic fallout and to ensure flows of humanitarian assistance. We must also build back better by reducing inequality, stressing resilience, and building just, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies. I count on this year's Stockholm Forum discussion to contribute to the unity, leadership and solidarity we need at this defining moment.

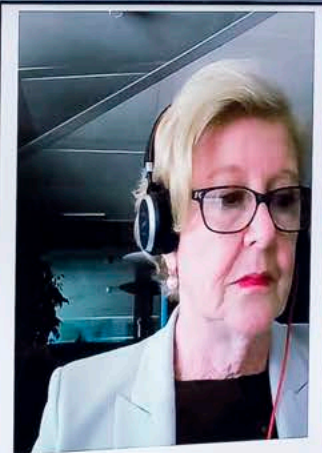
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