Road to 2023: our common agenda and the pact for the future

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Road to 2023

Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future

BREAKTHROUGH

BREAKDOWN

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STIMSON

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About this report

To better cope with great power tensions, extremist violence in fragile states, pandemics, the prospect of runaway climate change, cross-border economic shocks, and ever more sophisticated cyber attacks, the world needs a better way of marshalling its talent and resources—new voices, tools, networks, knowledge, and institutions. In *Road to 2023: Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future*, the authors show how a close coupling of justice and security imperatives can best drive the work needed to deal with critical global problems, underscoring twenty key ideas in support of inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism, many outlined by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his seminal September 2021 report, *Our Common Agenda*. Such a rethink, to be sealed by the widely anticipated September 2023 Summit of the Future, has become imperative. Creatively mobilizing diverse actors worldwide, next year's Summit and the preparations for it must look to equip our shared global governance architecture with the instruments, structures, and connectivity required to rebuild institutional trust and competence, and to navigate with confidence humanity's perilous coming decades.

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Acknowledgements

Related Publications

- *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance* (June 2015)
- *Just Security in an Undergoverned World* (Oxford University Press, 2018)
- *An Innovation Agenda for UN75: The Albright-Gambari Commission Report and the Road to 2020* (June 2019)
- *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance – 75 Years beyond San Francisco* (June 2020)
- *Beyond UN75: A Roadmap for Inclusive, Networked & Effective Global Governance* (June 2021)

Foreword

When the late Madeleine Albright and I launched, in June 2015, *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance*—the report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance—at the Peace Palace in The Hague, both the headlines and the trendlines had begun to foreshadow the return of a virulent form of exclusionary nationalism amidst surging migration, increasing economic inequality, an intensifying climate catastrophe, and the emergence of leaders who dehumanize others and seek power through division, not unity. Regrettably, in the years that followed, the violent conflicts and environmental degradation we documented in our report have only grown more acute, now punctuated by Russia's war on Ukraine. The COVID-19 pandemic, moreover, has claimed millions of lives and brought devastating social and economic consequences to billions worldwide.

These developments underscore the central importance of the need for humanity to embrace the idea of just security. In short, any solution to a global problem must address both security and justice concerns, without privileging one over the other, in order to have any prospect of lasting success.

In this new Stimson Center report, *Road to 2023: Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future*, which I have the honor to introduce, the authors aspire to enrich Secretary-General António Guterres' concepts of a "new social contract," a "new global deal," and "networked and inclusive multilateralism" through a focus on just security in global governance. They also lend support to—and elaborate twenty concrete ideas for—a Summit of the Future, recommended to coincide, in September 2023, with the General Assembly's high-level week. In 2015, our Commission called for a similar World Conference on Global Institutions. Further to the recent thematic consultations with Member States conducted by the President of the General Assembly, I am delighted that the Summit of the Future is now highly anticipated next year with the goal of bringing much needed improvements to global governance.

Last October, in advance of United Nations Day, Madeleine Albright and I wrote:[1]

Not since World War II has the international community confronted as monumental a test as the intertwined crises of COVID-19 and climate change, and the profound social and economic inequalities they have exposed. Yet precisely when global, collective action is most needed to address these crises, exclusionary nationalism and rising great-power tensions, including a new Cold War-like standoff between democracies and autocracies, are eroding essential multilateral cooperation.

Throughout her remarkable career, Madeleine never shied away from condemning those who sought to undermine fundamental norms and institutions of global governance. To both honor her legacy, and create hope and improved conditions for all humanity, we must continue to believe—and we all must work relentlessly these next fifteen months to ensure—that global institutions such as the United Nations remain indispensable to achieving a more just and secure world.

Ibrahim A. Gambari

Former Co-Chair, Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance

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List of Abbreviations

AHWG	Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CANZ	Canada, Australia, and New Zealand
CAPMATCH	United Nations online civilian capacity matching platform
CIVCAP	United Nations Civilian Capacity Initiative
COP	Conference of the Parties
COPn	nth UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
COVID-19	2019 Novel Coronavirus
DPO	(UN) Department of Peace Operations
DPPA	(UN) Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
EP	Emergency Platform
EU	European Union
G20	Group of 20 Nations
GDC	Global Digital Compact
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPD	Global Policy Dialogue
HLAB	High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HRC	(UN) Human Rights Council
IACC	International Anti-Corruption Court
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Intellectual Property
IPI	International Parliamentary Institution
IPS	International Peace and Security

ITU	International Telecommunication Union
M.E.S.H	Multilateral, Effective, Sustainable & Holistic
NGLS	Non-Governmental Liaison Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCA	Our Common Agenda
OCHA	(UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	(UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
P4TF	Pact for the Future
P5	Permanent Five (members of the UN Security Council)
PBC	(UN) Peacebuilding Commission
PGA	President of the General Assembly
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SCPS	Standing Civilian Protection Service
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
S-G	Secretary General
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN60	United Nations' 60th anniversary
UN75	United Nations' 75th anniversary
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNCSA	United Nations Collective Security Architecture
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNPN	United Nations Parliamentary Network
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
U.S.	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WTO	World Trade Organization
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

Executive Summary

"[T]he choices we make, or fail to make, today could result in further breakdown, or a breakthrough to a greener, better, safer future … it will be important to hold a high-level, multi-stakeholder 'Summit of the Future' to advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in this [*Our Common Agenda*] report, and potentially others, where governance arrangements are nascent or require updating."
—*UN Secretary-General António Guterres*[2]

Fears of escalating **conflict**, new **COVID-19** variants, irreversible **climate change**, and eroding **collaboration** in the global economy threaten to undermine the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other efforts to advance human progress. Yet, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to review and dramatically improve global tools for managing such enormous challenges—a Summit of the Future—is under serious consideration for September 2023 by the United Nations' 193 Member States. Coping better with the "Four Cs" and other global challenges will require carefully designed intergovernmental *and multi-stakeholder* negotiations, culminating in the adoption of a proposed "Pact for the Future" and related instruments. Without the active and creative engagement of civil society and the business community, however, the Summit may end up merely tweaking the global governance system—rather than weighing seriously more ambitious solutions commensurate with today's threats and opportunities.

Building on the UN75 Declaration and Global Conversation in 2020, the Pact for the Future will also benefit from the application of new conceptual tools, including by enriching—through a just security framework—UN Secretary-General António Guterres' notion of a new social contract, a new global deal, and networked and inclusive multilateralism as presented, in September 2021, in his seminal report, *Our Common Agenda*. Applying a just security lens, as advocated by the 2015 Albright-Gambari Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, means that any solution to a global problem must address both security and justice concerns, without privileging one over the other, in order to have any prospect of lasting success.

Informed by research and policy dialogues—initially undertaken for the Albright-Gambari Commission and its follow-through, and most recently to help flesh out key proposals in the *Our Common Agenda*—this report's twenty recommendations (below) and their associated policy overviews (in the body of the report) are intended to encourage more ambitious, forward-looking thinking and deliberation on global governance renewal and innovation in the run-up to next year's Summit of the Future:

Conflict Prevention and Management for Building Peace

1. Advance Inclusive and Just Peace through a New Agenda for Peace: The spirit of the original, 1992 *Agenda for Peace* can be recaptured by a new and dynamic approach to sustaining peace and just security in the twenty-first century, focusing on prevention, the changing nature of conflict, innovations in Women, Peace & Security and Youth, Peace & Security, and reform of the UN Collective Security Architecture.

2. Increase Representation in the Security Council for Strengthened Collective Security: The Security Council must reflect today's geopolitical realities and the multilateral principle of inclusive, collective action that is the UN's cornerstone. The Summit of the Future, with impetus from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, can help to generate political momentum and offer a much-needed deadline for progress on both issues: representation and misuse of the veto.

3. Prevent and Recover from Conflicts through a new Peacebuilding Council and Audit: Upgrading the Peacebuilding Commission into an empowered Peacebuilding Council will allow the United Nations to address second- and third-order conflicts, freeing up the Security Council to focus on first-order threats. This new body would lead on conflict prevention (through a new Peacebuilding Audit tool) and peacebuilding policy development, coordination, and resource mobilization.

4. Boost the Reach of the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court, for Greater Global Justice: A well-functioning, peaceful, and rules-based international order requires respected and well-functioning international courts working in balance with state sovereignty. Strengthening international courts to fulfill their mandates means increasing their enforcement powers, preserving their independence, and enhancing their resilience.

5. Develop the Secretary-General's Proposed Emergency Platform and Associated UN Rapid Crisis Response Capacities: Stand up a new Emergency Platform within the UN system to better anticipate and prepare for future global shocks and large-scale crises, supported by a proposed Standing Civilian Protection Service to augment UN capacities for peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and humanitarian purposes.

COVID-19, Representation, and Human Rights Promotion

6. Fight Future Pandemics through a Global Health Threats Council and Pandemic Framework Convention: A Global Health Threats Council should be established to monitor global health risks and coordinate among states and non-state actors for preparation and prevention. It could help draft a Pandemic Framework Convention to clarify the responsibilities of Member States and international organizations and provide a template for future pandemic preparedness and response.

7. Strengthen the UN Human Rights Council and Human Rights Treaty Monitoring System to Better Protect People: The UN Human Rights Council and Human Rights Treaty Monitoring System should be strengthened by opening the Council's elections to greater scrutiny; increasing accountability of Council members through a code of conduct; enhancing enforcement of its decisions by expanding cooperation with international human rights courts; and ensuring meaningful consultation with a wider range of civil society organizations.

8. Bring New Voices into UN Decision-Making through a High-Level Civil Society Champion: To make the United Nations more "people-centric," we suggest a High-Level Civil Society Champion or Envoy who works across the UN system to increase civil society's contribution to policymaking and implementation. Specific interventions are increasing the capacity of civil society groups to engage effectively with Member States, improving UN agency standards to address bottlenecks to civil society participation, and championing new voices from the Global South and younger generations.

9. Engage with and Empower Young People through a UN Youth Office and Council: Taking forward UN75 Declaration commitment #11 and the Youth2030 Framework depends on expanding youth representation in politics and decision-making across the UN system, by establishing a well-resourced UN Youth Office, and standing-up a dynamic, representative, and strategic UN Youth Council, as an integral part of the new Office's mandate.

10. Foster Intergenerational Equity through a Declaration on, and Special Envoy for, Future Generations: As no office or institution with a global perspective, remit, or reach now speaks for or promotes the interests of future generations, a UN Declaration on Future Generations should be crafted and a Special Envoy for Future Generations established to promote and help ensure that future generations inherit a healthy planet.

Climate Action and Governing the Global Commons

11. Repurpose the Trusteeship Council to Better Govern the Global Commons: The Global Commons—comprising the high seas,

the atmosphere, Antarctica, outer space and, increasingly, cyberspace—surrounds, supports, and sustains our world's ecosystem and is vital to our economic prosperity. The international community should repurpose the United Nations' all-but-defunct Trusteeship Council to exercise a new, carefully shaped role as a steward of the Global Commons, with a view to enhancing intergenerational equity and the well-being of future generations.

12. Rethink the UNFCCC and COPs for Enhanced Climate Governance: Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) should promote greater participation in decision-making by all signatory states regardless of size or status. Enhanced non-state and sub-national actor participation is also needed to ensure stricter multilateral climate agreement accountability.

13. Manage and Regenerate Natural Resources through Global Forestry Governance: A new Global Forest Management Body operating on the principles of Multilateral, Effective, Sustainable & Holistic (M.E.S.H.) Governance would facilitate interaction between local, national, and regional levels of forest governance, and provide guidance on government engagement with non-state actors.

14. Make Green Technology More Accessible to Developing Countries to Combat Climate Change: The pernicious effects of climate change necessitate innovative approaches to assist vulnerable populations, including a licensing facility for green technology and an information sharing platform to strengthen the UN's Green Technology Startup Hub. This would encourage licensing and transfer of technology to developing countries, while protecting intellectual property rights to incentivize the development of green technology and increase its availability worldwide.

15. Expand and Safeguard Connectivity through a Global Digital Compact: Challenges such as the digital divide, increased cyber-crime, and global disinformation underscore the need for a rules-based order governing all facets of digital life worldwide. Rooted in human rights, a Global Digital Compact could foster shared principles for addressing all aspects of the technological life-cycle—from its development, through to its accessibility and protection of rights online.

Collaborative Economy and Promoting Global Public Goods

16. Accelerate Equitable Socioeconomic Recovery through a G20+ Biennial Summit: Convene a Biennial Summit between the Group of 20, the UN's 193 Member States, the Secretary-General, and heads of international financial institutions—during the General Assembly's High-Level Week—to shepherd a more sustainable and resilient global economy. Importantly, focus this "G20+" on fostering socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic, mitigating and managing cross-border shocks, and addressing rising global economic inequality.

17. Revitalize and Streamline the General Assembly for Improved Global Decision-making: To revitalize and streamline the work of the United Nations General Assembly, the Office of the President of the General Assembly should be given greater authority to manage the Assembly's agenda and monitor its implementation. When the Security Council fails to act in maintaining international peace and security, the General Assembly should invoke the Uniting for Peace resolution, in collaboration with a qualified majority of Security Council members.

18. Enhance Democratic Legitimacy and Effectiveness through a UN Parliamentary Network: Reducing the United Nations' intertwined democratic and implementation deficits through a UN Parliamentary Network (UNPN) is a moral and practical imperative. By creating a formal channel for parliamentary input into UN governance, the UNPN would better align a country's domestic policies with UN General Assembly resolutions, increase public awareness of UN policy priorities, and further accountability of the world body's decisions.

19. Forge a Sustainable Development Funding Compact that Leverages Public-Private Partnerships: Establish a Global Funding Compact with the participation of

international financial institutions, governments, and the private sector that combines accountability tools with blended finance mechanisms aimed at increasing investment in the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, continued debt relief for least developed countries should be tied to commitments to fulfill the SDGs.

20. Combat Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows through an International Anti-Corruption Court: While *Our Common Agenda* stresses the need to "build trust" through combating corruption, a legal punitive response at the global level is missing. To combat illicit financial flows, which fuel both corruption and excessive income inequality, an International Anti-Corruption Court, based on the principle of complementarity with national jurisdictions and located in The Hague, is urgently needed.

To prepare for the September 2023 Summit of the Future and maximize its impact in line with a "just right" approach, seven steps are necessary and desirable:

Design an inclusive, forward-leaning Modalities Resolution, focusing Summit preparations from February 2023 around four inclusive thematic committees: i) peace, security, and humanitarian action; ii) sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery; iii) human rights, inclusive governance, and the rule of law; and iv) climate governance; their combined work would support a fifth, integrative Executive Committee. Work on strategic priorities (e.g., a Declaration on Future Generations) should begin now.

Set up a small UN Secretariat organizing team with expertise in communications and in the subject matters of the four thematic committees.

Promote globally the findings and recommendations of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, which will issue its recommendations in early 2023 in support of the Summit of the Future.

Encourage robust engagement across civil society worldwide by promoting civil society participation in national delegations and in global multi-stakeholder forums, whose proposals are then deliberated upon by governments.

Build consensus around select global governance strengthening proposals, by encouraging Member States to rank options according to criteria involving desirability, policy impact, urgency, cost, and implementation feasibility.

