2021 STOCKHOLM FORUM ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Promoting Peace in the Age of Compound Risk
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STOCKHOLM FORUM
on Peace and
Development 2021

Foreword

In May 2021, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute co-hosted the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development for the eighth time. Under the theme 'Promoting Peace in the Age of Compound Risk', the Forum started with the premise that the Covid-19 pandemic had reinforced existing risks and challenges to peace and development at a time when the multilateral system was under great stress to tackle them.

The discussions made clear that the multiple interconnected risks of today can only be handled successfully through cooperation and concerted action. That is why the Stockholm Forum is such an important platform. It connects different communities of practice from international organizations, national governments, the private sector, civil society and research. Generating common objectives and complementary evidence-based efforts to reach these communities is ever more important as we are emerging from the pandemic and the resources to build back better are scarce.

Since its inception, the Forum has become an important part of global conversations on how to unlock effective action that cuts across sectors and siloed approaches. In 2021, the Forum brought together more than 5300 participants from 162 countries and 62 partner organizations, reflecting a truly global reach. 384 speakers from the peacebuilding, economic and human development, security, health, and technology fields shared not only views from international or regional organizations—such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations—but also views from local perspectives, including those of women peacebuilders, youth and environmental activists. All parts of the population must be involved in shaping a sustainable future.

The digital format of the 2021 Stockholm Forum contributed to offering such local voices, often in conflict contexts, an important platform to explain what needs to change to make a positive difference on the ground, as well as how and why. Regional organizations in turn—including the OSCE under Swedish chairpersonship—complemented local views by emphasizing their role in scaling up locally grounded solutions to peace, security and development challenges.

Particularly noteworthy in this edition of the Stockholm Forum were:

- OSCE member states' and the OSCE Secretariat's participation in numerous discussions;
- Technology actors' contributions and joint sessions between the Stockholm Forum and the OSCE-wide Cyber/ICT Security Conference 2021 focusing on emerging technologies, confidence-building measures and conflict prevention in cyberspace; and
- Swedish embassies in the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa hosting and amplifying the reach of Stockholm Forum discussions.

The strong Forum voices in support of multilateral solutions, inclusive conflict resolution, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and more and better integrated peacebuilding and gender equality, as well as serious efforts to address the climate crisis, give cause for hope and optimism. Now it is everyone's shared responsibility to follow through with action. This means doing things differently from in the past. It means—as Hajer Sharief so aptly put it—no longer leaving peacebuilding to 'one gender from one generation', but including the remaining two-thirds of society: women and young people. The Covid-19 pandemic is not only an unprecedented challenge but also an opportunity to join forces globally across gender and generations and to strengthen the efforts by the international community to meet common challenges.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all participants in and partners of the 2021 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.

Ann Linde
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Government of Sweden

Per Olsson Fridh
Minister of International Development Cooperation Government of Sweden

Jan Eliasson
Chair of the SIPRI Governing Board


on Peace and
Development

Promoting Peace in the Age of Compound Risk

The Covid-19 pandemic amplified conflict, human rights violations, disinformation efforts, gender inequality and societal fractures. The post-pandemic world risks being more violent and less democratic. Geopolitical tensions and unilateral approaches have multiplied, while the need for collective action—as highlighted by the United Nations' 75th anniversary and the pandemic response—has become clearer than ever, as has the need for locally grounded solutions and recognition of the interconnections between the two.

In addition, politics, social mobilization and warfare are increasingly taking place online. This turns the spotlight on how to promote accountability, confidence, access to justice and democratic space in the digital sphere, and on the influence of online developments for policymaking. The compound nature of today's challenges makes a strategic reassessment of approaches to promoting peace and international cooperation with inclusivity, including women's participation and agency, paramount to this effort. Countries' capacities and resources available to deal with the challenges to peace are often both siloed and restricted. Yet, current interlinked problems cut across sectors and, hence, cannot be tackled successfully by one actor or sector alone. How to break out of these silos was a prominent theme at the 2021 Stockholm Forum.

Objectives: Towards a Deeper Understanding of Current Complexities, Novel Solutions and Collective Action

Forum 2021 discussions sought to deepen our understanding of these complexities and explore novel approaches to promoting peace in the age of compound political, social, economic and environmental risks reinforced by Covid-19. Over four days, participants shared lessons from across organizations, sectors and countries —as well as from history— in open studio-produced hybrid panel discussions, online technical roundtables, and workshops. These conversations gave senior policymakers, practitioners, researchers and civil society representatives the opportunity to review new evidence and exchange views on innovations from practice, ongoing policy developments, and key thematic and country or region related issues. The discussions brought together the political, security, technology, health and peacebuilding communities—placing the issue of improved collective action at the centre.

In 2021 emphasis was on:

- the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as a regional platform for conflict resolution;
- the complex longer-term implications triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic;
- the challenges and opportunities that emerging technologies present for peacebuilding;
- good peacebuilding financing; and
- climate-related security risks and peacebuilding efforts.

What follows is a summary of key findings and recommendations generated during the studio-produced discussions with ministerial participation. These centred on seven key themes:

- the capacity of the international system to address compound risk;
- the role of social media in peacebuilding;
- local and regional cooperation on women, peace and security;
- good peacebuilding financing;
- preventing famine;
- climate security; and
- health, peace and security.

> *'Nobody has the monopoly on wisdom or action. You have to have partnership. Partnership is not about hiding in the crowd and saying, "somebody else can do it." Partnership is about everybody stepping up. And leadership is about enabling everybody to step up.'*
>
> **Dan Smith, Director of SIPRI**

Extract of Statement by Hajer Sharief, Co-founder of Together We Build It

At the age of 19, when I became actively engaged in peace and development, I thought 'wow' there is already a well-developed field that has the resources and capacities needed to change lives for the better and improve the quality of life everywhere.

But today, I must say, I am a little bit disappointed but also on the edge of losing hope in some of our processes and practices that we utilize within the field of peace and development. Because, if we do not start having a closer look at what we have failed to achieve instead of focusing on and glorifying what we have managed to succeed in, then I'm afraid the time will come when we will all lose hope and give up.

I certainly hope this will never happen. That is why forums like this are extremely important for all of us to come together, have semantic discussions, have technical discussions, but most importantly have critical discussions.

In my soon-to-be 10 years of activism for peace, I have attended and participated in many workshops, events and meetings, discussing how to advance human rights, how to advance women's rights, how to ensure that young people's voices are heard and taken seriously in peace and security processes.

One thing that I kept hearing everywhere I went is that people are afraid of change. People here is a reference to all other regular people who are not actively involved and engaged in peace and development.

And I partly agree with that, people are afraid of change. People are afraid of doing things differently.

But I also think that we, who work on peace and development, are afraid of change. We are afraid of doing our work differently even when we have proven to ourselves many times that some of our current practices and processes are not working.

For example, we know that peace cannot be achieved when two-thirds of society is excluded—talking about women and young people.

Yet, some parts of our systems and field supports, oversees, designs, facilitates and even celebrates peace processes that only bring one gender from one generation to the peace table.

We are afraid of change, and we are afraid of doing things differently.

To an extent that even when we are convinced that women and young people should directly participate in peace processes, we go about finding different ways to engage them on the sidelines of the process instead of simply doing our best to include them at the peace table. The more years that pass, the more I engage and participate within the international movement of peace and development, the more I realize this risk.

We are as much change-phobic as those who are not involved and engaged in peace and development.

To their defence, they are afraid of change because they do not have all the knowledge needed to be convinced that the change we seek is for the benefit of everyone.

But what is our excuse? I believe we are afraid of change because we are afraid to fail.

However, working on peace and development is unlike any other field. This is a field we join because of our personal values, morals and principles. The international system and movement for peace

and development is also based on these values, morals and principles. So, if a certain process or practice fails, we take it personally. We feel that we failed.

While this fear comes from a moral place, I consider it dangerous because it blinds us. It makes us miss out on opportunities that might accelerate achieving peace and development. Most importantly, it threatens the credibility and legitimacy of our work in the eyes of the people we want to serve. Denzel Washington said, 'Just because we are doing a lot, it does not mean we are getting a lot done.' This is exactly how I feel. Ten years after being part of this global movement working on peace and development, are we getting a lot done?

