

## FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL: HOW CAN WE PRACTICALLY APPLY GLOBAL PEACEBUILDING FRAMEWORKS?

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### OVERVIEW

The United Nations Secretary-General's sustaining peace initiative, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Bank–UN *Pathways for Peace* report represent global policy frameworks that boldly push for fundamental change in the way that violent conflict and violence are addressed. While there have been concrete efforts to bring attention to these frameworks, such as the 2018 General Assembly high-level meeting, the international community must do more to transition from dialogue to action. While the peacebuilding field collectively advocated for these frameworks, there remains a lack of action on practical implementation at the national and community levels. This absence of practical action is driven by a lack of understanding about these frameworks and a frustration stemming from the proliferation of numerous priorities and furthering the view of 'having frameworks for the sake of frameworks'. This session explored how to translate these frameworks into national ownership to help achieve change by integrating the frameworks' goals into decision-making processes, such as national development plans. Participants outlined current efforts and challenges to connect these frameworks towards a larger goal of reducing violence, advancing local ownership, and building peaceful and just societies. Furthermore, the session explored the political constraints that surround UN and UN member state-directed action, as well as the barriers that often keep local actors and knowledge from being heard.

### FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

The session outlined how civil society, non-governmental organizations and government actors can help advance discussion and action on these frameworks between key stakeholders and policymakers.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Global frameworks are helpful in enhancing a common understanding of relevant concepts—they can be tools for more effective coordination and coherent responses. However, there are still significant challenges when it comes to making them operational at the local level. They provide the 'what' but not the 'how', so understanding them as guides or systems may enhance their overall effectiveness.

There is a need for hybrid knowledge, rather than top-down knowledge on peacebuilding, as well as creative and entrepreneurial approaches to creating positive sustainable peace. Seen in this view, the frameworks should be considered as entry points towards approaches being adapted and fleshed out according to the local environment.

While progress has been made in strengthening the role of civil society within these frameworks, there is still a lack of clarity on how best to involve civil society organizations (CSOs) and encourage them to apply and promote the frameworks. Government is the boss, and CSOs have a role that is not well defined.

The focus of all actors is increasingly on prevention, rather than just on resolution, but the big picture 'how' is not evident. There is a perception that the peacebuilding sector 'projectizes' peace rather than looking at the sum total of action.

Consultation between all stakeholders in the process of implementing frameworks is vital. Global frameworks can act as a vehicle to ask governments and people at the local level what they want and need. However, this is not really being done.

One of the key challenges lies in the fact that global bodies, such as the UN and the World Bank, are subject to the political will of their member states. It is important to recognize that in many cases the UN may not be the most impartial or effective organ for conflict prevention. Can impartial peacebuilders fill this gap in part?

Local contexts will change the elements of the framework that are more applicable.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Think of global frameworks as a system within which local actors can seek guidance. Local agency and ownership need to be at the core of this system.
- Use voluntary national reviews as an opportunity for consultation, collaboration and listening, not merely an exam score.
- Make a collective effort to map the ‘how’ to the ‘what’ that global frameworks provide.
- Apply global frameworks more effectively to supporting already existing action.
- Create more effective feedback loops on what works—more research is needed on what conditions are conducive to creating sustainable, positive peace, but better methods of communicating such findings are also needed. At the same time, peacebuilders need clarification on what kind of evidence of impact at the local level is needed to shape donor policy and programmes, and they need to learn how to get donors and policymakers to listen.

### **SESSION QUOTES**

‘Everything that is happening globally has an impact locally.’

‘We need to substitute the word “systems” for frameworks and understand the system and geopolitical changes these entail.’

‘There’s a disconnection between local efforts and international dialogue on these frameworks among people who don’t do local work . . . the real shift needs to be from local to global, not the other way around.’

### **RESOURCE LINKS AND DOCUMENTS**

World Bank and United Nations, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (World Bank Group: Washington, DC, 2018), <<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>>.

United Nations, ‘The Sustainable Development Agenda’, <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>>.

United Nations Peacebuilding, ‘Sustaining peace’, <<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/tags/sustaining-peace>>.

This session report was produced onsite at the 2019 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development hosted by SIPRI and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The report aims to reflect the session discussion. The views, information or opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of SIPRI, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs or other institutes associated with the session.

Alliance for Peacebuilding, 'The Sustainable Development Goals', <<https://allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/about-our-work/policy/the-sustainable-development-goals/>>.

Alliance for Peacebuilding, 'Global peacebuilding frameworks', <<https://allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/about-our-work/public-awareness-and-partnerships/global-peacebuilding-frameworks/>>.

Ponzio, R., 'The UN's sustaining peace agenda: a policy breakthrough in the making', Stimson Center, 23 Feb. 2018, <<https://www.stimson.org/content/un-new-sustaining-peace-agenda-policy-breakthrough-making>>.



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*Advancing sustainable peace and security worldwide*

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