Adopt a Pact for the Future and other strategic frameworks for global action at the Summit to facilitate concrete, measurable, and adequately resourced commitments across the above mentioned four thematic areas.

Establish Summit follow-through mechanisms to ensure effective coordination, monitoring, financing, and other actions to facilitate implementation.

Striking a balance—in the agenda for next year's Summit of the Future—between national interests, global public goods, and enlightened global leadership will not be any easy task. The Summit's proposed Pact for the Future would not resolve today's colossal global problems overnight; but it could set into motion a series of events and facilitate, over time, a more comprehensive and impactful overhaul of our international system and of the laws and norms that underpin it. We cannot afford to aim for less, because nothing less than humanity's future hangs in the balance.

> *The Summit's proposed Pact for the Future could set into motion a series of events and facilitate, over time, a more comprehensive and impactful overhaul of our international system and of the laws and norms that underpin it.*

I. Road to 2023: How Did We Get Here?

> "Yet the past is ever with us and all that we are and that we have comes from the past. We are its products and we live immersed in it. Not to understand it and feel it as something living within us is not to understand the present. To combine it with the present and extend it to the future, to break from it where it cannot be so united, to make of all this the pulsating and vibrating material for thought and action—that is life." —*Jawaharlal Nehru*[3]

2020 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. It also revealed deep-seated tensions between enhanced global connectivity, on one hand, and major fault-lines in global governance, including renewed great-power rivalries and Global North-South distrust, on the other. The COVID-19 pandemic and UN75 may be only brief episodes in world history, but if engaged boldly and creatively, they can each yield valuable new thinking, planning, and action in increasingly critical spheres of global governance—including the "Four C's" emphasized in this report, namely, conflict, COVID-19, climate governance, and the increasingly collaborative global economy—in anticipation of the Summit of the Future in September 2023.

Before turning to them, it is worth reflecting on the journey thus far to more clearly comprehend the present situation, and to glean insights and lessons from UN Secretary-General António Guterres' Global Conversation and negotiations leading up to the UN75 Declaration in 2020, and the thematic dialogues that followed in response to the Secretary-General's seminal report, *Our Common Agenda*, in 2021.

While this report mainly shines light on the road to 2023 and the preparations underway for next year's Summit and its Pact for the Future, this section offers a glance in the rearview mirror to recall what has been gaining on us all in recent years, and what so far has been done about it.

The Secretary-General's Call to Action: From UN75 to *Our Common Agenda*

Leading up to UN75, Secretary-General Guterres launched a Global Conversation, which spurred more than 3,000 civil society dialogues worldwide and surveys involving some 1.5 million people in 195 countries.[4] The UN75 Office reported that the Conversation showed "overwhelming public support for international cooperation" and for a more people-centered multilateralism.[5]

These civil society-led consultations fed into and shaped intergovernmental negotiations on the UN75 Declaration, culminating in a joint commitment by Member States to twelve priority areas during High-Level Week, at the start of the General Assembly's 75th session in September 2020.[6] Co-Facilitated by Qatar's UN Permanent Representative Alya Al-Thani and Sweden's Permanent Representative Anna Karin Eneström, the UN75 Declaration negotiations sought to renew collective action on such global challenges as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme poverty, armed conflict, disarmament, and disruptive technologies. At the same time, deliberations underscored sometimes sharp differences between Member States on critical issues, including Security Council reform, women's rights, and civil society engagement.

Earlier that year, COVID-19 had shifted in-person diplomacy (with its greater opportunities for civil society engagement) to closed-door, virtual discussions. Still, with support from a diverse group of nations, including South Korea, Mexico, Uganda, and the twenty-seven members of the European Union, the co-facilitators navigated the at times difficult political terrain and forged, by July, a consensus-based UN75 Declaration. Formally adopted by world leaders that September, the Declaration directed the Secretary-General "to report back" within

Figure 1.1: UN High-Level Tracks Leading to the Education Summit, Summit of the Future, and World Social Summit
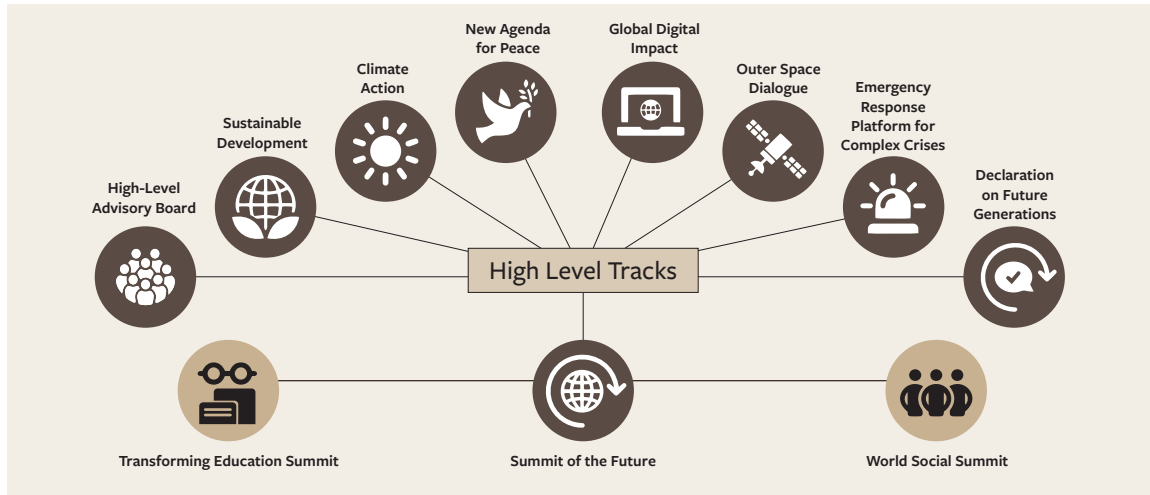
Guterres, *Our Common Agenda*, 7, ©2021 United Nations. Reproduced with permission.

a year "with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges."[7]

In September 2021, the *Our Common Agenda* (OCA) report was released. Emphasizing ways to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals and implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, and benefiting from four tracks of consultations (which sought inputs from youth, thought leaders, civil society, and governments), the report outlined some ninety distinct recommendations across four pillars: a renewed social contract, a focus on the future, protecting the Global Commons and delivering global public goods, and an upgraded United Nations.[8] Recommended ideas for taking forward this agenda include three global summits, seven high-level tracks, and the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (see figure 1.1).[9] Section VII of this report builds on these suggested steps, especially for maximizing the opportunities for global governance innovation presented by the September 2023 Summit of the Future.

Described by the Secretary-General and his team as a "manifesto" and "vision" for improving global collective action, the OCA does not claim to address every major issue facing the United Nations and international community—for instance, it pays limited attention to

aging, deforestation, and combating terrorism. Furthermore, it only briefly sketches a possible agenda for the proposed Heads of State Summit of the Future. Nevertheless, it has served as a significant catalyst for sparking and shaping an overdue intergovernmental exchange (and likely official negotiation, by early 2023) on the future of global governance—one that, increasingly, is welcoming inputs from diverse actors across civil society, including the business community, with concrete ideas to share on global problem-solving.

Our Common Agenda and the President of the General Assembly's Thematic Consultations

In November 2021, the General Assembly lent initial support, in the form of a resolution adopted by consensus, to follow through on *Our Common Agenda*. The resolution acknowledged the need for more participatory discussions to realize the report's potential and called for the President of the General Assembly (PGA) to "begin inclusive intergovernmental consideration of the various proposals, options and potential means of implementation and on ways to take them forward, in collaboration with all relevant partners through broad and inclusive consultations."[10]

In response, PGA Abdulla Shahid convened, in February and March 2022, five informal

Box 1.1: PGA's Thematic Consultations on *Our Common Agenda*: Highlights

PROPOSALS SUPPORTED BY MEMBER STATES

⊘ **Five transformative measures for gender equality to be implemented by Member States**

Action: Continue working on proposals where strong support was received and provide support on emergency response plans to eradicate violence against women and girls, including with technical involvement and knowledge from Resident Coordinators.

⊘ **Beyond GDP**

Action: Follow-up should take into account the High-Level Panel on the Multidimensional Variability Index for Small Island Developing States established by the PGA in February 2022 in accordance with resolution 76/203.

⊘ **Global Digital Compact**

Action: Develop this proposal further through an open and inclusive process as part of the preparations for the proposed Summit of the Future.

PROPOSALS WHERE FURTHER CLARIFICATION/INFORMATION WAS NEEDED

⊘ **Renewed social contract anchored in human rights**

Action: Provide support to Member States, including clarifications, on request.

⊘ **Biennial Summit of the G20, ECOSOC, S-G and IFIs**

Action: Continue working on this proposal, including the scope and modalities of the summit, and to provide regular updates to Member States.

⊘ **A New Agenda for Peace**

Action: Develop a New Agenda for Peace in close consultation with Member States, as part of the preparations for the proposed Summit of the Future.

Source: President of the General Assembly, *Our Common Agenda - Summary of the Thematic Consultations*.

thematic consultations, inviting Member States and civil society representatives to offer feedback and proposals for achieving, in practical terms, *Our Common Agenda*'s vision for more inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism.[11] Key results are presented in box 1.1, which lists OCA recommendations garnering Member States' support, and those for which "further clarification or information" was sought from the Secretary-General and relevant working groups.

A key message of the present report, given the mixed reception from Member States and the far-reaching but preliminary nature of the proposals offered by the OCA, is that work needs to begin now on all agreed strategic priorities in order to be ready for their possible adoption at the 2023 Summit in the form of a new "Pact for the Future." There is simply no time to lose, especially given the deepening cracks across the international security landscape.

Fortunately, many civil society-led discussions worldwide intersected with these intergovernmental conversations and were reflected upon by the UN75 Office and the Executive-Office of the Secretary-General. In particular, this report derives inspiration and specific recommendations from a series of global and regional dialogues with leaders across civil society, academia, the business community, governments, and the UN System itself, informing the UN75 Leaders' Summit and UN75 Declaration, and now the expected Summit of the Future (see figure 1.2).

The Road to 2023 and the Four C's

The present report advocates and supports a dynamic intergovernmental *and multi-stakeholder* process—a roadmap to the 2023 Summit of the Future—that brings together the ideas, networks, and capabilities of a wide range of people and institutions, including governments, civil society, the business community, and international organizations. Doing so offers the best hope that the Summit's Pact for the Future can be a breakthrough in meeting today's most urgent needs and aspirations and leave both a livable and a peaceful planet to future generations.

Figure 1.2: Select Civil Society-Led Activities Around UN75, the OCA, and Proposed Summit of the Future
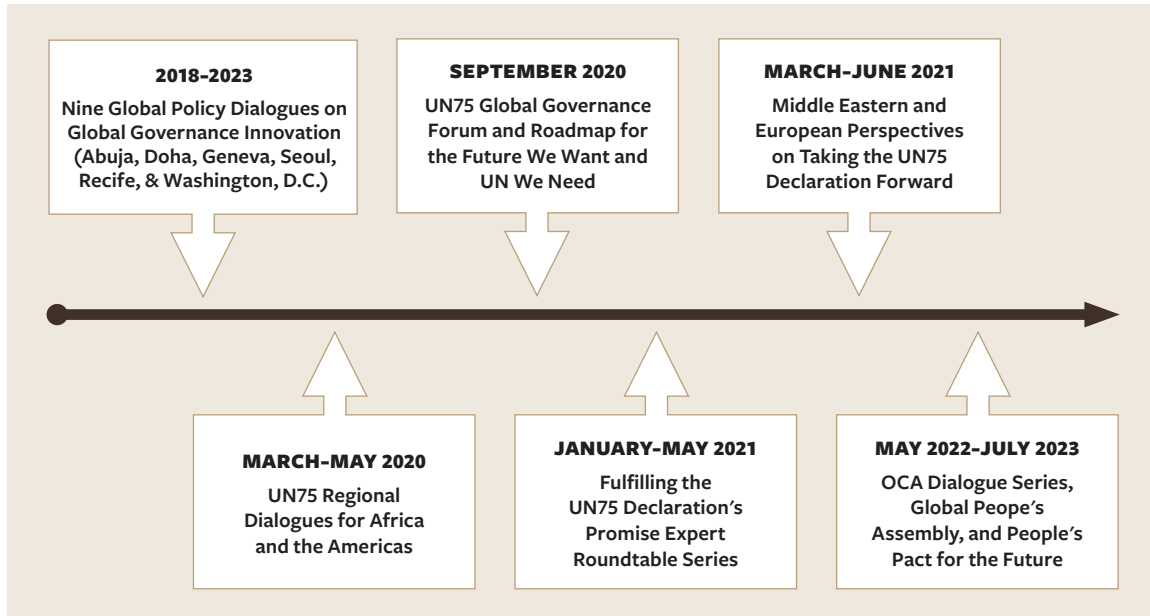
Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center

This report builds on recommendations introduced initially in the 2015 report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance,* and detailed in the follow-up book, *Just Security in an Undergoverned World* (2018). It also highlights a number of proposals presented in the *Our Common Agenda* report; altogether, twenty far-reaching reform innovations to make the UN system more inclusive, networked, and effective—selected in part based on the outcomes of the global and regional policy dialogues summarized in figure 1.2.

Before turning to the recommendations, which are grouped by their primary area of relevance (to conflict, COVID-19, climate, or the collaborative economy), we offer a brief analytic update on each of the "Four C's" (see figure 1.3).