I don't think so. Because the gains we have made do not compensate for the work, the effort that we have put in and, most importantly, the personal sacrifices that many of us had to make to make this work a success.

There are many experts in this room who can identify hundreds of risks. But today I choose to identify a risk that I think is at the core of every other risk: the risk of losing hope and the risk of losing trust.

To try to mitigate that, I have a recommendation. From this minute onwards, throughout the whole Forum, let's start asking ourselves: Have we done enough? Are we getting enough done? Because we all know we are doing a lot. But are we getting enough done? ■

Extract of Opening Remarks by Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund

Promoting peace in the age of compound risk is crucially important and indispensable for economics. You cannot have sustainable growth without sustainable peace. You cannot have economic and financial stability without stability and security in people's lives. So let me share three types of economic risks that, if left unaddressed, can affect global peace.

First, the risks from our global interdependence. At its best, interdependence can lift people up, but it can also amplify shocks as the Covid pandemic clearly shows. This crisis will not end anywhere unless it is over everywhere. Vaccine policy is our best economic policy this year. Next year, it is essential for the recovery. Together, we must ramp up vaccine production and distribution—especially in the poorest countries.

Second, the risk of a changing climate. Left unabated, it is a major threat to our prospect for our economic and financial stability. We need substantially stronger climate action to protect our planet and secure our future. And now research shows we can do so while boosting growth and creating millions of jobs.

Third, the risk of underinvesting in resilience. A key lesson from this crisis is that economies with stronger fundamentals have been able to cope much better, and those with vulnerabilities do far worse. This is particularly important for communities and countries that are affected by conflict.

How do these compound risks affect peace and security? Think of all societies as having immune systems. This can include the strength of their institutions, their capacity to cope with and manage risks, and their social cohesion. But all societies have breaking points when their immune system undergoes severe strain.

Working together, we not only can manage those risks, but we can turn them into unique opportunities to build a more resilient, inclusive and greener world. And one that is ultimately more peaceful. ■

Managing Interconnected Risk: The Capacity of the Multilateral System

The underlying presumption of this Stockholm Forum session was that compound global risks create a demand for international tools to stem them. The Covid-19 pandemic is reversing progress on reducing poverty and conflicts and has weakened solidarity within and between countries. All this is happening against the backdrop of the climate crisis. The most vulnerable populations are suffering the most. Domestic abuse is rising, inequalities are increasing, and many developing countries are disadvantaged in rolling out vaccination campaigns.

> *'The pandemic is affecting everyone, but it is not affecting everyone evenly. It is the people most exposed, the people in the most vulnerable situations, who pay the highest price.'*
>
> **Jan Eliasson, Chair of the SIPRI Governing Board**

Panellists stressed that the pandemic and its ramifications pose a critical challenge to national governments and multilateral institutions to 'build back better' and enhance societies' resilience to future threats.

> *'Global resources can be scarce in this pandemic and, while we continue to address people's immediate humanitarian needs, we need to engage with a long-term perspective on what happens after the pandemic. We need to reduce the risk, we need to reduce the vulnerabilities, and in that way prevent conflicts.'*
>
> **Ann Linde, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs**

Pitfalls of the International System

CEO of New America, Anne-Marie Slaughter, highlighted that today's international institutions were built after World War II to prevent new major conflicts between countries and provide fora for governments to cooperate on selected issues such as trade. While the multilateral system has been successful in many areas over the years, critics questioned whether it is fit to tackle the challenges of the 21st century long before the current pandemic. Increased globalization appears to have weakened multilateral actors both normatively and operationally. Current weaknesses highlighted by the 2021 Stockholm Forum discussions include:

- **Perceived absence of global leadership.** One panellist lamented that global leadership, for example, by the UN Security Council is missing in action. Instead, great power competition and a partitioning of markets are on the rise.
- **Lack of human focus and inclusivity.** Other problems of the current institutional set up include a state-based rather than a human focus (i.e. focused on the security and welfare of states instead of individuals), under-representation of the Global South in major decision-making fora, such as the UN Security Council, and systematic exclusion of marginalized groups.
- **Siloed approaches.** An aversion to evaluating existing tools and an adherence to thematic silos further limit the effectiveness of modern day regional and international organizations to tackle interconnected risks and are causing the supply of global solutions to run dry.

Promising Ways Forward: Towards Networked Multilateralism

Stockholm Forum speakers agreed with the broad consensus that strengthening multilateralism is key to tackling global interconnected risks effectively. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres said at the General Assembly's 75th anniversary meeting, 'In an interconnected world, we need a networked multilateralism, in which the United Nations family, international financial institutions, regional organizations, trading blocs and others work together more closely and more effectively. We also need . . . an inclusive multilateralism, drawing on civil society, cities, businesses, local authorities and more and more on young people.'

European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell

and UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed echoed the need to balance increased multipolarity with revitalized and inclusive multilateralism at the 2021 Stockholm Forum.

> *'The world is becoming more multipolar and at the same time less multilateral. And yet the demand for effective global action has never been greater . . . So the main challenge today is to reconcile these two dimensions—multipolarity and multilateralism.'*
>
> **Josep Borrell, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

In practice this has far-reaching consequences across policy areas from gender equality to emerging technologies and climate change. Proposed solutions fall into two categories: short-term recommendations, focusing on the Covid-19 crisis at hand, and long-term solutions, enhancing the international systems' capabilities to prepare for future crises and effectively deal with risks reinforced by the pandemic.

> *'Responding to new realities requires inclusive, networked and effective multilateral cooperation connecting governments, international, regional and financial organizations. A multilateralism that is inclusive with women's equal and meaningful participation.'*
>
> **Amina Mohammed,**
> **United Nations Deputy Secretary-General**

Short-term Recommendations

To tackle the health and economic effects of the Covid-19 crisis and their connected risks, the Stockholm Forum panellists advocated for a two-fold approach:

- **Global access to vaccines.** Guaranteeing fair and equitable life-saving vaccine access in every country in the world will speed up global Covid-19 recovery. The World Health Organization's (WHO) COVAX facility needs to improve its pooled procurement mechanism and accelerate an equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines. Thus far, it has gathered around US$6.6 billion to do so, but a lot more is needed to guarantee universal vaccine access.
- **Sustainable economic recovery.** Covid-19 economic recovery can be used as an opportunity to create a green and resilient global economy. To this extent, the World Bank Group is dedicating 50 per cent of its climate financing to support adaptation and resilience for a more sustainable and green economic recovery from the pandemic.

Long-term Recommendations

According to Stockholm Forum speakers, interconnected risks must be considered when creating long-term policies by:

- **Formulating cross-systemic frameworks.** International institutions and governments need to break down silos by implementing cross-system measures. In a world of interconnected risks, institutions can only cope with challenges if they embrace complexity and accept that climate change is connected to security, security to gender equality, and so forth. To do so, it is vital to formulate analytical frameworks that take a holistic view of risk impacts and include experts and local actors in evaluating risk policies.
- **Improving partnerships.** Local perspectives and private sector engagement are required to mitigate interconnected risks. To facilitate cooperation among actors of different backgrounds, new forms of public–private partnerships need to be explored.
- **Joining Impact Hubs.** Government and international organizations should create joint monitoring tools. Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) suggest creating 'Impact Hubs' where multilateral institutions and governments come together to develop joint evaluation frameworks and scale up preventive measures.
- **Championing networked multilateralism.** National governments should role-model inclusive multilateral cooperation.

However, these measures only fulfil their full potential when the existing multilateral institutions are reformed and adapted to the challenges of the 21st century. Panellists argued that multilateralism needs to be more inclusive, democratic and embrace long-term policies to stem interconnected risks effectively.

New Frontiers in Peacebuilding: The Role of Social Media

Social media use has grown exponentially worldwide. In January 2021, there were 4.2 billion active users globally—a 106 per cent increase compared to January 2011. Social media platforms connect people, enable speedy dissemination of information, and can be tools of accountability—all vital to free and liberal societies. Yet, they have also facilitated voter suppression and the strategic dissemination of lies and propaganda.

> *'Social media platforms can be positive spaces where people can connect, create linkages and mobilize . . . However, social media platforms can also drive polarization, radicalization and extremism.'*
>
> **Robert Rydberg,**
> **Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs**

In the worst cases, social media platforms have been used to suppress internal dissent, negatively influence global affairs, incite armed violence and contribute to crimes against humanity, as in the case of the Rohingya in Myanmar. In 2020 Oxford University's Computational Propaganda Research Project found evidence of social media manipulation in 81 countries. Firms offering computational propaganda campaigns to political actors were present in 48 countries. The 2021 Stockholm Forum explored current challenges and promising initiatives going forward.