Conflict Prevention and Management for Building Peace

The economic downturn from the pandemic fed into social and political instability in many (already) fragile countries and reinforced causes of conflict amid a global deterioration in peace and security.[12] More active conflicts (currently thirty-four) are on record than at any time since the end of the Second World War. Their average duration has extended and conflict relapses have also become more frequent.[13] New or existing conflicts escalated in countries like Ethiopia and Burma; in Afghanistan, even following the withdrawal of American and allied forces last year, peace remains elusive in the country.[14] But perhaps the most shocking new development is the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine—an egregious violation of the UN Charter and international law by a nuclear-armed, permanent member of the Security Council—in an apparent attempt to annex even more of the country.[15] The human impacts of these conflicts are catastrophic: high-intensity conflicts (with a death toll over 1000) accounted for 47 percent of active conflicts in 2020;[16] in Ukraine, more than one-quarter of its people are displaced with 5.6 million Ukrainians fleeing to neighboring countries.[17]

The war against Ukraine has severely deteriorated Russia's relationship with Western countries, which have imposed unprecedented economic sanctions on Moscow and are providing massive military aid to Ukraine. Meanwhile, an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, in domains from trade and technology to security, is likely to further

Figure 1.3: International Law, Institutions, and Issues: Overlapping Solutions

Int'l Law & Global Norms					
	UN CHARTER				
	Int'l Institutions		EITI	World Bank | IMF	ECOSOC
	UNSC ICJ		**Collaborative Economy**		
	PBC ICC				
RESPONSIBILITY TO RPOTECT	DPO DPPA OHCHR	**Conflict** ▶ Create a new Peacebuilding Council to advance conflict prevention	▶ Address globalization's democratic deficit with a UN Parliamentary Network	▶ Promote a "G20+" Biennial Summit to foster socio-economic recovery	G20 OECD WTO
	UNGA	▶ Promote international justice	▶ Strengthen cyber-security to safeguard positive global connectivity	▶ Fight future pandemics through a Global Health Threats Council	ICAO IMO
	OCHA UNDP	▶ Acknowledge climate & health disruptions as a contributing source of conflict	▶ Amplify neglected voices in global governance through a High-Level Civil Society Champion	▶ Leverage private sector ingenuity through a Green Technology Licensing Facility	COVID WHO
INT'L HUMANITARIAN LAW INT'L HUMAN RIGHTS LAW	WFP UNHCR	▶ Use adaptation strategies as conflict prevention measures	▶ Respect the human rights of all affected by climage change	▶ Promote carbon pricing, taxation, and trading (with shrinking caps)	IOM
		Climate			**MARRAKESH AGREEMENT (WTO) INT'L HEALTH REGULATIONS (2005)**
		UNFCCC Secretariat | UNEP | WMO			
	FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE		MONTREAL PROTOCOL		

Source: Adapted from Durch et al., *Just Security in an Undergoverned World*, 492. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press, http://global.oup.com/academic. For permission to reuse this material, visit http://global.oup.com/academic/rights.

disrupt the global strategic environment.[18] A destabilizing global arms race also looms on the horizon. Even before the Russian invasion prompted several European countries to raise their defense spending, annual global military expenditure, in 2021, exceeded U.S. $2 trillion for the first time.[19]

COVID-19, Representation, and Human Rights Promotion

The World Health Organization estimated that, as of May 2022, nearly 15 million "excess" deaths had occurred as a direct or indirect result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 68 percent of which occurred in just ten countries.[20] An estimated 530 million individuals globally have been infected with the COVID-19 virus, and 11.5 billion vaccine doses have been administered to 4.73 billion persons globally, but with uneven distribution regionally.[21] At the same time, the pandemic has repeatedly been cited as a reason to curtail or circumvent democracy and rule of law. Between 2020 and 2022, for example, "at least 80 countries have postponed national or subnational elections due to COVID-19."[22] The malevolent use of technology, whether cyber-crime (which, by 2025, could cost the world U.S. $10.5 trillion annually) or the rise of disinformation (in the case of COVID-19, a parallel "infodemic") creates acute challenges to protecting human rights both off- and on-line, threatening to further marginalize vulnerable communities.[23]

Climate Action and Governing the Global Commons

On International Earth Day (April 22, 2022), UN Secretary General António Guterres underscored the threat of the "Triple Planetary Crisis" (climate change, air pollution, and biodiversity

> *UN Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the threat of the "Triple Planetary Crisis" (climate change, air pollution, and biodiversity loss) which threatens the survival of humanity and requires urgent action.*

loss) which threatens the survival of humanity and requires urgent action.[24] Indeed, 2022 is forecast to be one of the hottest years on record, reinforcing the vital need for a *green recovery* from the pandemic to both increase energy security and improve environmental outcomes.[25] The global mean sea level also reached a record high in 2021, stressing low lying coastlines and their surrounding ecosystems.[26] Meanwhile, the war in Ukraine made energy security a renewed priority, especially for European countries, as energy prices spiked.[27] Although, at the 5th UN Environment Assembly in March 2022, 175 countries affirmed their commitment to reduce pollution and curb biodiversity loss by restricting plastic waste, more public and private action is imperative as "more species are threatened with extinction than ever before in human history."[28]

Collaborative Economy and Promoting Global Public Goods

The COVID-19 pandemic caused socioeconomic setbacks worldwide, albeit with widely diverging impacts across countries.[29] Around 97 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty the past two years, according to the World Bank.[30] Global unemployment, exceeding 200 million in 2022, is expected to remain above pre-COVID-19 levels until at least next year.[31] Many emerging economies are now facing acute financial pressure: rising interest rates in the West have drawn capital out of these economies and raised the cost of mobilizing financial resources. Indeed, more than half of the world's low-income countries are now in or at high risk of debt distress.[32] And the war in Ukraine has fueled surges in food and energy costs.[33] The World Food Programme estimated that the conflict in the world's leading producer of grain might put 44 million people at risk of hunger and starvation.[34]

Meanwhile, many Western advanced economies have bounced back swiftly from the pandemic, thanks to a combination of generous government stimulus and widespread vaccination. But an overheated economy in the United States, coupled with a tight labor market, have led to historically high inflation, increasing the risk of a recession,[35] which could have ripple effects abroad. In China, city-wide lockdowns under the country's "Zero-Covid Policy" are projected to dent the Asian economic powerhouse's 2022 Gross Domestic Product growth forecast by 0.5 percent.[36]

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Confronting the challenges accompanying the Four C's requires shedding old ways of thinking and adopting new conceptual tools, including by enriching Secretary-General Guterres' notions of a new social contract, new global deal, and networked and inclusive multilateralism through a just security framework. These ideas are addressed in section II of this report. Sections III through VI take a hard look at key innovations needed in global governance for each of the Four C's. Finally, section VII offers a strategy for global system-wide renewal—including concrete measures to maximize the once-in-a-generation opportunity afforded by next year's Summit of the Future and its anticipated Pact for the Future, building on political momentum generated by the UN75 Declaration, the Secretary-General's UN75 Global Conversation, and *Our Common Agenda*.

II. Conceptual Innovations for 2023

"The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals show the way, but we must pick up the pace. We need a paradigm shift in our approach to development. We need to rebuild trust and social cohesion through a renewed social contract that also gives weight to the interests of future generations." — *UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed* [37]

Conceptual innovations in our thinking about global governance have shaped both the discourse and policies of past decades. Prominent examples include coining the concept of "sustainable development" by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), which paved the way to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and "the responsibility to protect" ("R2P"), first presented in the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which was taken up by the 2005 World Summit Outcome and continues to frame the debate on responses to mass atrocities.

Even in an environment of increasing geopolitical tensions, ideas matter as a common language and as a platform for crafting a common outlook. One theme that permeates today's global challenges and efforts to tackle them is finding the right balance between security and justice, which is encapsulated in the framework of "just security" as presented in the report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance (the Albright-Gambari Commission) of 2015.[38] Reprising the overarching framework of just security, this section discusses conceptual innovations elaborated on in the UN75 Declaration and the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report, with an eye toward the Summit of the Future proposed for 2023 and its Pact for the Future. These innovations include the "new social contract," the "new global deal," and "networked and inclusive multilateralism."

In the following paragraphs, the main elements of each concept are presented. Following a critical analysis of the concepts and their interrelationships, each of them is problematized through the just security framework. Viewed in conjunction and through the lens of just security, they form the conceptual foundations upon which this report builds its twenty innovations for the future of global governance. As noted in section I, based on an extensive consultative process, the following sections develop further a number of recommendations that were included in the 2015 report of the Albright-Gambari Commission, several of the OCA proposals, and ideas drawn from the deliberations of several Global and Regional Policy Dialogues (see figure 1.2). Implemented together, the twenty innovations offered in sections III through VI below would make a major contribution to placing justice and security considerations in a mutually supportive relationship in contemporary global governance.

In 2015, the Albright-Gambari Commission delved into the complex relationship between justice and security in global governance. It stressed that justice and security exist in a mutually dependent relationship. According to the Commission, on the one hand security would merely be "the appearance of order in a framework of structural violence unless tempered or leavened by concepts of justice that include human rights, human dignity, legitimate government, and other normative limits on the use of power." On the other, "the pursuit of justice is crippled if not backed up by the requisite means to sustain security and order." Hence, the report urged for global governance reform "to forge a mutually supportive system of accountable, fair, and effective governance and sustainable peace globally," involving both state and non-state actors. [39]

In a world of rising geopolitical tensions and other challenges (as discussed in section I above), the need for just security has only increased. This imperative to pursue both

principles hand-in-hand is visible also in the current discourse on the future of global governance, which was kicked off by Member States' UN75 Declaration in September 2020 and preceded by the Secretary-General's UN75 Global Conversation. The declaration recalls that the UN's three pillars of peace and security, development, and human rights "are equally important, interrelated, and interdependent."[40] It describes the coronavirus pandemic, for example, not only as a threat to human, economic, or national security, but explains that it "has reminded us in the most powerful way that we are closely interconnected and only as strong as our weakest link."[41]

The Conceptual Cornerstones for the (Summit of the) future

Our Common Agenda was the September 2021 follow-up to the UN75 Declaration. The report's various recommendations for innovation and reform follow from its three guiding concepts—the new social contract, the new global deal, and networked and inclusive multilateralism—which have the potential to guide discussions on the future of global governance in the lead-up to, and during, next year's Summit of the Future. As this section highlights, these concepts and the reform proposals that build on them need to be considered through a "just security" lens.

New Social Contract

The notion of a "social contract" between those in power and the ones they govern harks back to the enlightenment philosopher Rousseau and, as the OCA notes, has roots in many cultures.[42] The Secretary-General had proposed a renewed social contract already in his earlier vision statement for the period 2022-26.[43]

Our Common Agenda elaborates further on this idea, noting that social contracts anchored in human rights at the national level form the foundation for cooperation, including at the international level. However, the report observes a "growing disconnect between people and the institutions that serve them," along with a rise in populism and "inward-looking nationalist agendas"—a trend exacerbated by the pandemic.[44] Hence, there is a need to usher in a new era of partnerships and a redefinition of what progress means. According to the OCA, the new social contract rests on three foundations: (a) trust; (b) inclusion, protection, and participation; and (c) measuring and valuing what matters to people and the planet.[45]

As defined in *Our Common Agenda*, the new social contract seems to focus on the national (and to some extent subnational) levels. Its argument that functioning states and societies are indispensable building blocks of a functioning global governance architecture is compelling, recognizing that governing beyond the nation-state cannot mean governing without it.

Nevertheless, the idea of a "new social contract" also raises some critical reflections. *First*, how can genuine social contracts be established in undemocratic, authoritarian societies, especially as the OCA notes that such contracts should be anchored in human rights? It also proposes "listening and 'envisioning the future' exercises."[46] However, one may doubt whether these can be sufficient in environments without free and fair elections and protected civic spaces. *Second*, this framing of the social contract may be taken to exclude international law. Yet the international legal order, having the UN Charter and a set of peremptory norms at its core, could be considered a type of global social contract, albeit one in dire need of renewal. *Third and finally*, while new social contracts essentially form the basis for just and equitable societies, the question arises how they can be made secure and resilient as well. Fostering new social contracts as envisioned by the OCA, therefore, is also a question of just security.

Our Common Agenda notes that justice "is an essential dimension of the social contract" and stresses also the importance of SDG 16 to justice and rule of law in this regard. The "World Social Summit" that it proposes for 2025 would highlight the justice dimension of the new social contract.[47] The link to security is made through a reference to the concept of "human security,"[48] a concept introduced by the 1993 and 1994 *Human Development Reports*. Establishing resilient new social contracts at the (sub-)national level serves in fact the double purpose of promoting justice

and (human) security within societies, but also internationally by reducing sources of conflict and discontent, such as inequality, racism, discrimination, and distrust.

The New Global Deal

The formulation of a "new global deal" may seem reminiscent of the New Deal in the United States under Franklin D. Roosevelt, in response to the Great Depression.[49] In addition, the expression "(new) deal" has become popular in contemporary policy discourse across different countries and sectors, often with an emphasis on environmental protection and sustainability. Examples include the "European Green Deal" and South Korea's "Green New Deal."[50] As with the new social contract, the Secretary-General had been developing the idea of a new global deal already prior to the OCA, as evidenced by his 2020 Nelson Mandela Lecture.[51]

Our Common Agenda stresses the need for "a new deal at the global level,"[52] with a view to strengthening solidarity between societies and generations. Noting that international cooperation helped to mitigate the worst effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the report observes that "the response to the pandemic also exposed serious gaps in the effectiveness of multilateral action when it was needed most."[53] To turn a potential systemic breakdown into a "breakthrough scenario," therefore, it proclaims that "a serious renewal of the principles and practices of collective action at the global level is needed, building on what is working and what has been achieved."[54]

The new global deal focuses on the protection of Global Commons and the provision of global public goods.[55] The OCA defines Global Commons as "natural or cultural resources that are shared by and benefit us all."[56] They include the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica and outer space, and for some, cyberspace too. Global public goods are defined as public goods that are "global in nature, in that they cannot be adequately provided by any one State acting alone, and they concern the welfare of humanity as a whole."[57] They include global health, information, the global economy, a healthy planet, science, peace, and the digital sphere, among others. The concepts of Global Commons and global public goods have long been debated.[58]

An immediate question the concept of a new global deal raises is its relationship with the abovementioned new social contract. According to *Our Common Agenda*, they should "complement" each other.[59] More specifically, it explains that "a renewed social contract at the national level and stronger intergenerational solidarity must find expression in a new deal at the global level."[60] In this sense, the new global deal serves as the international counterpart of the new social contract. At the same time, the new social contracts serve as the foundation for a global new deal.

But the new global deal can also be seen as a new social contract at the global level—although this analogy with the domestic sphere was perhaps expressly avoided in the OCA. The notion of a "new deal," moreover, can connote a more immediate and operational endeavor: a new global deal facilitating the renewal of social contracts at the (sub-)national level. While the new social contract can be best understood as a "long-term goal for weaving a new normative fiber,"[61] a new global deal serves as the vehicle for overcoming the obstacles standing in the way of its realization. In other words, a reinvigorated global governance architecture that effectively protects Global Commons and ensures the provision of global public goods to all countries would also remove obstacles to struggling societies in their efforts to renew their respective social contracts. Seeing that new social contracts are also beneficial for global governance, these concepts can be considered mutually supportive.

However, the realization of such a new global deal faces at least three serious challenges: *First*, it requires large resources and the power to redistribute them on a worldwide scale—a power the UN does not have.[62] *Second*, it would also require a new global civic ethic.[63] *Third*, it, too, needs to strike the right balance between justice and security imperatives.

The new global deal's redistributive dimension has clear justice connotations. So do the references to an equitable recovery from the

COVID-19 pandemic and the various references to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals made in the OCA.[64] *Our Common Agenda* also notes the importance of international rules with regard to the Global Commons and global public goods, culminating in the proposal of "a global road map for the development and effective implementation of international law."[65]

At the same time, the Global Commons and public goods have clear links with security ranging from the international to the human dimension. The protection of the high seas, for instance, is a centuries-old issue of international security. Access to and usability of outer space and cyberspace have more recently become international security concerns as well. The pandemic, furthermore, has shown that global health is also a preeminent security challenge, which is acknowledged by the OCA in that it refers to "global health security."[66]

However, justice and security concerns can be at loggerheads, which requires careful balancing and calibrating of policy responses. An approach to outer space or pandemic response that is overly "securitized," for example, can lead to militarization and the excessive diminishment of individual freedom, respectively. By contrast,

approaches overly focused on justice without taking due account of security concerns will likely lack effectiveness and durability. Thus, within the two-way relationship between the new social contracts and the new global deal, the interrelationship between justice and security concerns needs to be considered as well (see figure 2.1).

Networked and Inclusive Multilateralism

Crucial questions of agency, actors, and modes of cooperation are captured in *Our Common Agenda's* notion of networked and inclusive, and therefore arguably more effective, multilateralism—an idea the Secretary-General had already put forward on the occasion of the UN's seventy-fifth anniversary.[67] Such an enhanced form of multilateralism is contended as necessary due to the outdatedness of global governance structures and seeing how, in many instances, they fail to address global challenges.

Thus, moving beyond cooperation among a limited number of states, the OCA calls for a broad range of state and non-state actors to make constructive contributions "as part of open, participatory, peer-driven and transparent systems, geared at solving problems by drawing on the capacities and hearing the voices of all relevant actors rather

Figure 2.1: New Social Contracts, the New Global Deal, and Just Security
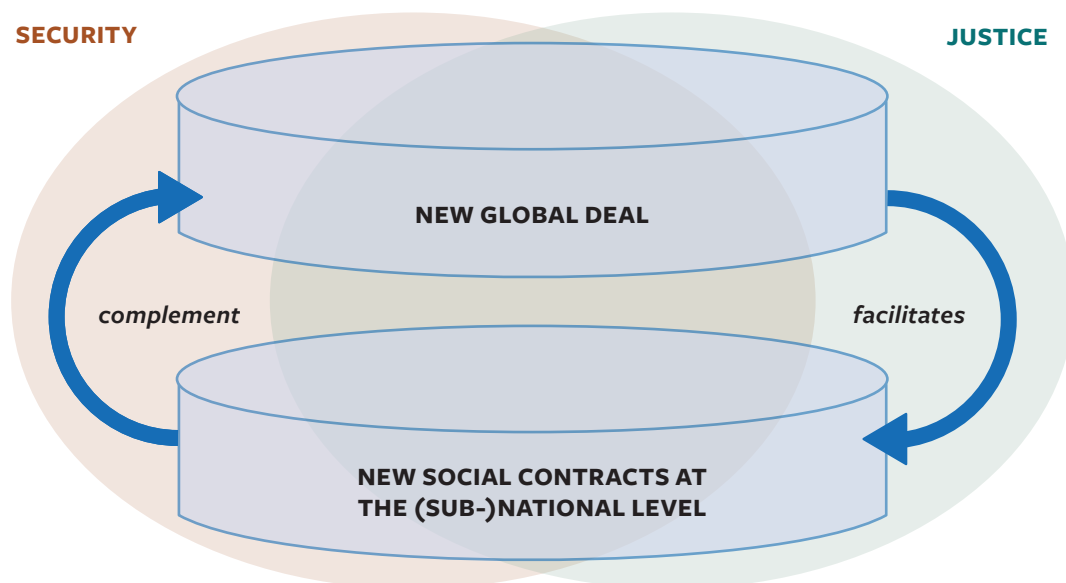
Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center

Figure 2.2: Multiple Actors in Multilevel Governance
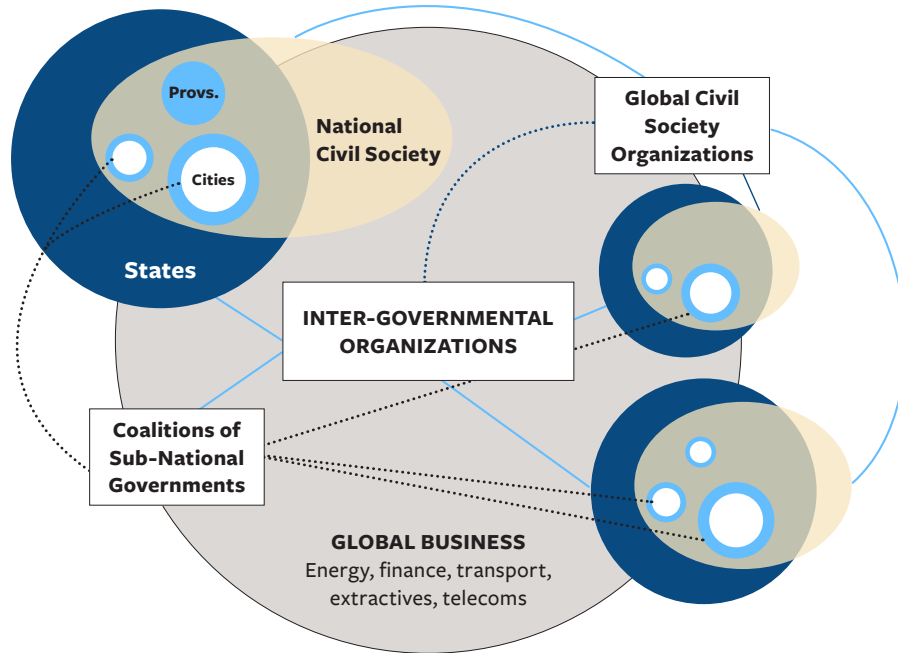
than being driven by mandates or institutions alone."[68] Instead of creating new institutions, the report stresses the need for better cooperation among an ever-wider range of relevant actors. Moreover, its recommendations include several proposals for repurposing existing institutions.

"Networked" in this context means harnessing existing capacities, breaking down traditional silos, and enhancing cooperation across different levels of governance.[69] "Inclusive" is defined in the OCA as giving a voice and possibilities to contribute not only to all states but also to other stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, parliaments, cities and local governments, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, academia, trade unions, and the private sector and industry, with an emphasis on "those led by women and young people."[70] Networked and inclusive multilateralism, hence, could also be recast as inclusive and effective "multi-stakeholderism" and as the main modus operandi for achieving the new global deal, as well as assisting in the reinvigoration of social contracts. The Secretary-General has also inaugurated a High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB) to delve

further into this issue and provide specific recommendations, by early 2023, in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future.

The insight that non-state actors play an increasingly important role in global governance—for better or worse—is not new; nor are calls for "effective multilateralism,"[71] initiatives for harnessing the private sector in efforts to tackle global challenges (recalling the launch of the UN Global Compact in 2000), or insights about more "networked governance" (figure 2.2).[72] Moreover, all calls for governance "beyond the state" of the past decades notwithstanding, both the COVID-19 pandemic and recent responses to interstate aggression show the enduring indispensability of states (in these cases with their public health systems and militaries) in tackling contemporary global challenges. At the same time, these crises have also shown multi-stakeholder collaboration in action, such as the COVAX initiative, through which state and non-state actors work together to provide equitable access to vaccines.

There is, moreover, a risk that increasingly networked, multi-stakeholder-driven approaches

Strengthening social contracts, inaugurating a new global deal, and enhancing ways to make better use of the potential of multi-stakeholder approaches in global governance…are all exercises on bringing about just security.

may result in parallel processes that bypass the formal, intergovernmental ones. This poses serious justice concerns. Relying heavily on non-state actors, in particular multinational corporations and billionaires, to protect the Global Commons and deliver global public goods raises questions of transparency and of accountability to the public.[73]

Inclusiveness, furthermore, needs to be seen through the lens of decoloniality. This means, first of all, revealing and acknowledging the continuing impact of, and underlying power imbalances resulting from, colonialism and, on that basis, working towards remedying them structurally. Better representation of Global South countries and citizens in key international institutions is one important part of this.

At the same time, a decolonial approach also means critically unpacking notions of "civil society" and "multi-stakeholderism." For instance, if any enhanced space for non-state actors at the UN is taken up by predominantly Western/Global North corporations and civil society organizations, then this can increase rather than break down coloniality-derived structural power imbalances. Similarly, the views that current non-state actors hold and the input they provide to multilateral processes need to be critically interrogated from the point of view of representativeness—or to use the term from the UN75 Global Conversation, "people centeredness." This includes critically reflecting on gender issues and the concerns of future generations. In other words, it should not be accepted at face value that these actors speak on behalf or in the interest of groups whose voices remain marginalized in global governance.

While many non-state actors can and do make valuable contributions towards what *Our Common Agenda* calls a "new global deal," others with nefarious or at best mixed objectives raise concerns in terms of both security and justice. This includes terrorist groups and organized crime, but to some extent could be applied to other non-state actors in light of their respective self-interests and ways in which they pursue them. In many cases, rather than being allies for the OCA's causes, they detract rather than contribute to the ambitions outlined in the report, regarding both new social contracts at the domestic level and a new global deal.

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Strengthening social contracts, inaugurating a new global deal, and enhancing ways to make better use of the potential of multi-stakeholder approaches in global governance—while devising effective mechanisms to hold non-state actors accountable—are all exercises in bringing about "just security." Breaking down silos and working with flexible partnerships can be instrumental in identifying the complex interplays between justice and security issues. Fortunately, *Our Common Agenda* did not stop at expounding and linking important conceptual advances for the coming years and decades. It went on to make several specific proposals for reform in the spirit of these ideas. As argued here, crafting a mutually reinforcing relationship between justice and security imperatives remains a challenge that permeates these concepts. This requires a delicate balance to be struck in the further development and implementation of the various innovation proposals of the OCA and beyond, as organized in this report around the Four C's of conflict, COVID-19, climate, and collaborative economy.

III. Conflict Prevention and Management for Building Peace

3.1 Advance Inclusive and Just Peace through a New Agenda for Peace

Recommendation

The spirit of the original, 1992 Agenda for Peace can be recaptured by a new and dynamic approach to sustaining peace and just security in the twenty-first century, focusing on prevention, the changing nature of conflict, innovations in Women, Peace & Security and Youth, Peace & Security, and reform of the UN Collective Security Architecture.

Gaps in Global Governance

Following the Cold War, the landmark 1992 report of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, took a bold step forward in conceptually expanding "peace" to move beyond the absence of war and into the world body's role in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding.[74] This high-level strategic framework was followed by the 1995 *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, which sought to refine these concepts in light of the UN's experiences in the course of peacekeeping operations in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia.[75] Since then, most updates and major UN-commissioned studies have focused mostly on the operational level, including the internal reforms of the past two incoming Secretaries-General (in 2007 and 2017).

Those studies that have attempted to further redefine major conceptual terms and goals of "peace," including the 2000 Brahimi Report on peace operations and the 2015 reports of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, reflect changing political circumstances and conflict dynamics that continue to challenge our conceptions of conflict, its origins, and how to prevent, manage, ameliorate, or end it.[76]

With ongoing conflicts in the 21st century (including, most recently, the intensification of violence between Russia and the Ukraine),

the international community faces a number of challenges to its ideal of sustainable peace. Without serious reconsideration of the conceptual premises of the UN's Peace Agenda and its Collective Security Architecture, priorities, and operational capabilities and approaches, the UN system is unlikely to adapt sufficiently to meet these challenges. These include the rising number and changing nature of conflict, the urgent need for new prevention mechanisms, paralysis of UN Security Council decision-making vis-a-vis major conflicts such as Syria and Russia-Ukraine, the durability of efforts to rebuild and sustain peace post-conflict, and the disproportionate suffering and curtailed agency of women and youth as a result of deadly conflict.

Moreover, as acknowledged in *Our Common Agenda*, there is a need to consider the cross-cutting and increasingly interdisciplinary nature of the global peace and security agenda across climate governance, the Global Commons, socioeconomic structures, and cyberspace.[77] Such a comprehensive approach to preventing conflict will, in today's hyper-connected world, inevitably flow into a larger, more intersectional conceptual framework; for example, half of the most climate-fragile countries suffer from conflict.[78]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Introduce A New Agenda for Peace to Advance Inclusive and Just Peace

Responding to the above global governance gaps, four proposed building blocks for a New Agenda for Peace are:

First, **a reinvigorated focus on prevention** at the local, regional, and international levels. Building on the work of the Secretary-General's High-Level Board for Mediation, created in 2017, and calls for a new Peacebuilding Audit

> *The General Assembly's March 2, 2022 vote on the Russia-Ukraine crisis manifested, once again, the deep-seated shortcomings of the current global security architecture.*

(see Overview 3.3), a renewed approach to conflict prevention must be understood within the increasingly interconnected effects of conflict. Effective responses will benefit from foresight-driven, inclusive, and equitable practices in both preventive diplomacy and disarmament. These should be backed by investments in regional and state-based prevention capabilities. This invites the UN to think and act beyond solely the operational capacity of high-level UN mediators, and, instead, anchor its interventions around the rich notion of positive peace and, new kinds of proactive, early initiatives for peace. Admittedly risky in nature, monitoring early warning indicators and recommending immediate actions, to the Security Council, General Assembly, and other UN bodies, falls precisely within the remit of the Secretary-General, as envisaged by the UN Charter's framers.

Second, moving past the two-decade emphasis on counter-terrorism, the New Agenda for Peace should **address the changing nature of conflict** as a result of climate related security threats (including water scarcity), cyber-warfare (including disinformation and misinformation), and the two-way interplay between sustainable security and health of the Global Commons.[79] This means, for example, that an integrated approach to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be built into any new global peace agenda.

Third, **an emphasis on inclusivity** in the new peace agenda means moving beyond military-based solutions to actions conceived **through Gender and "Next Generation" lenses** that actively tap often neglected women and youth perspectives, as there is compelling evidence that women's physical security

and gender equality in society are associated with broader peace and stability in states.[80] Furthermore, in a world of increasing awareness of cultural influences, adopting both a feminist and intergenerational lens toward examining peace is needed to solve parts of the "peace puzzle," helping, for instance, to dissect the roles of incentive structures and social norms in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and prevention. Such an analytical approach is also poised to better comprehend the interests and needs of future generations in international policymaking, including in connection with Secretary-General Guterres' focus on the Global Commons and proposed new Declaration and Special Envoy for Future Generations (see Overview 4.5).

Fourth and finally, **reform the UN's Collective Security Architecture**, including the Security Council, General Assembly, and Peacebuilding Commission, to better conform with the goals and principles of the New Agenda for Peace (see Overviews 3.2, 3.3, and 6.2 for specific ideas).

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"Peace" has remained an elusive, aspirational goal for millions. The General Assembly's March 2, 2022 vote on the Russia-Ukraine crisis manifested, once again, the deep-seated shortcomings of the current global security architecture.[81] This crisis and the others of our time invite us to rethink fundamental assumptions, including what it means to secure and maintain peace. A New Agenda for Peace that captures the above building blocks could serve as a guiding light to help the UN and broader international community promote a more robust notion of positive peace and better safeguard the future for all nations and peoples.

3.2 Increase Representation in the Security Council for Strengthened Collective Security

Recommendation

The Security Council must reflect today's geopolitical realities and the multilateral principle of inclusive, collective action that is the UN's cornerstone. The Summit of the Future, with impetus from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, can help to generate political momentum and offer a much-needed deadline for progress on both issues: representation and misuse of the veto.

Gaps in Global Governance

In 1945, Article 23 of the UN Charter gave permanent membership to five powerful countries (the "P5")—China, France, the Soviet Union (Russian Federation from 1991), the UK, and the United States. However, their makeup reflects the geopolitical reality of the immediate post-war era. Non-permanent members have only occasional formal say in the Council's work with two-year terms.

Today, the P5 represent only 26 percent of the world's population.[82] Regions in the Global South have no permanent members. Uneven representation also extends to the Council's ten non-permanent members (see figure 3.1). Countries in the Western Europe and Other Group have as many non-permanent seats (two) as the Asia-Pacific Group—despite the latter having a far larger share of world population.[83] African countries have only three seats, yet over half of Security Council meetings and 70 percent of resolutions involving Chapter VII mandates in 2018 were related to Africa.[84] In effect, Council membership distribution means that only a small minority of the world participates in its decision-making on international peace and security.