Current Challenges

Speakers argued that the role of the media for propaganda purposes is not new but stressed that social media presents distinct challenges to traditional media:

- **Shift of gatekeeping power to technology companies.** The rise of news consumption via social media has shifted the gatekeeping power for information dissemination from editors and journalists to tech companies.
- **Creation of echo chambers.** To maximize profit by growing user engagement and participation, social media companies have created sophisticated tools that filter information and place people in virtual echo chambers which confirm or even radicalize world views.
- **Voter manipulation and offline violence.** One panellist stressed that the pigeonholing of information to people not only shapes world views but also behaviour. This is evidenced by the targeted voter manipulation during the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum, India's 2019 election and the violent storming of the United States Capitol Building in January 2021.

> *'[Social media is] creating emergent behaviour that literally feeds on violence, fear and uncertainty.'*
>
> **Maria Ressa, CEO of Rappler,**
> **2021 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate**

Promising Efforts Stemming Social Media Disinformation

Promising recent initiatives to stem disinformation discussed at the 2021 Stockholm Forum have come from the EU, social media platforms and civil society actors:

- **Strengthened EU Code of Practice on Disinformation.** The 2021 Stockholm Forum provided its audience with a sneak preview of the EU's guidance to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the 2018 Code of Practice on Disinformation. The Code is a self-regulatory instrument to commit online platforms and advertisers to counter the spread of online disinformation. Daniel Braun, Deputy Head of Cabinet to Vera Jourova, Vice President of European Commission for Values and Transparency, explained that it contains stronger measures to demonetize the purveyors of disinformation, increase transparency of political advertising, tackle manipulative behaviour, empower users and call for improved collaboration with fact checkers and access to data for researchers. The next step is to develop it into a Code of Conduct embedded in the EU's Digital Services Act currently under review in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

> *'The [European Commission's] approach is . . . about transparency measures and addressing the systemic risks. The aim is not to regulate content, but rather to ensure that the platforms put in place resources and processes needed to protect public health, democracy and fundamental rights.'*
>
> **Daniel Braun, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Vera Jourova,**
> **Vice President of the European Commission**

- **Responses by social media companies.** Facebook Director of Human Rights, Miranda Sissons, explained that social media companies

have responded to harmful disinformation campaigns by removing content, monitoring conflict situations, reducing the visibility of certain content or limiting the resharing of news, and creating early warning systems in partnership with local fact-checking organizations. Between January 2019 and November 2020, Facebook took down more than 10 893 accounts and 12 588 Facebook pages. To monitor conflict situations across the world, the company invested in local language technologies to help flag hate speech. The most recent estimates by Sissons have placed hate speech at approximately 8 per 1000 messages, an improvement from previous estimates. In March 2021, Facebook adopted a human rights policy that is meant to adhere to UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The policy commits Facebook to the publication of an annual report on human rights interventions undertaken, a fund for offline assistance to human rights defenders and journalists, removal of verified misinformation and rumours, partnership with human rights organizations, and continuing technological advancement in early warning prioritization of at-risk countries.

- **Partnerships with civil society organizations.** In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the WHO launched an initiative to combat dangerous misinformation in Africa in partnership with the UN, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), local fact-checking organizations and local public health organizations.

'I want to be clear to people on this panel and around the world that, in many markets, we are actively seeking to invest in and develop the technology that limits the distribution of hateful or policy-violating content or content that otherwise defies human rights principles.'

Miranda Sissons, Director of Human Rights, Facebook

'What we need, especially if we think about very sensitive situations like conflict situations, is to build a new ecosystem. And to build this new ecosystem we need much more civil society involved, because civil society will be a source of legitimacy. [And] we need the platforms involved.'

Teresa Ribeiro, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Representative on Freedom of the Media

Outlook and Recommendations

This Stockholm Forum session discussed why and how social media unintentionally evolved into a threat to democracy and human rights across the world. Legislators and technology firms are responding to the harmful spread of disinformation online by strengthening monitoring, oversight and collaborating with NGOs and civil society actors. Investing to improve trust in traditional media and strengthening civil societies' capacities to distinguish fact from fiction are also required. However, analysts were sceptical about progress as long as disinformation remains a source of revenue for social media platforms.

Locally Rooted and Regionally Connected: Challenges of Cooperation on Women, Peace and Security

'As chairperson of the OSCE, the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a top priority. In our experience . . . persistence yields results.'

Ann Linde, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs

After two decades of activism, peace processes remain male dominated. Only 5 per cent of peace agreements at the national level include female signatories. This is problematic for at least two reasons:

- The negotiation table is where resources and power are distributed.
- The inclusion of women improves the longevity of the agreement.

The Covid-19 pandemic increased the challenges women and children face worldwide. The level of gender-based violence has drastically increased, economic disempowerment is on the rise and extremism leading to displacement has left women and children particularly vulnerable to poverty and violence.

'It is critical for us to address gender-based violence . . . as human rights—a developmental and peace and security imperative. This requires intentionally addressing the social and cultural norms regulating power relations between men and women, and approaches especially on linked aspects of subordination.'

Siga Fatima Jagne, Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Economic Community of West African States

The 2021 Stockholm Forum offered a platform to local and regional organizations to discuss cooperation on accelerating the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.

Overcoming Barriers to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

According to Sanam Anderlini, Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), a common barrier to effective implementation is the perception that the WPS Agenda is too 'Western', creating contradictions instead of support.

'So how do we pursue the women, peace, and security mandate despite the reticence of some? We firmly believe we've got all the normative documents that we need—we have resolutions, we have statements. What we need is implementation.'

Rosemary DiCarlo, United Nations Under-Secretary for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

The main steps the Stockholm Forum panel put forward to stem this misperception and accelerate the implementation of the WPS Agenda included:

- **Leading by example.** Regional organizations can promote women's rights internally through gender parity policies; zero-tolerance policies towards sexual misconduct; and training on inclusion, the gendered dimensions of conflict and sexual harassment. The OSCE, for example, is striving for equal representation of women and men at all organizational levels by 2026 through talent acquisition, leadership promotion, an inclusive work environment and the elimination of all-male panels. However, in the field, the representation of women has been challenging. OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid shared an example from Ukraine where the

attempt to balance gender in the border patrol teams failed given the lack of female patrol officers. Efforts continue nonetheless since mixed teams and the presence of women in military positions have shown to reduce the use of violence against the population, increase empathy and lead to more effective engagement with cultural norms of a society.

- **Supporting the development of national action plans.** Externally, regional organizations actively work towards women's inclusion by supporting national action plans. Some organizations have also formed working groups that are specifically tasked to implement the WPS Agenda. The African Union's Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation—FemWise, a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity building and networking aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments for women's inclusion in peacemaking in Africa—is an example.

> *'We have to make sure that we walk the talk, and that's why in the OSCE one of the most important things we're doing is supporting the development of national action plans. They are absolutely critical when it comes to women, peace and security.'*
>
> **Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

In addition, closer cooperation between regional and local actors was at the heart of the discussion. Such cooperation can take different forms:

- Relying on local actors and their knowledge of local contexts. Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde argued that the WPS Agenda needs to go beyond a 'one size fits all' approach and understand local dimensions and risks. Such contextual knowledge is not limited to peace processes: the onset and escalation of conflicts also require a gendered lens attuned to contextual factors. Regional organizations should therefore trust and rely on local actors for on-the-ground expertise and for context sensitive implementation of the WPS Agenda. Speakers suggested that the willingness of local grassroot organizations to implement the WPS Agenda is high when it is tailored to the local context.