Nor does P5 membership correlate with contributions to multilateralism or respect for international law. Japan and Germany—among the top four contributors to UN regular budget and peacekeeping expenditures—have long felt frustration about not being permanent members.[85] Meanwhile, some P5 members have violated international law and acted against the UN Charter–most recently in the case of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

The lack of representation is further compounded by the Council's veto mechanism, which is frequently abused to protect permanent members' narrow national interests. The Council has failed to provide effective leadership despite a worsening recent trend in global peace. Russia and China have both vetoed humanitarian efforts related to the conflicts in Syria and Burma, and–for the first time in over fifteen years–on a resolution in May 2022 seeking to impose new sanctions on North Korea following its latest missile tests.[86] In 2021, the United States blocked proposed resolutions calling for a cease-fire in the Gaza conflict.[87] Shortly after its invasion of Ukraine, Russia vetoed a resolution calling for an end to its military aggression.[88] This paralysis also has prevented the Council from working on non-traditional security threats, including the growing link between climate and armed conflict.[89]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Expand Security Council Membership and Allow Re-election for Non-permanent Members

Many proposals have called for expanding the Security Council, particularly its permanent membership.[90] However, any negotiation for Council expansion is limited by geopolitical constraints, as manifested in the more than decade-long effort of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform (and its precursors, initiated in 1993). For this reason, the international community should focus on feasible reform measures that can be adopted in the short-term and improve the Council's work. Specifically, the number of non-permanent seats should be expanded by six, while shelving the thorny issue of permanent membership to a later date. At the same time, the General Assembly should redraw the regional groups for the allocation of non-permanent UNSC seats, with particular regard for the impact on Sub-Saharan countries in the African Group.

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Figure 3.1: Distribution of Security Council Membership by Region

Western Europe and Other Groups	Asia and the Pacific Group	Eastern European Group	African Group	Latin American and Carribbean States Group
12.49%	**58.5%**	**4.69%**	**15.8%**	**8.57%**
U.S.	China	Russia	Non-Permanent Seat	Non-Permanent Seat
U.K.	Non-Permanent Seat	Non-Permanent Seat	Non-Permanent Seat	Non-Permanent Seat
France	Non-Permanent Seat		Non-Permanent Seat	
Non-Permanent Seat				
Non-Permanent Seat				

% of UN Members population

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center

Finally, though somewhat more challenging, Article 23(2.) of the UN Charter should be amended to allow for the immediate re-election of non-permanent members, as they are currently not allowed to serve consecutive terms. Together, these measures would make representation fairer, create more stakeholders in the governance of international peace and security, and bring more regional expertise to UNSC decision-making. Allowing for immediate re-election of non-permanent seats will also create incentives for elected Member States to act fairly and responsibly in the Council.

Curb Misuse of the Veto

Member States could adopt innovative measures to hold the P5 accountable and encourage the responsible use of their veto power. In concrete terms, the P5 should agree—through voluntary agreement or UN Charter amendment—to suspend use of the veto in certain cases, such as mass atrocities and humanitarian and natural disasters. One related reform proposal, put forward by France and Mexico in 2015, would give the Secretary-General the power to ascertain mass atrocities with references from the

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights or Member States.[91]

Another creative idea, proposed by the late U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, is to add a third voting option for the P5: a "no" vote that does not have the effect of a veto. This would make voting more flexible and allow the P5 to express their dissent without blocking the Council's work.[92]

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Many of these reform measures already have support among Member States. Most P5 members, however, are likely to resist the erosion of their veto rights. To counter this, the international community should harness the positive momentum for change generated by next year's Summit of the Future to mobilize greater support for these long overdue reforms. (And for discussion on the greater potential for General Assembly action under the *Uniting for Peace* resolution, including a related new initiative of Liechtenstein see Overview 6.2).

3.3 Prevent and Recover from Conflicts through a new Peacebuilding Council and Audit

Recommendation

Upgrading the Peacebuilding Commission into an empowered Peacebuilding Council will allow the United Nations to address second- and third-order conflicts, freeing up the Security Council to focus on first-order threats. This new body would lead on conflict prevention (through a new Peacebuilding Audit tool) and peacebuilding policy development, coordination, and resource mobilization.

Gaps in Global Governance

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, global armed conflicts have not subsided (figure 3.2). 2020, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies "witnessed the highest number of conflicts since 1945." The average duration of conflict has grown, and the boundary between conflict and post-conflict has blurred, with more frequent conflict relapses.[93]

Facing this crisis, the United Nations Security Council has failed to provide decisive leadership. Beset by confrontations among the P5, the United Nations has initiated no new Integrated Peacekeeping Missions since 2014 and has insufficiently addressed non-traditional security threats, such as climate change.

Just as important as timely intervention appears in imminent or ongoing crises, however, is the need to sustain peace and prevent conflict recurrence in fragile post-conflict countries. Established in 2005, the UN Peacebuilding Architecture has made progress in these areas. The Member States of the Peacebuilding Commission have played a convening role in regional peacebuilding strategy, while the voluntarily funded, Secretariat-managed Peacebuilding Fund has closely engaged with international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, on peacebuilding priorities.[94]

However, as an advisory subsidiary body of the General Assembly and Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission does not have independent authority or decision-making power and is, thus, unable to effectively coordinate UN peacebuilding efforts.[95] As noted in the 2020 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review, there has been very limited progress on securing adequate and sustained funding for peacebuilding activities. The Peacebuilding Fund only received U.S. $178 million in 2021, or less than 3 percent of what was budgeted for UN peacekeeping in the 2021 fiscal year.[96]

Finally, the UN has too often played a reactive role in conflict management. Complex political, social, and economic factors behind armed conflicts make conflict prediction incredibly challenging. Emerging risks and dangerous trends, such as the instability caused by climate change, create further pressure on existing forms of foresight and prevention. Nonetheless, better foresight and prevention capabilities would allow the UN to do a better job addressing the underlying causes of conflicts before they tip into violence.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Upgrade the Peacebuilding Commission to an empowered Peacebuilding Council

Today's worsening security landscape not only requires nimble intervention but also increases the demand for post-conflict peacebuilding. Upgrading the Peacebuilding Commission to an empowered UN Peacebuilding Council (new PBC) can complement and assist in the Security Council's challenging task of maintaining global peace and security. With an expanded mandate, the Peacebuilding Council would have enhanced powers and responsibilities to lead on conflict prevention and peacebuilding policy development, coordination, and resource mobilization on critical second- and third-order conflicts, freeing up the Security Council to concentrate on first-order conflicts that most threaten international peace and security.

The new PBC would focus on countries and regions in non-peacekeeping and post-conflict environments where it can monitor and coordinate actions to prevent conflict recurrence. Furthermore, the new PBC could address issues such as gender equality in conflict-affected

Conflict

Figure 3.2: Global Conflict Trends, 1990-2020
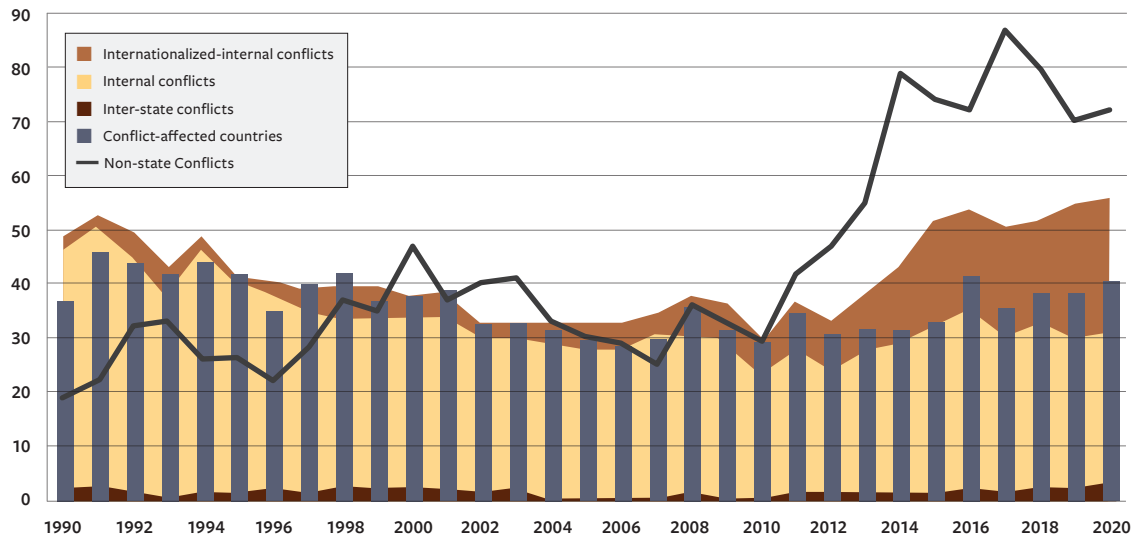
Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *Armed Conflict Survey* 2021, 22

regions, climate change-induced instability, human rights abuses, conflict prevention and mediation services, digital disinformation, and, more broadly speaking, post-conflict peace-building. The new PBC would allow more Member States to participate in decision-making on peace and security issues.

Creating the new PBC would be in line with *Our Common Agenda's* call to expand the capacities of the Peacebuilding Commission.[97] It would follow the precedent of the UN Commission on Human Rights' transformation, in 2006, into the UN Human Rights Council. Should Member States not repurpose the Trusteeship Council to govern the Global Commons (see Overview 5.1), they could consider supplanting it with the new PBC. This would require appropriate Charter amendments, and it would make the new PBC a principal organ of the UN with considerable authority and convening power.

Enhance Foresight and Prevention through a New Peacebuilding Audit Tool

To better operationalize its mandate on conflict prevention, the new Peacebuilding Council should employ a new Peacebuilding Audit tool, modeled on the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Just as the UPR is used to review Member States' human

rights records, this new Peacebuilding Audit would periodically monitor various national indicators linked with conflict outbreaks. Early warning from the audit would better inform decision-making by the Security Council and new PBC, and enable earlier and more effective preventive action. The Peacebuilding Audit would be consistent with current efforts tracking Members States' progress toward meeting their commitment to SDG 16. And with more sophisticated analysis enabled by better data and information technologies, it would allow the world to better understand the underlying causes behind armed conflicts.

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Following the 2020 review of UN Peacebuilding Architecture, the General Assembly and the Security Council requested an interim report in 2022 on the implementation of the 2020 resolutions on peacebuilding (A/RES/75/201 and S/RES/2558). This offers an opportunity to have the above two proposals discussed within the present Peacebuilding Architecture before the proposed Summit of the Future in 2023. Such reforms would likely garner support from emerging powers and countries making significant financial contributions too, as they also await long overdue Security Council reform.

3.4 Boost the Reach of the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court, for Greater Global Justice

Recommendation

A well-functioning, peaceful, and rules-based international order requires respected and well-functioning international courts working in balance with state sovereignty. Strengthening international courts to fulfill their mandates means increasing their enforcement powers, preserving their independence, and enhancing their resilience.

Global Governance Gaps

International legal institutions, such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Court (ICC), and other international courts and tribunals, are potential pillars of the international rules-based order. However, since their inception, they have suffered from legitimacy and credibility crises. For example, only 73 states have accepted ICJ compulsory jurisdiction in more general terms (through the so-called "optional clause" in its founding Statute).[98] UN Member States' periodic assertions of sovereignty in the face of the ICJ's rulings reinforce concerns regarding its credibility and effectiveness. On February 26, 2022, for example, Ukraine initiated a case against Russia, prompted by Russia's then 48-hour-old invasion of its territory. Russia refused to participate in the oral proceedings, arguing that the ICJ lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the case.[99] On March 16, 2022, the ICJ urged Russia to immediately suspend military operations, to no effect.[100] The United States has also rejected the rulings of the ICJ in the past, while China has consistently refused to appear in the South China Sea arbitration at the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Despite increasing ratification of its Rome Statute over the years (see figure 3.3), the ICC has nevertheless faced complaints of bias and neo-colonialism, especially from some of its African members, which have criticized it as existing "solely for judging Africans" (Jean Ping, President of the AU Commission) and seeking to continue "imperialism" by "undermining people from poor and African countries" (Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda).[101] This trend reached its nadir in 2016, when several, mostly African, countries announced their intention to withdraw from the ICC. Many Asian countries—including China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nepal, Vietnam, and Myanmar—are not parties to the ICC's Rome Statute.[102] However, non-party countries can and do exercise their sovereign prerogative to accept jurisdiction, as did Ukraine in 2014/15, allowing the ICC prosecutor to seek authorization to open an investigation concerning crimes falling within the jurisdiction of the Court that may have been committed on its territory.[103]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Strengthen the International Court of Justice through expanded use of the "Optional Clause" and Advisory Opinions

In order to strengthen the ICJ's capacity to advance and safeguard international justice, its compulsory jurisdiction should be expanded through additional "optional clause" declarations by states under Article 36(2) of the International Court of Justice Statute.[104] Given that less than half of the world's countries have made such a declaration, a global campaign could garner and mobilize public support in states not having done so yet, and encourage their governments to consider joining. A "smart coalition" of like-minded states and civil society

Conflict

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Figure 3.3: States Parties to the ICC Rome Statute
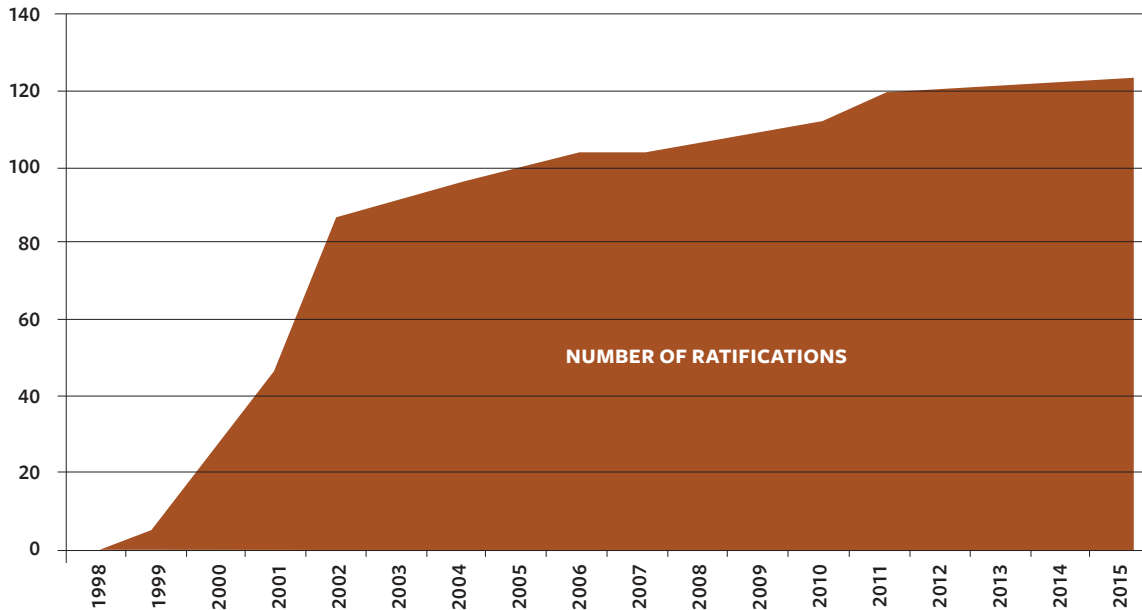
Source: Jo, Hyeran et al., "Assessing the International Criminal Court," 198.

organizations could champion and promote acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction.

Moreover, greater use of the Court's advisory opinions can expand its global reach. Even though non-binding, they carry authoritative weight. The UN Secretary-General, and perhaps other international courts, could be given the option to access advisory opinions via a clear and expedited procedure, submitting their requests through existing channels such as the Security Council or General Assembly, avoiding the need for Charter amendment.[105] Finally, certain procedural reforms, such as instituting single terms for ICJ judges, would safeguard the Court's impartiality and independence.[106]

Strengthen the International Criminal Court through close linkages with the Security Council and Human Rights Council

To strengthen the International Criminal Court's effectiveness and reach, *first*, adopt a protocol or outline factors that could guide the UN Security Council when it deliberates on the referral of a situation to the ICC; *second*, enhance UNSC support for ICC actions against alleged perpetrators, including enforcing ICC arrest warrants, through sanctions (such as

freezing assets); and *third*, encourage regular, scheduled human rights dialogues between the ICC, UNSC, and Human Rights Council. In addition, a comprehensive study should be undertaken to understand why relatively few states in particular regions, such as Asia, have opted to sign the Rome Statute, with an eye to mobilizing greater support worldwide for the ICC.

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In advance of the September 2023 Summit of the Future, "smart coalitions" of like-minded states and civil society organizations—building on the achievements, since 1994, of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court—are needed to further elaborate and mobilize support for these and other proposals to strengthen both the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. The case needs to be made, yet again, that a well-functioning, rules-based international order benefits all nations and peoples; rather than "losing" its sovereignty, a country gains a more just, prosperous, and peaceful world by using its sovereignty, along with other countries, to support the evolution of capable international courts.

3.5 Develop the Secretary-General's Proposed Emergency Platform and Associated UN Rapid Crisis Response Capacities

Recommendation

Stand up a new Emergency Platform within the UN system to better anticipate and prepare for future global shocks and large-scale crises, supported by a proposed Standing Civilian Protection Service to augment UN capacities for peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and humanitarian purposes.

Gaps in Global Governance

Russia's recent illegal invasion of Ukraine and egregious use of its veto to stymie action by the Security Council have caused some of the world body's most ardent champions to lose confidence in the Organization's ability to maintain international peace and security.[107] Unsurprisingly, official calls for Security Council reform have become more widespread and intensified.[108] Meanwhile, with no new UN peacekeeping missions authorized since 2014 and continued pressures to downsize or terminate ongoing ones, this vital conflict management tool—combining military, policing, and civilian capabilities for peace—is currently facing neglect by members of the Security Council.[109]

In his *Our Common Agenda*, Secretary-General António Guterres, reflecting on the socioeconomic knock-on effects from the current pandemic and other crises the UN routinely confronts, identified the lack of "pre-negotiated ways to convene relevant actors in the event of a global economic crisis" as a major gap in global governance, which he later extended to global risks of many types, stressing the need to invest in resilience and prevention, as well as response.[110] Adopting a comprehensive and holistic approach to wider crisis prevention and response—drawing on the capabilities of all governmental actors (at national, regional, and sub-regional levels) and non-state actors (from across civil society and the private sector)—could potentially revolutionize how the international system copes with a range of future political, economic, social, and environmental crises.

At the operational level, while the UN has made important advances in the civilian, policing, and military aspects of peace operations (which include not just peacekeeping but broader humanitarian, human rights monitoring, and development functions/objectives), it remains highly dependent on both voluntary donor aid and Member State contributions of police and military personnel, which can lack the preparation to perform well in fragile and high-risk foreign environments. Moreover, complex peace operations (or "integrated missions") often face logistical constraints, a lack of mobility, insufficient equipment, and poor contextual knowledge and situational awareness, which can hamper mission effectiveness in protecting civilians and providing critical life-saving assistance.[111]

Building and sustaining peace and channeling vital humanitarian aid expeditiously—in response, for instance, to growing instances of political violence worldwide—require greater response capacity in the civilian, policing, and military realms. In the civilian realm, matching growing demand with supply in an innovative, systemic manner was the goal of the UN's Civilian Capacity Initiative (CIVCAP, 2009-14) and "CAPMATCH"—the UN's former online civilian capacity sourcing platform. CAPMATCH afforded, for instance, country-level support to institution-building efforts in Liberia and Côte D'Ivoire.[112] Despite CIVCAP's disbandment and the closure of the CAPMATCH platform, the initiative drew attention to the many shortcomings related to the UN's ability to deploy needed civilian capacities in conflict-affected states.[113]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Adopt the Secretary-General's proposed Emergency Platform

A new Emergency Platform (EP), as sketched in *Our Common Agenda*, could improve the UN system's collective response to specific crises with global reach, regardless of provenance.[114] Once triggered by pre-agreed benchmarks of crisis "scale and magnitude," it would bring together

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> ## *Successful implementation of the SCPS model would stem, in part, from intensive training.*

representatives—from Member States, the UN system, key country groupings, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civic society organizations, the private sector, and subject-specific industries or research bodies—relevant to the declared crisis. Once an emergency has subsided or ended (based on previously agreed criteria), the platform would be deactivated, and the temporary overseeing body dissolved.

To complement effectively the formal emergency management roles of established UN bodies, from the Security Council to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (and its Inter-Agency Standing Committee of field-operational civil society organizations), the Emergency Platform (extending beyond what the Secretary-General has called for in the OCA) could identify gaps in international action to address not only humanitarian emergencies (including fears of a current global food crisis) or violent conflict, but also political crises or threats from new technologies. The EP could convene both the usual and some less traditional entities, within and beyond the UN system, that could play a role in ameliorating a particular crisis. Through careful yet swift, context-sensitive analysis and skillful diplomacy, the Secretary-General and his or her lieutenants could also add-value to existing arrangements by forging, through the platform, an international and multi-stakeholder consensus on the underlying causes of, and the most urgently needed measures to manage and over time resolve, a complex emergency. In addition, the EP would benefit, at the operational level, from the ability to draw upon new rapid response capacities.

Create a Standing Civilian Protection Service

Past Stimson Center reports have spoken to the need for upgrading civilian, policing, and military capabilities in support of UN-led, multi-dimensional peace, development, and humanitarian field-based operations.[115] The Fletcher School's Ian Johnstone recently introduced a related, creative set of ideas for what he termed a "Standing Civilian Protection Service" (SCPS). It entails the creation of a new, permanent, highly trained and mobile component to reinforce existing UN peacekeeping and political missions, as well as respond to support requests from regional organizations. Comprising a total of 2,400 personnel, the SCPS would be organized around twenty "Joint Protection Teams" consisting of approximately 120 civilian, police, and military personnel each.[116]

With an overarching goal of protecting civilians, the Standing Civilian Protection Service could tailor its suite of bespoke services to the unique needs of a challenging, high-threat environment, including dialogue and community engagement; local level conflict resolution facilitation; and proactive support to vulnerable groups.[117] Successful implementation of the SCPS model would stem, in part, from intensive training—undertaken in six to ten hubs worldwide—on both basic protection of civilian tasks and the particular dynamics and context of a situation to which its Joint Protection teams could be deployed.

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Though addressing acute gaps in the international community's architecture for responding to complex global crises, the proposed Emergency Platform and Standing Civilian Protection Service are likely to face resistance from actors within and outside the UN system who might question their comparative advantages, price-tags, and level of interoperability with existing crisis-specific response arrangements. However, next year's Summit of the Future—which will bring together world leaders to consider global governance system-wide improvements—offers the potential to generate requisite political support for these ideas and their subsequent initial proof of concept.

IV. COVID-19, Representation, and Human Rights

4.1 Fight Future Pandemics through a Global Health Threats Council and Pandemic Framework Convention

Recommendation

A Global Health Threats Council should be established to monitor global health risks and coordinate among states and non-state actors for preparation and prevention. It could help draft a Pandemic Framework Convention to clarify the responsibilities of Member States and international organizations and provide a template for future pandemic preparedness and response.

Gaps in Global Governance

The devastations brought by the COVID-19 pandemic are testimony to the acute governance gap in the global health system and call for the world to reflect on best fit policy practices in preparation for future pandemic response. Having failed to build up national, regional, and global resilience, the international community was caught off guard by the highly contagious virus and its rapid evolution. With no multilateral mechanism in place to ensure and coordinate equal access, many countries were locked in a cutthroat competition for essential medical supplies often to the detriment of developing nations.[118]

COVID-19 vaccine distribution has neither been adequate nor equitable (see figure 4.1). The world is still far from the World Health Organization's target of vaccinating 70 percent of the world's total population by mid-2022. Only 13 percent of people in low-income countries have been vaccinated, compared with almost 70 percent in high-income ones—largely the result of rich countries hoarding and prioritizing their own populations.[119] Last year, for instance, the U.S. and European countries proceeded with administering booster shots despite pleas from the WHO to hold this off until the developing world has had sufficient access.[120] The UN-partnered COVAX initiative has made some progress in closing the vaccine equity gap, but it has been plagued by a lack of effective leadership

and insufficient funding from major countries.[121] Worse still, vaccine donations have been used by some countries as a tool to extend diplomatic influence.[122]

The pandemic's heavy health cost runs parallel to many broader socioeconomic setbacks. According to a World Bank report in October 2021, 97 million more people experienced extreme poverty due to the pandemic, and an estimated three-to-four years of progress on poverty eradication have been lost.[123] Developing countries in particular are experiencing weaker recovery from COVID-19 due to slower vaccination and tighter fiscal and monetary policies.[124] Finally, the pandemic has been exploited by authoritarian governments to consolidate power and curtail civil liberties.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Prepare for Future Pandemics through a Global Health Threats Council

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, established by WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus, has recommended establishing a Global Health Threats Council to address what the panel describes as "a leadership vacuum at the global level."[125] Comprising Heads of State or Government and representatives from the private sector and civil society, this high-level political leadership body would galvanize collaborative global efforts to support the work of key partners, including the WHO, UN, IMF, regional development banks, civil society, and the private sector.

The Global Health Threats Council's main role would be to sustain high-level political leadership and attention on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response between emergencies. To that end, it would monitor progress on pandemic preparedness, hold states and multilateral

Figure 4.1: COVID-19 Vaccine Administration by Country Income Group
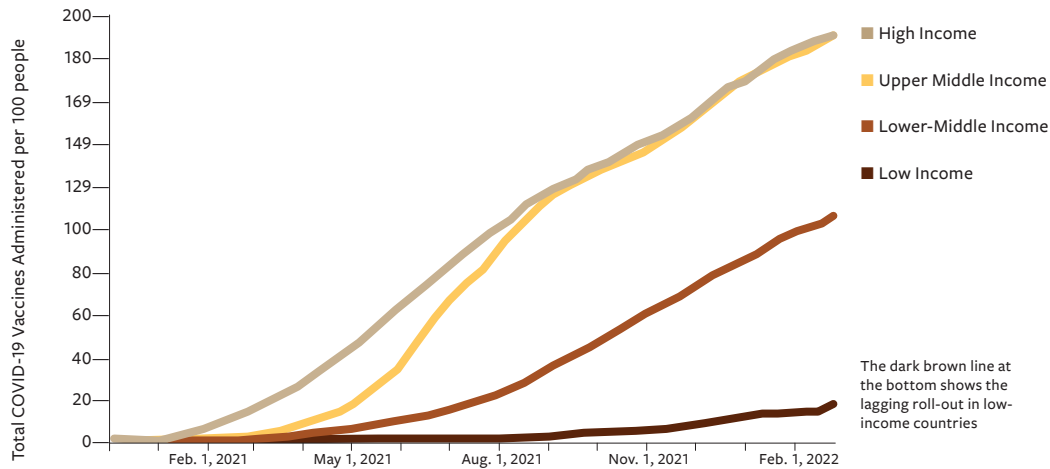
Source: UNDP, "Global Dashboard for Vaccine Equity," using data from Our World in Data.

actors accountable, draw attention to preparedness and response gaps through high-level advocacy, and guide the allocation of resources from relevant financing institutions to support capacities development.[126] The Council would be informed by evidence-based data and analytical work done by international organizations, such as the universal periodic peer review of pandemic preparedness and response capacities—a new scheme already piloted by the WHO.[127]

Adopt a Pandemic Framework Convention for Preparedness and Response

Drawing on lessons from the past two and one-half years, the proposed Global Health Threats Council, with the help of the WHO and other institutions, could draft a Pandemic Framework Convention to provide an international instrument for pandemic preparedness and response.

The convention would clarify the leadership roles of UN Member States and international organizations in global health emergencies. It should support stronger coordination through the WHO as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work, and further establish priorities and measurable targets for pandemic preparedness and resilience, for countries which the Global Health Threats Council could monitor. Early warning and reporting for potential pandemics could be based on the existing global information sharing mechanism established by the 2005 International Health Regulations.[128] It should also establish a framework to ensure universal and equitable access to medical resources necessary for pandemic preparedness and response.

Finally, the proposed convention should address the socioeconomic effects of pandemics. For instance, it could introduce and formalize measures to mitigate the pandemic's economic repercussions on poor countries, such as suspension of debt repayment obligations. It could also further declare that pandemic response will not be used as a pretext for human rights infringement and political repression, as well as provide guidelines on how government and international institutions can maintain the public's trust so critical during health emergencies.

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The easing of public health measures in advanced economies has drawn public attention away from COVID-19. Nevertheless, the pandemic continues through its variants and sub-variants, and the world remains largely unprepared for future pandemics. Among major upcoming intergovernmental gatherings, the G20 Summit, scheduled for November 2022 in Indonesia, provides an excellent opportunity to discuss, in the run-up to next year's Summit of the Future, future pandemic preparedness and response with an eye toward the above, far-reaching reform proposals.

4.2 Strengthen the UN Human Rights Council and Human Rights Treaty Monitoring System to Better Protect People

Recommendation

The UN Human Rights Council and Human Rights Treaty Monitoring System should be strengthened by opening the Council's elections to greater scrutiny; increasing accountability of Council members through a code of conduct; enhancing enforcement of its decisions by expanding cooperation with international human rights courts; and ensuring meaningful consultation with a wider range of civil society organizations.

Gaps in Global Governance

Racism, inequality, and a surge of xenophobic rhetoric exerted pressure on multilateral institutions even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, over the past years, countries experiencing rising authoritarianism and democratic backsliding outnumbered those leaning more towards democracy, and an estimated 85 percent of the world's population experienced a decline in the rule of law.[129] The "shadow pandemic"—the sociopolitical impact of COVID-19—has resulted in sealing state borders, trapping migrants, and propelling a rise in gender-based violence.[130] In the process, some states have abused their emergency powers and failed to ensure that human rights restrictions were proportionate, necessary, and non-discriminatory.[131]

The Human Rights Council has also closely monitored the war in Ukraine, discussing the situation during its sessions, providing updates on civilian casualties, and establishing a Commission of Inquiry on the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine—despite Russia's no vote just prior to its suspension from the Council. However, its concerted efforts have not precluded massive human rights violations.[132]

Membership and elections to the HRC are, for the most part, diplomatic exercises with little attention paid to the quality of human rights records of its members. The narrow pursuit of national interests and the absence of a code of conduct for its members limit the HRC's ability to act efficiently and authoritatively. Power politics within the HRC can potentially lead to polarization—often triggered through regional alliances—thereby impeding its ability to act and react to urgent issues of human rights abuses, replicating the problems that plagued its predecessor Commission on Human Rights.[133] The history of the HRC membership remains controversial, as states with unsatisfactory human rights records have been able, in many cases, to secure a seat (see figure 4.2).