> *'[Regional organizations] are essential in developing, monitoring and ensuring accountability for women, peace and security policy programmes . . . [They] also play a very key role in providing pathways to elevate grassroots women . . . By establishing strategic partnerships, regional organizations can secure real scaled-up support to WPS.'*
>
> **Rosemary DiCarlo, United Nations Under-Secretary for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**

- **Linking inclusion (quotas) and women's empowerment.** Although regional organizations have started using quotas, this has not necessarily translated into women's empowerment. Stockholm Forum discussants lamented that women are too often relegated to 'clean up the mess' instead of engaging with the 'hard-core' political and military issues faced by post-conflict societies. To change this, the underlying societal and cultural norms that allow women to be left behind need to be challenged by local organizations. This means engaging with (social) groups that create part of this exclusion in the first place, for example reactionary faith-based organizations. Sanam Anderlini, Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network,

stressed that not only women should be included in the delegations but civil society actors more generally—independent of the warring parties. This would ensure the wider public is given a voice and increase local ownership.

> *'Right now we need in-country civil society organizations because the problems are so localized.'*
>
> **Sanam Anderlini, Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network**

- **Providing access to stable and flexible funding.** According to Rudina Çollaku, Executive Director of Albania's Woman Center for Development and Culture, funding remains the biggest challenge for local organizations to implement the WPS Agenda. To build capacity for local organizations, funding needs to be stable and flexible, allowing money to shift to where it is needed most at short notice. This is difficult for regional organizations that need to carefully monitor and account for their project financing.

The underlying rationale for fostering closer cooperation between local and regional organizations relates to the interdependence and complementarity of both actors for achieving the inclusion and empowerment of women. Local organizations are often unable to gain donor attention or find the respective departments within regional organizations that could provide them with funding. Regional organizations can provide them access to national and international decision-making levels. Local organizations, in turn, can ensure accountability of larger actors within the region, provide local grassroots intelligence to regional actors and serve in advisory roles—identifying female voices that could be included in the peace processes. However, cooperation between regional and local actors remains challenging given the asymmetric power relations, diverging priorities and—more often than not—uncertainties faced by both regarding the sustained political will of donor countries.

Towards an Inclusive Future

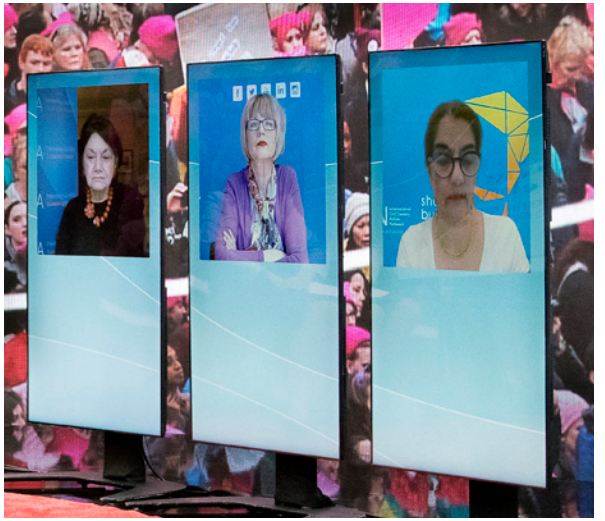
The panellists advocated for a higher level of cooperation and communication between regional and local actors, prolonged and flexible funding, and mainstreaming the discussion of gender in every meeting at regional and local levels to accelerate the implementation of the WPS Agenda. They also highlighted there is a responsibility to prepare the next generation to continue this effort.

This may push the discussion beyond the concept of 'women's inclusion' and focus on diversifying inclusion, accounting for intersectionality, transgender rights and the rape of men in war, for example. Diversification is necessary to:

- achieve higher levels of local ownership;
- make peace agreements more sustainable; and
- address root causes of conflict beyond the needs of the warring actors.

Although the WPS Agenda has a long way to go to meet this expectation, the notion that no women are available was firmly debunked by the panel.

> *'We can never again hear the excuse that women are not ready for these roles, because there are binders full of them.'*
>
> **Robert Egnell, Vice-Chancellor of the Swedish Defence University**



Peacebuilding Financing: Doing More, Doing Better

An efficient peacebuilding system reduces the risks of violence and is estimated to save the international community at least US$5 billion per year. Yet, donors often deem conflict prevention efforts uncertain. Unsurprisingly, they have been reluctant to invest in peacebuilding. This has resulted in chronic underfunding. The Covid-19 pandemic has raised the need to sustain peacebuilding, while at the same time it has created financial difficulties in doing so. Since 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has declared conflict prevention the key priority of the international community. Doing so requires funding not only to increase but for it to become more targeted, predictable and long-term. The 2021 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development explored current shortcomings in peacebuilding financing and how these can be addressed by working towards good peacebuilding financing.

The Paradox of Current Peacebuilding Financing

Peacebuilding concerns long-term and sustainable action. Paradoxically, it too often depends on short-term, unreliable, unpredictable and uncoordinated financing. With the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its enormous strains on societies, especially in fragile situations, efforts to prevent conflict and build peace are required even more. However, throughout the past years it has

become apparent that peacebuilding needs are greater than the resources available. Short-term demands, such as humanitarian crisis response, are given priority over long-term peacebuilding efforts, even though around 80 per cent of humanitarian needs stem from conflict.

> *'While we must be ready to finance immediate needs, this cannot be done at the expense of long-term peacebuilding investment.'*
>
> **Per Olsson Fridh, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation**

Other shortcomings highlighted at the Stockholm Forum were:

- **Heavy reliance on a small number of donors.** Current peacebuilding financing is heavily dependent on a small group of donors. While more donors are beginning to invest in peacebuilding, these are often symbolic contributions that do little to solve the chronic problem of underfunding.
- **Disagreement on a global model to finance peacebuilding.** Elissa Golberg, Canada's Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy, Global Affairs, stressed the challenge of reaching a consensus regarding what a global financial model for peacebuilding financing should look like.
- **Future funds and coordination.** While the panel agreed that there is a need to build a financial model that allows for sustained, flexible financing, it was less clear where the funds should come from. In addition, coordination between a broadening range of actors is likely to become a growing challenge.

> *'The real challenge on peacebuilding finance is not just one of mutual accountability between those who may want to invest and those who have ideas for the future of their countries and civil society. There is this broader systemic challenge that we face around securing agreement on what a global financial model for sustainable funding for peacebuilding could look like.'*
>
> **Elissa Golberg, Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy, Global Affairs**

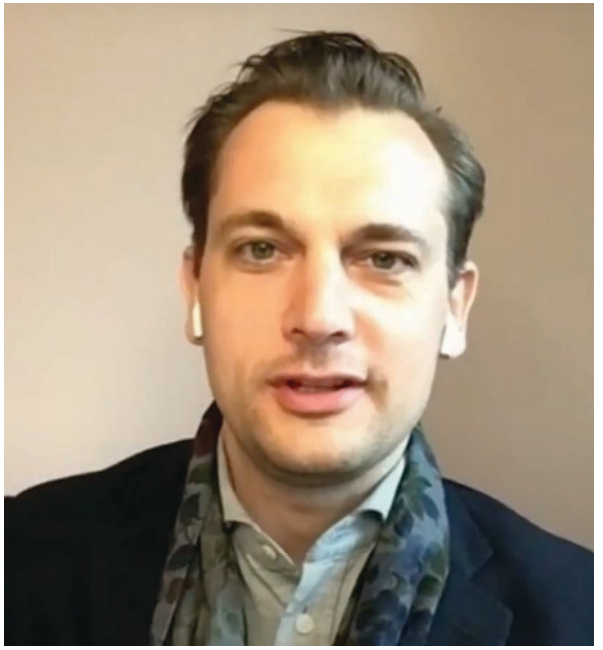
Lessons From Somalia

Former Somali Foreign Minister, Issa Awad, shared lessons from Somalia which illustrate that short-term and long-term financing approaches need to be combined. The Somalian Government signed a peace accord in 2008, and the country has passed through the first stages of peacebuilding. However, the country is still experiencing armed violence and humanitarian needs are high. At the same time, there is a lack of focus on building good institutions and retaining trust in communities. In sum, humanitarian aid is unlikely to achieve peace, as it fails to address the root causes of conflict and must be complemented with long-term conflict management and institution building. Awad expressed frustration with donors' lack of understanding of local needs.

Addressing the Shortcomings: Blended, Integrated, Flexible and Predictable Financing

The panel offered five recommendations to address current shortcomings:

- **Blended financing.** German Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office Niels Annen suggested that peacebuilding should be open to blended financing, encouraging peacebuilding investments from the private sector. The peacebuilding process in Colombia, for example,



relied on significant contributions from private actors, in addition to traditional state-based donors. However, private peacebuilding investments have been criticized as risky given that corporations' short-term profit-orientated objectives may collide with long-term peacebuilding objectives. The panel called for more research on how blended financing could work.