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Improve Elections and Increase Accountability of the HRC's members

Transparent, clear, accountable, and non-biased human rights-based criteria for membership on the HRC are vital for its credibility. To address politicization, it should increase scrutiny of prospective members by improving the transparency of its elections, with members casting votes in an open ballot system, exposing possible collusion. For each open seat, regional coalitions should be required to propose at least two candidates who have overall positive human rights

COVID-19

> *Membership and elections to the HRC are, for the most part, diplomatic exercises with little attention paid to the quality of human rights records of its members.*

Figure 4.2: Map highlighting the Global Freedom Status and current membership at the HRC
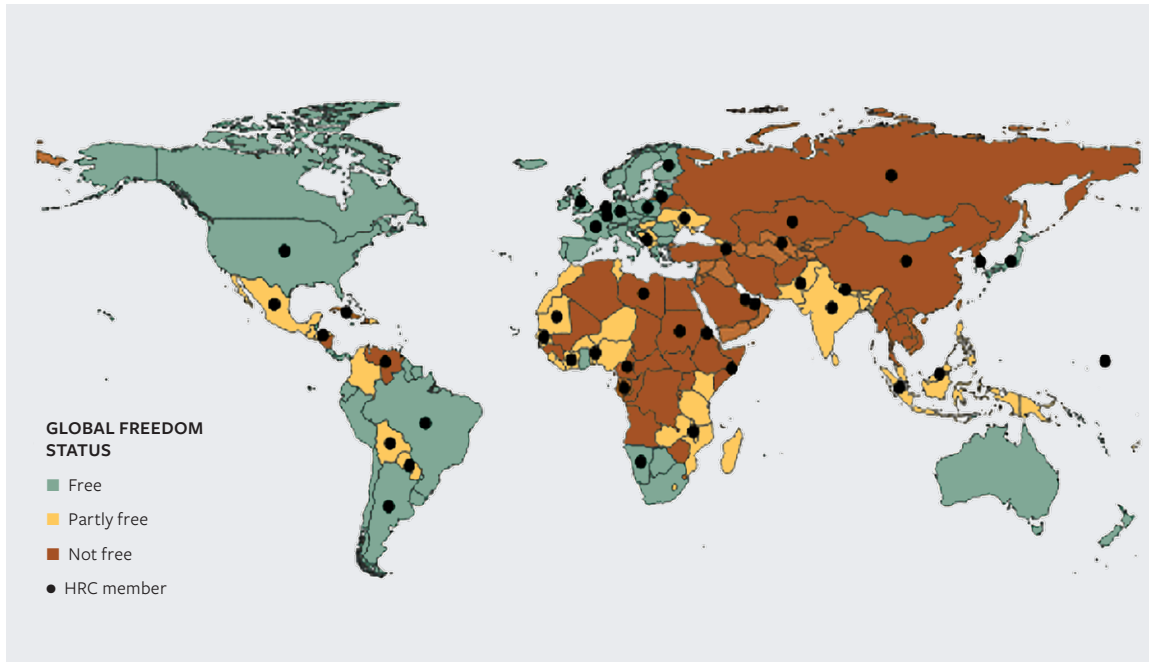
Source: Freedom House, "Countries and Territories." United Nations Human Rights Council, "Membership [for 2022]." Data as of April 1, 2022

records or at least show a positive trend in that direction.

To verify such records or progress, the HRC should develop a global database for all past, present, and future members of the Human Rights Council.[134] To increase the accountability of elected candidates, the HRC should enact a member code of conduct, entailing greater reporting requirements, an expressed consent to fact-finding missions to investigate allegations of human rights abuse, and—if human rights violations are confirmed—automatic temporary suspension, while permanent suspension would remain at the discretion of the General Assembly.

Strengthen the HRC's Interaction with International Courts and Civil Society

Strengthened cooperation of the Human Rights Council with international and regional courts, as well as civil society organizations, would improve the credibility and enforcement of its decisions. Regional human rights courts (including those in Africa, the Americas, and Europe) could serve as an entry point for this reform by allowing the HRC to refer cases to them. In this case, the HRC could act as an interceder, while

attracting the international community's attention to a human rights violation. The HRC should further increase the participation of civil society organizations, including and especially from the Global South, by inviting organizations that possess significant information on rights-related subjects to participate in its sessions, even if these institutions do not have ECOSOC consultative status.[135] Their enhanced participation would ensure ground-level, up-to-date information, and that all voices are heard.

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None of these proposals jeopardizes the intergovernmental nature of the Human Rights Council, as its decisions are made solely by its members rather than non-governmental organizations. Even though some governments, especially those with unsatisfactory human rights records, might oppose reform, next year's 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Summit of the Future could, together, generate significant momentum for positive changes, as prescribed above.

4.3 Bring New Voices into UN Decision-Making through a High-Level Civil Society Champion

Recommendation

To make the United Nations more "people-centric," we suggest a High-Level Civil Society Champion or Envoy who works across the UN system to increase civil society's contribution to policymaking and implementation. Specific interventions are increasing the capacity of civil society groups to engage effectively with Member States, improving UN agency standards to address bottlenecks to civil society participation, and championing new voices from the Global South and younger generations.

Gaps in Global Governance

The United Nations has long been involved in activities that transcend national borders (refugees support, disease eradication, and more). UN agencies and personnel rely heavily on civil society to deliver on their mandates. Yet, huge gaps remain in formal engagement with civil society at the policy level. Arguably, the general approach, especially in the Global South, has been to view civil society as an implementer rather than key stakeholder in the spirit of inclusive multilateralism.

Calls for "genuine partnership" of the UN with civil society date from as early as 1987, and rising again, from 1997-2003, when Gillian Sorensen served as Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations.[136] Following her departure, a 2004 Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations Civil Society Relations convened by Kofi Annan recommended that the UN establish a new Under Secretary-General in charge of a new Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships.[137] While this proposal was never implemented, the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service works within the civil society unit of the UN Department of Global Communications to coordinate engagement with civil society organizations (including those non-accredited) for events organized by the Secretariat, including the President of the General Assembly's recent five-part thematic consultations on *Our Common Agenda*.[138]

Despite these efforts, crucial gaps exist in the UN's engagement with civil society. Notably, global civic space conditions for civil society participation at home remain challenging. According to the CIVICUS Monitor, a participatory research platform, just 3.1 percent of the world's population live in countries where civic space is robustly assured, which CIVICUS rates as "open."[139] There are also serious asymmetries in how UN agencies and offices engage with civil society. For example, OHCHR has seven handbooks on civil society engagement and best practices, and UN Women has a dedicated multi-level roster of Civil Society Advisory Groups.[140] At the same time, other UN bodies have limited modalities for meaningful engagement with civil society. Moreover, many of the civil society organizations which do engage with the UN on policy through consultative status or otherwise tend to be from the Global North, where most major UN bodies are located.[141]

The Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* acknowledges the important role of civil society in more inclusive and networked multilateralism and calls for an "updated resolution" and "general review" of civil society participation modalities.[142] Further, it calls for an annual civil society caucus and urges UN agencies to establish civil society focal points (in case they have not done so already). However, it misses

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The general approach has been to view civil society as an implementer rather than key stakeholder in the spirit of inclusive multilateralism.

COVID-19

Box 4.1: Priority areas for a Civil Society Champion

1 **Increase the capacity of civil society groups to engage UN Member States more effectively** by supporting local, regional, and global civic forums through promotion, spotlighting, and encouraging and sharing best practices across civil society organizations.

2 **Improve the standards of civil society engagement across all relevant UN System bodies**, including by learning from organizational best practices to develop a framework for effective co-creation between civil society groups and the Secretary General's proposed civil society focal points. This could provide a baseline against which UN agencies may develop their own civic relationships, much akin to the Youth2030 framework's role in establishing best practices for the UN's youth engagement.

3 **Champion new voices at the UN**, by actively bringing conversations on inclusive multilateralism to the Global South, women, youth, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups. This is a critical step for the UN's civic engagement to move beyond the Global North and an often "New York-centric bubble."

Sources: Guterres, Our Common Agenda, 79; Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Youth 2030.

the opportunity of recommending a UN-wide Champion or Envoy to connect civil society focal points and drive better outreach.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Establish a High-Level Civil Society Champion to bring New Voices into UN Decision-Making

Building on the earlier work of Together First, UNA-UK, CIVICUS, the Coalition for the UN We Need, and others in civil society, the position of Champion or Envoy for Global Civil Society should be created at the Under- or Assistant-Secretary-General-level and based outside the Executive-Office of the Secretary-General. At the same time, this new high-level post should work closely with the Secretary-General and other UN bodies—in much the same way as the UN Youth Envoy currently operates.[143] An initially small support staff should have a clear pathway for future expansion, funded by groups of voluntary donors, with some checks and balances to avoid catering to preferences of the largest donor (see Overview 6.4 for ideas on a related Global Funding Compact).

The Champion must have clearly defined priorities, even if its mandate remains flexible. Three

key priority areas stand out to close the gap in civic engagement at the UN (see box 4.1).

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The challenges to this proposal have come, surprisingly, from the parts of the UN system that currently engage with civil society the most. There is concern of "focal point syndrome" and the introduction of "UN Central" views, or that a High-Level Champion will undermine the work being done by individual agencies, diminishing their existing value to civil society clients. The work of the present Youth Envoy's office, while commendable given the limited resources and extensive mandate, is an example of the difficulty a UN-wide Champion faces when advocating across the UN System (see Overview 4.4). Importantly, a Civil Society Champion must serve not simply as a "focal point," but as a pro-active liaison between civil society and the UN, championing progressive systemwide practices that fully tap the ideas, networks, and capabilities of civil society in the service of the UN's work for peace, sustainable development, and human rights.

4.4 Engage with and Empower Young People through a UN Youth Office and Council

Recommendation

Taking forward UN75 Declaration commitment #11 and the Youth2030 Framework depends on expanding youth representation in politics and decision-making across the UN system, by establishing a well-resourced UN Youth Office, and standing-up a dynamic, representative, and strategic UN Youth Council, as an integral part of the new Office's mandate.

Gaps in Global Governance

The history of youth representation and action at the UN has been ad hoc and halting. From the 1965 "Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples" to, three decades later, the "World Programme of Action for Youth," and, a further two decades on, the Security Council's Resolution 2250 on "Youth Peace and Security," UN commitments to young people represent reflexive responses to political circumstances rather than serious consideration of how youth experience inequality, poor governance, and conflict.[144]

More recently, youth advisory groups, ambassadors, delegates, representatives, and leaders have cropped up across UN agencies, missions, and units to offer new opportunities for engagement by young people. Moreover, the creation of the Youth2030 Framework in 2018, led by the UN Youth Envoy's Office, signaled a genuine effort toward making the UN more accessible to youth, and setting some baseline standard for youth engagement across the UN.[145] However, without administrative coordination across the system, several gaps in youth engagement persist:

First, the UN Youth Envoy, while the chief representative of young people across the UN, must raise her own funds and receives limited institutional and administrative support to engage with the different youth constituents working across the UN System.

Second, excessive jargon, gatekeeping, financial and language barriers, and dis-enfranchisement due to tokenism prevent even the most well-informed and institutionally supported young people (such as UN Major Group on Youth and Children participants) from meaningfully contributing to high-level UN decision-making.

Third, the level of youth engagement in the UN (at headquarters and the country-level) is almost entirely dependent on the emphasis that a Member State places on involving its youth in the UN agenda. Moreover, there is no formal knowledge management platform to connect youth to one another or to youth groups outside the UN. Given the lack of integration and entry points, work is often repeated or underutilized.[146]

Fourth, there is little institutional accountability to the Youth2030 Framework beyond the two progress reports that have been released at ECOSOC Youth Forums 2021 and 2022.[147]

The *Our Common Agenda* report calls for the creation of a UN Youth Office to "increase youth representation at the UN."[148] While this could represent an important milestone for the UN, the establishment of such a structure must be designed carefully to avoid the above pitfalls.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Establish a Well-Resourced UN Youth Office

A UN Youth Office should consider three central objectives. *First,* "youth" are not one homogenous group. Therefore, the new Office should integrate the work and knowledge of diverse youth constituencies, from youth advisory groups to youth representatives of Member States and civil society groups, for effective engagement across the UN system, nurturing a self-learning community of practice.[149] *Second,* it should translate the wide array of global goals and agendas (for example the SDGs, Paris Climate Agreement, OCA, and UN75

Table 4.1: An Illustration of potential youth representation and empowerment at the UN

	YOUTH OFFICE	YOUTH COUNCIL	ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM	YOUTH ENVOY
Mandate	Decrease barriers to entry and integrate the work of youth across the UN System	Increase accountability to the Youth2030 Framework, with an action-oriented Steering Committee of 15-20 nominated representatives	Annual global convening of diverse youth and stocktaking on the Youth2030 Framework	Champion the meaningful participation of young people at the UN
Value-Add	Institutional knowledge management and dedicated administrative body for youth participation in the UN system	Effective coordination among representatives on strategic approaches to goals set by and for young people; a clear entry point into high-level UN decision-making	An inclusive forum that provides a space for generating ideas and representing diverse youth voices	An advocate for bringing peripheral agendas and voices to the center of UN policy discourse

Source: Original Table, Stimson Center

Declaration) into digestible calls to action for youth at community, national and regional levels.[150] *Third*, representation of youth in politics and global decision-making should be expanded, and a clear entry point created for youth engagement with the UN, facilitated by establishing a UN Youth Council. These three steps would, in effect, increase UN accountability to youth. After almost a decade of a UN Youth Envoy responsible for mobilizing its operational resources, a degree of financial sustainability must be a baseline upon which the new Youth Office is built.

Create a Dynamic, Representative, and Strategic UN Youth Council

Building on existing policy proposals, a UN Youth Council could deliberate on and conceive of strategies to advance the Youth2030 Framework.[151] The current framework has clear goals, but with little said on how to get from point A to B. Moreover, there are few entry points for young people and those working with youth with potential knowledge of such strategies to engage in high-level UN decision-making conversations. Established by the UN Youth Office, and bringing together representatives nominated across agencies such as the UN Major Group on Children and Youth, UN Women, the UNDP Community of

Practices, UNFCCC, civil society networks, and national or regional youth ambassadors, the UN Youth Council would complement the stock-taking role of the ECOSOC Youth Forum and serve as a steering committee for the Youth 2030 Framework's implementation. Table 4.1 illustrates the proposed complementary and reinforcing UN Youth Office, Youth Council, ECOSOC Youth Forum and the Youth Envoy.