> *'If done right, non-traditional instruments, such as blended financing, can yield benefits that additional donor funding cannot yield. Specifically, we are looking to unlock peace dividends, including employment generation, economic empowerment and equitable access to basic services.'*
>
> **Niels Annen, German Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office**

- **Integrative problem solving.** To make peacebuilding financing more efficient, the panel agreed that integrative efforts are needed. As Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh pointed out, complex issues call for nuanced solutions. This means that instead of seeing peacebuilding as conflicting with other urgent problems such as climate adaptation, the issues should be dealt with in an integrated manner. Related to this is the need for localized approaches and integration of bottom-up initiatives.

> *'We need to be sure our solutions are as integrated as the challenges are.'*
>
> **Per Olsson Fridh, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation**

- **Flexible funding.** To incorporate more issues into peacebuilding programmes while also allowing for locally adapted solutions, flexible funding to local organizations is needed. Part of this, according to Olsson Fridh, is to ensure that organizations always have access to core funding covering their basic needs.
- **From crisis management to prevention.** Drawing on lessons from Colombia, Golberg advocated for a shift in focus from crisis management to crisis prevention by addressing the root causes of violence. In Colombia where the conflict between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo, FARC–EP) has been settled, lethal violence is a reoccurring issue. This is in part due to the instability in neighbouring Venezuela, but also the unresolved conflict between other armed groups and the Colombian Government.
- **Stakeholder coordination and the role of the UN.** Good peacebuilding financing is dependent on better coordination between stakeholders. In addition, a more complex understanding of peacebuilding will cause new, practical challenges. As De Carvalho and Abdenur put it in their report *Can the UN Security Council Help Prevent Conflicts?*: 'The closer conflict prevention comes to addressing the structural causes of conflict, the harder it becomes to implement.' Providing channels through which disagreements can be addressed will therefore be a critical part of the solution. The panel recalled the imperative role of the UN and other large multilateral organizations for this task, while also recognizing the necessity of new creative solutions. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building (IDPS) was used as a successful example. The IDPS brings together conflict-affected states, international development partners and civil society to improve policy and praxis in fragile states. Fora like this can serve as important arenas where new partnerships can be built, and solutions coordinated in an integrated manner.

Investing More and Smarter

The 2021 Stockholm Forum panel identified an urgent need for good peacebuilding financing, both in terms of more peacebuilding funding, but also for smarter investment, increased quality of aid and integrative approaches. One part in achieving this is leveraging funds from the private sector. More effort should also be directed towards prevention and addressing root causes of violence rather than crisis management. Local organizations should access core funding so that they can be more flexible in their efforts. Finally, coordination between donors, the UN and international financial institutions needs to be improved and clear implementation strategies defined.

> *'Peacebuilding financing is the nuts and bolts of peacebuilding. Just as Napoleon used to say "an army marches on its stomach," peacebuilding marches when it has the resources and the fuel to keep going.'*
>
> **Sarah Cliffe, Director of New York University's Center on International Cooperation**

Preventing Famine, Promoting Peace?

'Famine is back on the agenda.'

Dan Smith, Director of SIPRI

Famine has made a tragic return to the international agenda. Hunger has been rising since 2014. Today, 34 million people are living on the edge of famine and the World Food Programme (WFP) projects this will increase to 270 million people. Conflict is identified as the number one cause of famine and hunger, and famine and hunger are key drivers of violent conflict. In addition, both climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exacerbated tensions and food scarcity across the world, hitting the most vulnerable people the hardest. Both short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term developmental change are needed to combat and prevent famine, but most of all there is a need for political will to provide these. The 2021 Stockholm Forum deepened our understanding of the issues surrounding famine.

'US$5.5 billion is urgently needed to stave all famine in multiple countries. That is not the total financial picture—that is just for the 34 million people out of the 270 million that are marching towards starvation that are already knocking on famine's door.'

David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme

Explaining the Rise in Hunger

The panel identified three main causal pillars of food insecurity: violent conflict, climate change and structural inequality:

- **Violent conflict** drives hunger as it destabilizes societies and causes displacement. With destroyed infrastructure and people driven out of their homes, finding food becomes increasingly difficult. The case of Yemen is an excruciating example of hunger and starvation in a conflict situation, where a famine broke out in 2016 during the civil war. Today, the country is in a deep humanitarian crisis and, in March 2021, 16.2 million people were still food insecure.
- **Climate change** has a devastating effect on food security as food production is increasingly threatened by droughts and floods. The Murray-Darling Basin is a telling example. It is expected to receive less rainfall in coming years, resulting in drought that will lessen agricultural production.
- **Structural inequality** surrounding food, resources and aid—both internationally and within countries—is a third explanation. OXFAM's Executive Director, Gabriela Bucher, mentioned the profits the food sector makes worldwide while others live in hunger, and Agnes Kalibata, the UN Special Envoy for the 2021 World Food Summit, highlighted that structural inequality was the main topic of the summit.

'We live in a world where powerful countries find it easier to deliver guns to war zones than they do food. This is systemic failure. So, for me, action starts here.'

Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of OXFAM

A Weapon of War

The panel emphasized the importance of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as a UN Security Council Resolution 2417 of 2018 that condemned conflict-induced hunger and starvation of civilians as warfare tactics. However, there is still a lack of accountability and results. Valerie Guarnieri, WFP's Assistant Executive Director, explained, for example, how in South Sudan starvation is still used as a weapon of war and how food infrastructure was intentionally destroyed to punish communities that did not align themselves with the militia. Bucher, in turn, mentioned that during the pandemic arms were still sold to countries at war while humanitarian access was denied, despite UN calls for a worldwide ceasefire.

'When famine is unfolding there's a deathly quiet that sets in and it is up to us to be using our voices and making those calls before a famine is declared, because once it is declared, it's too late.'

Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director of the World Food Programme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Development 2021
PROMOTING PEACE IN THE AGE
OF COMPOUND RISK

Preventing Famine: Partnerships, Resilience and Political Will

To prevent famine in the future, the discussion stressed the need for combining short- and long-term approaches.

Short-term Solutions

- **Form partnerships.** The panel agreed that partnerships (SDG 17)—between local and international actors focusing both on humanitarian aid and structural developmental change—are at the core of any solution.
- **Empower women and youth.** Supporting grassroots organizations can help empower women and youth, which has both an intrinsic value and a value for building peace. Muna Luqman, Founder of Yemen's Food4Humanity, shared the example of her 'Water4Peace' project that included women as peacebuilders and successfully provided food and water to over 17 000 Yemenis. Bucher further emphasized the importance of empowering women in the agricultural sector by addressing underpayment and structural discrimination as farmers. By giving women farmers resources to improve their livelihoods, small-scale farming could grow and food insecurity decrease. The empowerment of women is, therefore, a critical part of preventing famine.

> *'It is fundamental to shift inequalities at the heart of our food system . . . We have to address that this unjust system is built on the backs of women.'*
>
> **Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of OXFAM**

Long-term Solutions

- **End and prevent conflict.** Ending and preventing violent conflict is the most important step to preventing famine.
- **Build resilience.** According to SIPRI Director Dan Smith, building resilience addresses all three causal pillars underlying famine in the longer-term. The UN defines resilience as 'the ability to prevent disasters and crises as well as to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from them in a timely, efficient, and sustainable manner'. It helps countries withstand relapse into violent conflict as well as the shocks of climate change. As such, enhancing resilience towards one challenge increases resilience toward other challenges. However, resilience has many facets, including individuals, communities and governments. In addition, uncertainty remains about who has the responsibility to build resilience. Does the focus on resilience leave certain countries to their own devices and take away responsibility of other countries, for example in the Global North?
- **Generate political will.** A recurring point raised by the panel was the lack of political will to address hunger. Preventing famine is possible as the work of the WFP in 2017 shows. However, the partnerships and resilience to do so successfully cannot be built without political will. For famines to become a thing of the past, countries need to be willing to provide the necessary funding and to cooperate on climate change, conflict prevention and structural inequality.

> *'Increasing funding is not something that is not solvable, it is a solvable challenge. The question is—are we up to it? Are we prepared to do this for people, for us, for our planet? Because every time we do not solve the challenge of poverty, it puts so much pressure on our planet because it is putting so much pressure on people.'*
>
> **Agnes Kalibata, Special Envoy for the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit**

Prospects and Responsibility

The responsibility of building resilience to prevent famine does not solely lie with countries most at risk but also with the international community. Kalibata argued that the 2021 World Food Summit was an important opportunity to generate the political will necessary to end hunger now and prevent it in the future. The Stockholm Forum discussions showed that the knowledge is there.

> *'[At the World Food Summit] we have an opportunity to come through for the people. We have an opportunity to come through for the planet. We will not be able to do it if leaders do not step forward.'*
>
> **Agnes Kalibata, Special Envoy for the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit**

Climate Security: Looking Back, Heading Forward

'We need to build new and systematic ways of countering risk by making peace with nature.'

Per Olsson Fridh, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation

Climate change is one of the most pervasive global threats to peace and security in the 21st century. The 2021 Stockholm Forum reflected on recent progress related to:

- integrating environmental issues into the human security discourse;
- stemming the impact of climate change on peace and security through multilateral action and across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus;
- incorporating climate security risks into mitigation and development projects, as well as co-creating policy with local actors; and
- promoting community-led processes and the inclusion of a broader set of actors, including women and youth.

'There is no ducking away from this issue: climate change is affecting the security landscape. It is changing what it takes to build peace.'

Dan Smith, Director of SIPRI

Renewing Our Understanding of Security and Why It Matters

Six of the ten largest UN-led peace operations are in locations that are most exposed to climate change. This is no coincidence—climate change is a 'risk multiplier' creating conditions for instability and conflict. Climate security has emerged as a transnational concept calling for a more comprehensive and renewed understanding of security. Focusing on the human security approach, it sees environmental degradation and depletion as fundamental threats to the physical security of individuals, groups, societies, states, natural ecosystems and the international system.

'No nation can find lasting and good security without addressing climate change issues.'

Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide, Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs

Rising sea levels, desertification, water scarcity, changing weather patterns resulting in floods or tropical storms are some of the tangible impacts of climate change witnessed across the globe. Such

impacts, tied with natural resource dependence, can lead to population displacement and increased food insecurity—which both foment political instability, increased resource competition and, in the most vulnerable contexts, violent conflict. The lack of economic opportunity associated with these impacts is a potential obstacle to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts by UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The relationship between climate change and violent conflict is mutually and negatively reinforcing. Since 2019, the UN has accepted that climate change poses a tremendous risk to political stability, economic prosperity, military readiness, food security and accessibility to natural resources.

Experience From Africa

According to Kwaku Afriyie, Ghanaian Minister of Environment, Ghana is a case in point having confronted food insecurity, the exacerbation of ethnic and civilian tensions in rural areas, violent cattle raiding and internal population displacement—all challenges that can be linked to climate change.

> *'In Ghana and Nigeria, for example, Fulani have always traditionally been [in conflict] with farmers because of accessibility to [water]. This problem has been exacerbated to the extent that ethnic fights have erupted, and people have even lost their lives.'*
>
> **Kwaku Afriyie, Ghanaian Minister of Environment**

Experience from West Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel shows that grievances against the government and the marginalization of people living in climate-vulnerable regions are contributing to radicalization and extremist armed non-state groups. Ilwad Elman, Director at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Center, stressed that in Somalia, for example, the internal displacement of vulnerable populations has led to increased recruitment opportunities for insurgent groups.

> *'The more frequent and intense climate events that have been taking place over the past 30 years are depleting citizens' assets, limiting their ability to recover from such setbacks. These climate events exacerbate . . . existing social, political and economic conflicts that disrupt peace, stability and security.'*
>
> **Ilwad Elman, Director at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre**

Policy Responses at Multilateral, National and Local Level

The 2021 Stockholm Forum explored how climate risks can be introduced into security policies involving the multilateral, national and local levels.

- **Climate security and the UN Security Council.** Sweden and Norway have strongly advocated the inclusion of climate change-related security risks on the UN Security Council agenda. Both countries contributed to enhancing the Security Council's knowledge about the need to address climate-related risks to effectively tackle the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin, for example. They also have consistently encouraged cooperation with research institutes, including SIPRI and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, to ensure evidence-based policymaking. Olsson Fridh and Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, highlighted the importance of the creation of the UN Climate Security Mechanism in 2018 in helping the UN system to address climate-related security risks more systematically and coordinate UN policies on climate and security.
- **National Early Warning Response Centres.** Afriyie shared Ghana's creation, in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States, of a National Early Warning Response Centre—a research hub on experiences of climate change and security.

> *'We need to align early warning with early action.'*
>
> **Carl Skau, Head of Department for United Nations Policy, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

- **Local community networks.** Speakers stressed the importance of bottom-up approaches to delving into local programmes and activities, thereby tapping into on-the-ground knowledge and informal community networks. Elman called on government ministers to 'take a step back' to 'include a broader set of actors to inform policy priorities and the subsequent actions', and to 'commit resources to community-based action' to enable the implementation and piloting of climate and security-focused programme initiatives.
- **Climate change and peace ambassadors: Youth and women.** Taking the UN Security Council 2250 Resolution on 'Youth, Peace and Security' as a reference, the strengthened involvement and empowerment of youth and women as agents of change and peacebuilders in communities was highlighted.

Growing Momentum

By acknowledging the interrelationship between the challenges of inequality, poverty, climate change and conflict, speakers urged the creation of an inclusive and networked multilayered system in which all the member states and actors are aligned to provide solutions and strategies to tackle these challenges.

'There is no way to escape the costs of conflict or the costs of climate change, and the costs will just grow the longer we wait to address them.'

Per Olsson Fridh, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation

Steps Forward

The 2021 Stockholm Forum discussion proposed the following concrete steps forward:

- Institutionalizing an Environmental Security Adviser in peace operations that are highly exposed to climate change. This would 'enhance coordination with the local government and help to integrate responses within the UN system'.
- Building and funding local and regional resilience by identifying new systematic ways of countering risks and incorporating climate security. This could include the creation of early warning systems and in-depth regional and country analysis on climate change.
- Developing new principles on inclusion to enable local, national and international actors to craft more inclusive approaches building on local knowledge and community processes. This could lead to co-creating and informing policy priorities together with young people, women and other marginalized actors.
- Exploring the potential opportunities inherent in climate-related security risks as an entry point for dialogue or trust-building among conflicting parties.


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Bridging Health, Peace and Security: The Role of Trust and Community Engagement

Global health crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbate underlying conflict issues by further destabilizing conditions locally. Particularly in countries experiencing violence, the pandemic—in combination with the infodemic, the spread of false or misleading information during the outbreak—has exacerbated mistrust towards authorities and increased inequalities. In cooperation with Interpeace, this session of the 2021 Stockholm Forum discussed the importance of local initiatives and community engagement in bridging health, peace and security and in overcoming vaccine scepticism. Policymakers and experts explained why the international community needs a coherent approach to address health, peace and security.

Health and its Impact on Social and Political Stability

'Pandemics are a politically destabilizing thing that need to be factored into how we think about international peace and security.'

Karin Landgren, Executive Director of the Security Council Report

Panellists identified immediate and longer-term social and political impacts of health crises and stressed that SDG 16 ('Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies') can only be achieved when the health of populations is protected:

- **Protests and democratic backsliding.** The Covid-19 pandemic and the responses to it (lockdowns, delayed vaccine deliveries or delayed elections) have induced conflict in many countries. International IDEA has argued that the pandemic has been the 'tipping point' in unleashing huge protests demanding political reforms in countries, including Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand. In Brazil, Hungary, India and Poland the pandemic led to democratic backsliding and exposed democratic weaknesses that included the extension of the state of emergency beyond the time necessary.
- **Food insecurity.** Long-term effects of the pandemic include food insecurity expected to last years after the pandemic. In Afghanistan, for example, the measures against the spread of the virus led to disrupted planting and rising food prices with shortages in food supply for the population. According to estimates by the WFP the number of people without sufficient food between April 2020 and April 2021 increased by 111 million.

Stemming Mistrust: The Role of Health Workers

Much of the discussion centred on one of the biggest fears of peacebuilders and local stakeholders during health crises in conflict states: worsening mistrust in state authorities. Especially during conflict, health institutions and their staff are needed to:

- strengthen the resilience of local communities;
- act as neutral actors in the conflict; and
- contribute to overcoming mistrust towards the government in states that are experiencing not only a health but also a political crisis.

'In a place where you can have vaccines and all the tools, you may not be able to control Covid if the community is not engaged, if there is trust deficit from the community.'

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization

Panellists argued that primary health workers are extremely important bridges between health institutions and communities. For this reason, peacebuilders and health workers need to be equipped with the skills to address health crises in conflict settings. Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, shared how his organization promotes the interconnectedness of health and security and the mutual learning

process with local actors, including the launch of the WHO Academy where health personnel engages in life-long learning and prepares for new challenges.

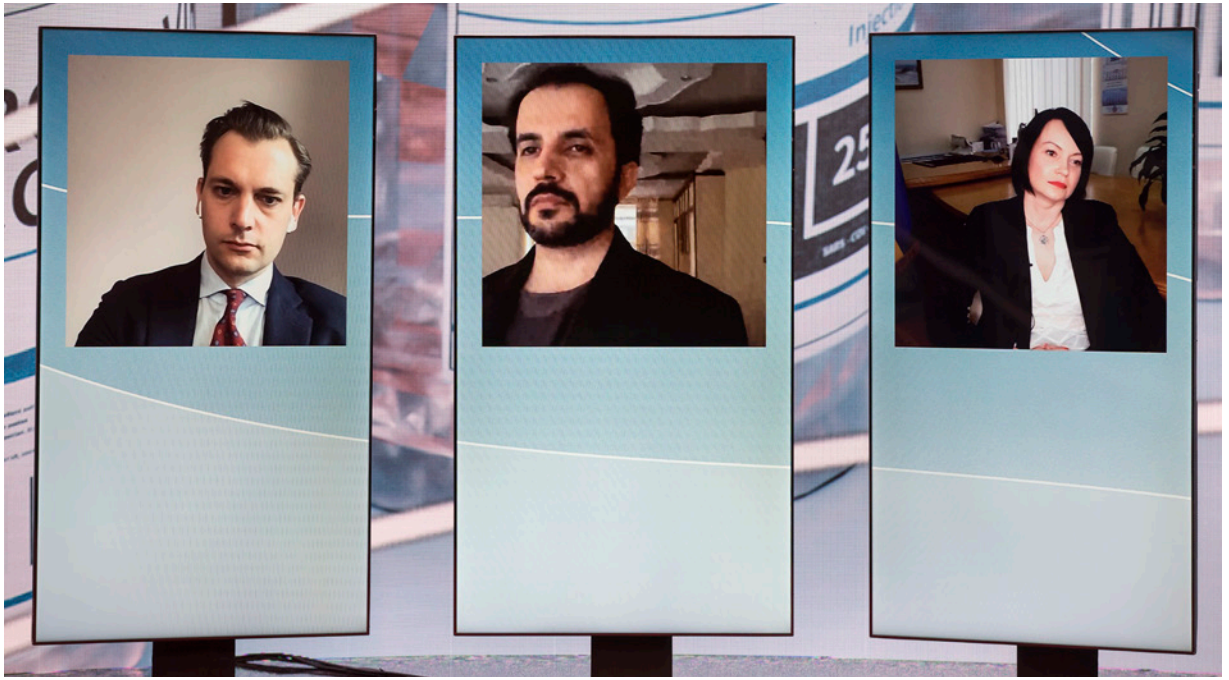
Covid-19 Response in Armed Conflict: The Cases of Afghanistan and Ukraine

In Afghanistan, the re-emergence of violence has been accelerated by the pandemic and the US troop withdrawal. Afghan Minister for Public Health Wahid Majrooh explained that because healthcare provision has suffered from the resurgence of conflict, NGOs support health services in the areas controlled by insurgents. While the violence makes their work challenging, Afghan health personnel have become the most trusted partner in healthcare delivery.

> *'In spite of the distrust in the community, [health workers in Afghanistan] are the most trusted part of the service delivery spectrum in this country . . . and they are the only ones who fix humanity in a field where everybody is fighting against humanity.'*
>
> **Wahid Majrooh, Afghan Minister for Public Health**

The key to stemming patients' mistrust, according to Majrooh, was disregarding ideology and ethnicity. The pandemic, combined with the re-emergence of violence, movement restrictions and misinformation, added significant psychological stress to the Afghan population, low-income households in particular. The example of Afghanistan shows that mental health and psychosocial support need to be at the centre of health interventions in conflict contexts.

In Ukraine, mistrust between the population and doctors, as well as between doctors and the healthcare system is high. In the past, people were used to solving healthcare problems through out-of- pocket informal payments and bribes. The



conflict with Russia, polarization between east and west Ukraine, and Kremlin-led disinformation campaigns on Covid-19 have contributed to discrediting vaccines within Ukrainian society and to doctors recommending against the Covid-19 vaccination, partly out of fear of side effects. According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) up to 40 per cent of Ukrainian healthcare workers are dubious about vaccines.

> *'Building trust in Ukraine is a very complicated issue.'*
>
> **Svitlana Shatalova, Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Health**

To strengthen confidence in vaccines and the relationship between citizens and the government, Ukraine introduced ambitious health sector reforms including:

- new licensing and educational standards for doctors; and
- the obligation to adhere to international treatment protocols.

During the pandemic, special Covid-19 funds for equipment procurement were allocated, and a national call centre for questions regarding Covid-19 was established. The government initiatives to respond to Covid-19 relied heavily on volunteers.

Lessons from the Ebola Outbreaks in 2014 and 2018

Mistrust and conspiracy theories in health crises have led to violence against health workers in the past. The killing of health workers during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, for example, was attributed to the conspiracy that they were

spreading the disease. The general mistrust in West Africa's health systems is rooted in unethical medical trials and colonial medicine. This mistrust contributed to the delay in the 2014 Ebola response.

The interconnectedness of health and peace was also very clear in the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May 2018. In the peaceful western region the disease was under control within three months. In the eastern parts, however, armed conflict and mistrust towards authorities complicated the response. Even though health workers had all the equipment necessary to address the outbreak, it took them two years to get the outbreak under control.

Engaging Primary Healthcare Workers as Bridges between Communities and the Government

Two recommendations from the 2021 Stockholm Forum discussion on health, peace and security stood out:

- **Bridging the silos of health and peace.** Conscious communication on the importance of the vaccine rollout and building trust is necessary to stem the Covid-19 pandemic and prevent social unrest. For the international community, it is essential not only to jumpstart the global economy but also to meet the needs of the people on a local level. This requires institutionalizing mutual learning between health workers and peacebuilders, as well as building the capacity and competence of local staff.
- **Engaging local communities.** A key element of trust building is engagement with traditional leaders and elders of affected communities. Building trust and resilience starts from the bottom and moves up. Investments could be increased at the community level, for example through unearmarked funding and training for local actors. Involving the people on the ground—primary health workers, refugees and elders—could create a bridge between local communities and global decision makers. Above all, health—in terms of vaccine deliveries—must never be used as political leverage.

> *'This type of ground-level engagement and presence, this type of listening—which is so hugely important in combating pandemics—is not valued enough by UN decision makers. We talk about building trust, building peace, building resilience from the ground up, but what I observe is that decision makers still give the greatest weight to the views of politicians, on the one hand, and technical experts, on the other.'*
>
> **Karin Landgren, Executive Director of the Security Council Report**

Now and Beyond: Strengthening Resilience, Trust and Partnership

Recommendations from the 2021 Stockholm Forum touched on seven key policy areas—conflict prevention, gender equality, good peacebuilding financing, social media, climate change, famine and health. Together, they highlighted three urgent, cross-cutting requirements for the successful future of peace and development:

- To complement short-term humanitarian and human rights interventions with long-term strategic resilience building and avoiding a trade-off between the two;
- To build trust at all levels and in and between different actors, including state institutions, but also local actors; and
- To rely on partnership as the basis for a new approach to security that moves beyond silos in order to stem interconnected risk.

'While there are many challenges . . . on the horizon and many dark clouds, . . . we have also identified many opportunities and many solutions . . . It is important that we now focus and invest in those opportunities to take us forward.'

Carl Skau, Head of Department for United Nations Policy, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

With what topics did partners engage at the Forum?

Compound Risk

Good Peacebuilding Financing

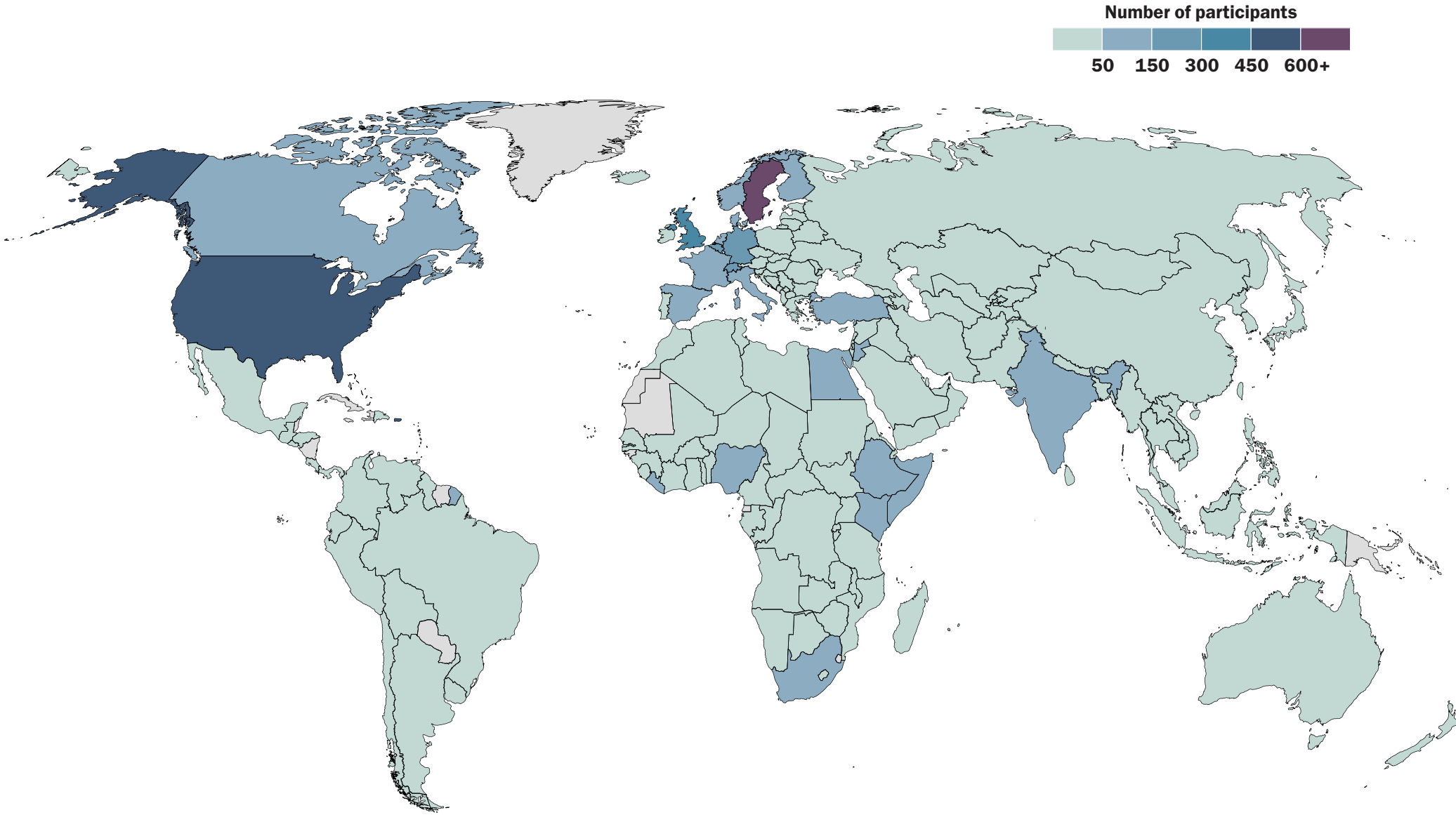
Covid-19

Emerging Technologies

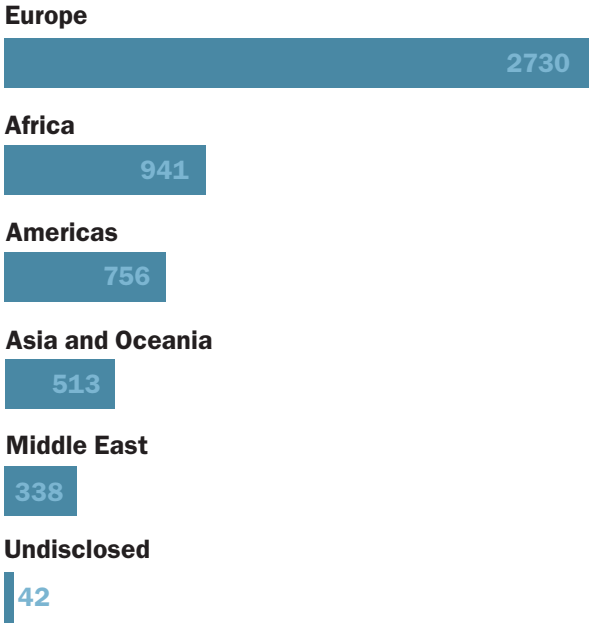
OSCE Region

Climate/Food/Security

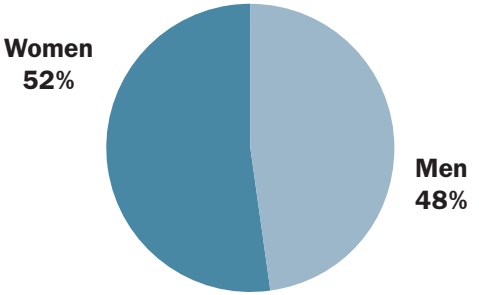
The Stockholm Forum's global audience



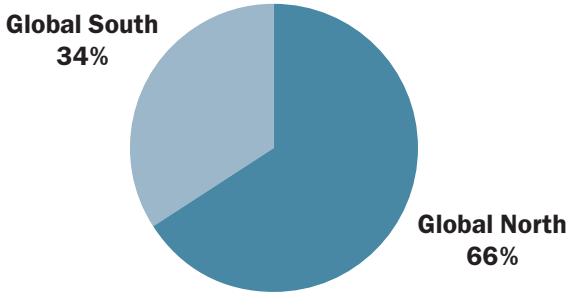
Number of participants per region



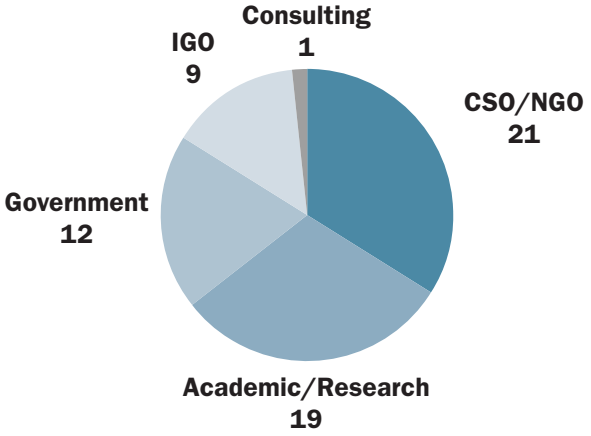
Proportion of speakers, out of a total of 384



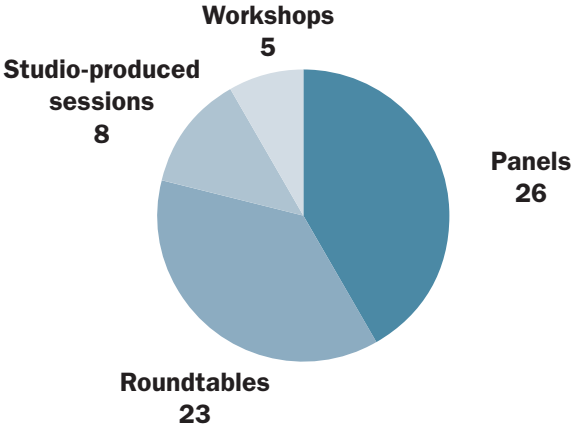
Proportion of participants, Global North and Global South



62 partners across 5 sectors



62 sessions over a period of 4 days



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All public sessions are available to view on SIPRI's YouTube channel **https://www.youtube.com/user/SIPRIorg**

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