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While the UN and Member States share an appreciation for effective youth engagement, proposed methods to achieve this in practice have met significant resistance. As raised by Member States in recent PGA thematic consultations on *Our Common Agenda*, the scarcity of resources as the world builds back from the pandemic suggests an early focus on establishing no more than a lightly-staffed UN Youth Office, with a clear pathway for future expansion and including the creation of a UN Youth Council. With support of champion governments and UN Missions eager to take forward UN-Youth strengthening proposals, it is important to invest in entry points now for youth voices seeking to feed into the September 2023 Summit of the Future, the UN Youth Envoy's Report, and the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.

4.5 Foster Intergenerational Equity through a Declaration on, and Special Envoy for, Future Generations

Recommendation

As no office or institution with a global perspective, remit, or reach now speaks for or promotes the interests of future generations, a UN Declaration on Future Generations should be crafted and a Special Envoy for Future Generations established to promote and help ensure that future generations inherit a healthy planet.

Gaps in Global Governance

Future generations will be key beneficiaries—or victims—of decisions made in the next few years. The interests of the projected 10.9 billion people to be born in the 21st century therefore must be accounted for in current policy and decision-making.[152]

One of the major threats to future generations is the international system's pronounced tendency towards short-term thinking and decision-making. This tendency, exacerbated by short-term political pressures, can aggravate the issues that future generations will face, from climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution to nuclear weapons proliferation, new pandemics, economic inequality, and political instability.

Uncertainties, of course, abound. While we can project numbers and estimate needs of future generations, the only thing known for sure is that they lack a voice. Though future generations-oriented institutions have been tested at the national level, most—with a few notable exceptions—have had limited impact or lasted only a few years. Such national institutions need support from international institutions, including to help them better contend with global demographic trends, which indicate that 71 percent of people born by the end of the century will be born into low- or middle-income countries, helping to only intensify global inequality.[153]

As it stands, however, no global governance actor, among international organizations, governments, or civil society organizations, represents

future generations.[154] The burden we face need not be one of optimization, but simply to ensure we do not irretrievably foreclose the possibilities of future generations. Without any accountability mechanisms, leaders can, sometimes inadvertently, make decisions to the detriment of future generations, especially when it comes to slowing down and reversing the effects of climate change. Furthermore, while UNESCO drafted, in 1997, a Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations that set out some critical needs of future generations, the world is rapidly changing and, along with it, the kinds of issues and realities future generations will have to someday confront.[155]

Our Common Agenda calls unequivocally for intergenerational solidarity and collective action to safeguard the future for people, the planet, prosperity, and peace.[156] In anticipating and addressing global risks, national and international policymakers must take into account the effects of their decisions on future generations. By doing so, future generations will be well-positioned to not only survive, but to thrive in conditions conducive to seizing opportunities, achieving their full potential, and meeting both individual and communal aspirations.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Forge a Declaration on Future Generations

UN Secretary-General António Guterres conceived of a Declaration on Future Generations to further promote intergenerational equity and to ensure long-term, strategic thinking in the present. This Declaration should outline the legal rights and interests of future generations, as well as the moral and political commitments that current generations should fulfill, especially concerning rights and commitments to pass on a habitable planet. It should also address socioeconomic and political principles, such as peace, equal access to high-quality education, meaningful work, and the right to a healthy planet.[157] Enshrining such principles

COVID-19

Figure 4.3: Welsh National Well-being Indicators Framework
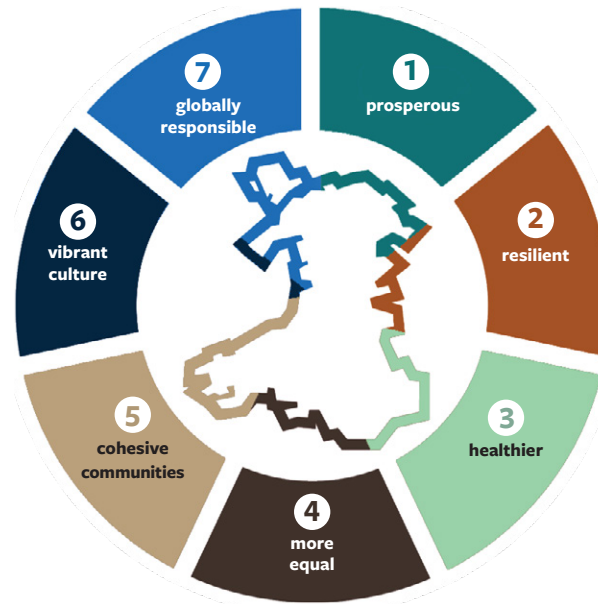
Source: Welsh Government, "Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015". (2015).

in the declaration would, in turn, offer guidance to leaders in crafting their own countries' responsibilities and legal, moral, and political obligations to future generations. All Member States should sign and honor the Declaration and endow a specific UN office (see below) with the authority to oversee and facilitate its implementation. This will help to mainstream the interests of future generations into current policymaking.

Establish a United Nations Special Envoy for Future Generations

First and foremost, the Special Envoy should work with the signatories to the Declaration on Future Generations and help to ensure their and the UN system's accountability for fulfilling commitments made in the Declaration. The Special Envoy should be appointed by the UN Secretary-General to a five-year term of office (with the possibility of renewal) at the Under-Secretary-General level, and she or he should have sufficient support staff to effectively carry out the mission of the office. The Special Envoy could convene annually with relevant parties, including representatives from UN Member States and agencies, to discuss and review implementation of the Declaration. Together,

they should also pay attention to tracking and monitoring objectives, national indicators, and future trends, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in connection with the Declaration. For instance, the Welsh government has developed a national well-being indicators framework for its Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which could serve as one model for tracking progress (figure 4.3).[158]

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Embracing uncertainty, the international community must invest in future peace and security, work to preserve the Global Commons, and deliver critical global public goods for the benefit of future generations as much as our own. All nations should strive to accommodate the interests of future generations in national strategies by devising national road maps for safeguarding people's security, combating climate change, and meeting essential socio-economic needs. They could present these nationally-tailored strategies at the Summit of the Future, in September 2023, helping to embed forward-looking ideas in national policymaking, while reinforcing the global Declaration and Special Envoy in support of future generations.

V. Climate Action and Governing the Global Commons

5.1 Repurpose the Trusteeship Council to Better Govern the Global Commons

Recommendation

The Global Commons—comprising the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica, outer space and, increasingly, cyberspace—surrounds, supports, and sustains our world's ecosystem and is vital to our economic prosperity. The international community should repurpose the United Nations' all-but-defunct Trusteeship Council to exercise a new, carefully shaped role as a steward of the Global Commons, with a view to enhancing intergenerational equity and the well-being of future generations.

Gaps in Global Governance

The Global Commons forms the basis of our ecosystem and, beyond any national jurisdiction, belongs to and benefits the whole of humanity. Some of the conventionally understood commons include the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica, and outer space.

All of these elements of the Global Commons are now under threat. Pollution and ocean acidification have degraded maritime biodiversity, and 34 percent of global fish stocks are now being overfished (see figure 5.1).[159] The connection between atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions and climate warming is now well-known and studied closely. Orbital debris is at a historic high, posing threats to space operations.[160] Even Antarctica's iconic glaciers and ecosystem are in peril due to global warming and overfishing.[161] More worryingly, renewed geopolitical competition has made the commons a contested domain, as manifested in maritime disputes and the militarization of outer space.[162]

The crisis facing the Global Commons reflects an acute governance gap. Governing the commons is inherently complex, due to competing stakeholders' reluctance to pay the costs of maintaining it while foregoing the gains of exploiting it.[163] International legal frameworks governing the commons are limited or non-existent in terms of regulating overfishing, deep sea mining, space debris, and air pollution. And there is no dedicated supervisory—let alone regulatory—body overseeing access to and use of the commons, or coordinating dialogue between stakeholders.

Lastly, the Global Commons governance gap represents a form of intergenerational inequality. Unrepresented in today's decision-making and unable to articulate their needs, future generations are subject to the consequences of today's policy mistakes.[164] Better managing and protecting the commons would take into account their interests, in accordance with the principle of intergenerational equity.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Repurpose the Trusteeship Council as a Steward of the Global Commons

The international community should consider repurposing the all-but-defunct Trusteeship Council to manage and protect the Global Commons. The Trusteeship Council, a principal UN organ, was originally created to oversee the transition of colonies to independence. But its activities have been suspended since 1994, when Palau gained independence. The idea of repurposing it to focus on the commons was first raised by the Commission on Global Governance in its 1995 report, *Our Global Neighborhood*.[165] It was also endorsed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan's *Programme for Reform* in 1997.[166] The proposal gained momentum recently after it was suggested again in *Our Common Agenda*.

To protect the Global Commons and ensure its sustainable use, the repurposed Council should be given the mandate to exercise collective trusteeship over major elements of the

Climate

Figure 5.1: Status of the World's Fish Stocks

Fish stocks are overexploited when fish catch exceeds the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) — the rate at which fish populations can regenerate.
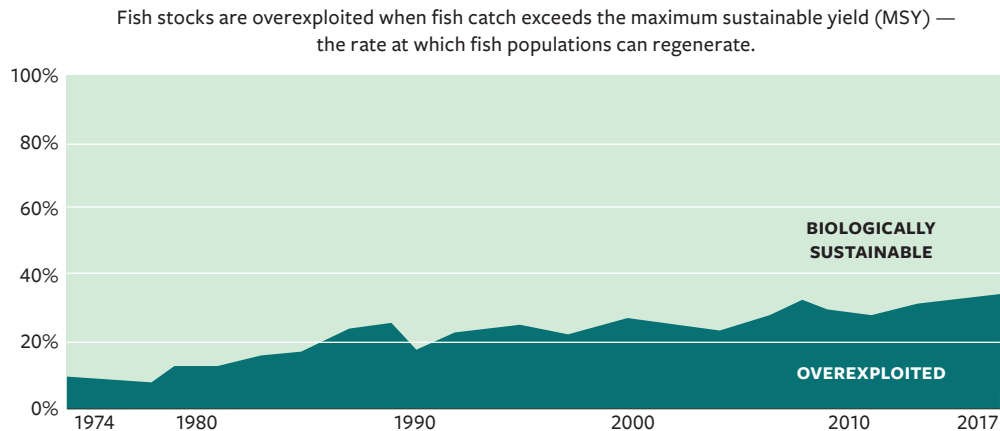
Source: Hannah Ritchie and Max Rose, "Fish and Overfishing," Our World in Data, 2021.

commons. Acting as a deliberative forum, the revitalized Trusteeship Council would consider reports or petitions on steps to protect the Global Commons submitted by Member States, UN specialized agencies and programs, and accredited civil society groups. The revamped Council would also monitor the use and protection of the commons, oversee compliance with relevant international laws, and report any infringement thereof to the General Assembly.

The repurposed Trusteeship Council should remain a UN principal organ, giving its role significant status and enhancing its convening power. The new Council would also help to foster system-wide coherence among a wide array of UN agencies and programs currently working on the Global Commons (including the UN Environment Programme, ECOSOC, the UNFCCC Secretariat, and other bodies). The repurposed Council should embody a new multilateral governance model that goes beyond the traditional state-centric framework—something needed if the world wishes to protect the resource and operational domains that lie beyond the sovereignty of any state but within the reach of many.

Protect Youth and Future Generations' Interests through the Trusteeship Council

The *Our Common Agenda* report highlighted the lack of representation for young people and future generations in today's global decision-making and their consequent inability to have their case made effectively in international forums. Among other proposals to address the interests of youth and future generations, *Our Common Agenda* recommends that the Trusteeship Council act on behalf of those future generations and account for their interests.[167]

Protecting and ensuring the sustainable use of the Global Commons is crucial to advancing intergenerational equity. In approaching the long-term governance of the Global Commons, the repurposed Trusteeship Council should make protecting the interests of future generations a guiding principle. It could further work closely with the proposed UN Youth Council and Special Envoy on Future Generations (see Overviews 4.4 and 4.5) to give voice to present younger and future generations.

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In preparation for the anticipated 2023 Summit of the Future, the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism offers a unique opportunity to further develop the idea of a repurposed Trusteeship Council for stewardship of the Global Commons. Still, the proposal is likely to encounter resistance from Member States who have different conceptions of the Global Commons and global public goods, who see mostly the value of the resources to be exploited, or believe, somehow, that the Trusteeship Council remains tied to colonialism—even though it, in fact, played a central role in accelerating decolonization.

5.2 Rethink the UNFCCC and COPs for Enhanced Climate Governance

Recommendation

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) should promote greater participation in decision-making by all signatory states regardless of size or status. Enhanced non-state and sub-national actor participation is also needed to ensure stricter multilateral climate agreement accountability.

Gaps in Global Governance

Parties to the UNFCCC have failed to curtail global carbon dioxide emissions, the main driver of climate change, in the thirty years since its creation.[168] Likewise, there is a major gap in the international funding needed to meet the 1.5C goal (see figure 5.2). This stems, in part, from a gap in accountability at the international level that must be bridged to bring about the necessary changes in human behavior to control climate change. At the annual COPs, decisions can only be made with consensus, essentially giving all countries veto power in any agreement. States that depend on large-scale fossil fuel production, or countries with large emissions deemed necessary for economic growth, have a vested interest in blunting any serious measures to constrain fossil fuels.[169]

COP decisions can establish collective goals, standards, and rules to enable more effective action and cooperation among governments, but implementation rests with governments and private-sector stakeholders. With limited mechanisms for accountability, there is little that holds countries to meet their net zero carbon emission targets for 2030.

More can be done to influence countries having modest 2030 targets to review their emission reduction plans. Crucially, effective leadership by large emitter countries at successive COPs rests on strong climate policies domestically. States such as the UK, China, and the U.S. should build the credibility and authority to encourage others to do more by mirroring it in their own robust actions at home. Globally, climate finance is growing, but only slowly.

Developed countries have yet to meet the Paris Agreement climate finance-pledge of U.S. $100 billion per year.[170] This deficit is cause for concern, especially as we have not yet seen COVID-19's full impact on climate finance.

An effective low carbon future depends on Member States following through on their commitments. Thus far, sub-national governments and non-state actors have proven to be more likely to do so. For example, while the national government of Brazil does not see climate change as a top priority, Brazilian states and municipalities have developed important interventions to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and begin to adapt. After all, it is the local governments that are most directly responsible for the quality of life of their population.[171]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Create Mechanisms for Better Decision-making at COP Summits

The ultimate goal of climate action over the medium to long-term is achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. One of the Paris agreement's characteristics contributing to its wide acceptance was its voluntary, non-binding nature for Member States, and another was its consensus decision-making. It would be extremely difficult to make the Paris commitments legally and politically binding on all signatories. Nevertheless, the parties to the UNFCCC should consider adopting a system of formal voting on all substantive decisions at the annual COPs, similar to UN General Assembly rules of procedure. States that do not have a deep stake in fossil fuel production but do have a stake in survival and prosperity, now and in the future, could create a sort of pro-compliance insurgency within the scope of the Paris agreement. This would allow decisions, such as the near-unanimous agreement at COP26 to phase out coal production, to be adopted by the world's majority without being thwarted by a holdout minority. This, in turn, would send a stronger signal to countries, investors, and civil society that the parties to UNFCCC are serious about the threat of climate change.

Climate

**Figure 5.2: Global Tracked Climate Finance Flows and the
Average Estimated Annual Climate Investment Need Through 2050**

USD billion

■ Actual climate finance　■ Future climate finance necessary to maintain 1.5° C pathway
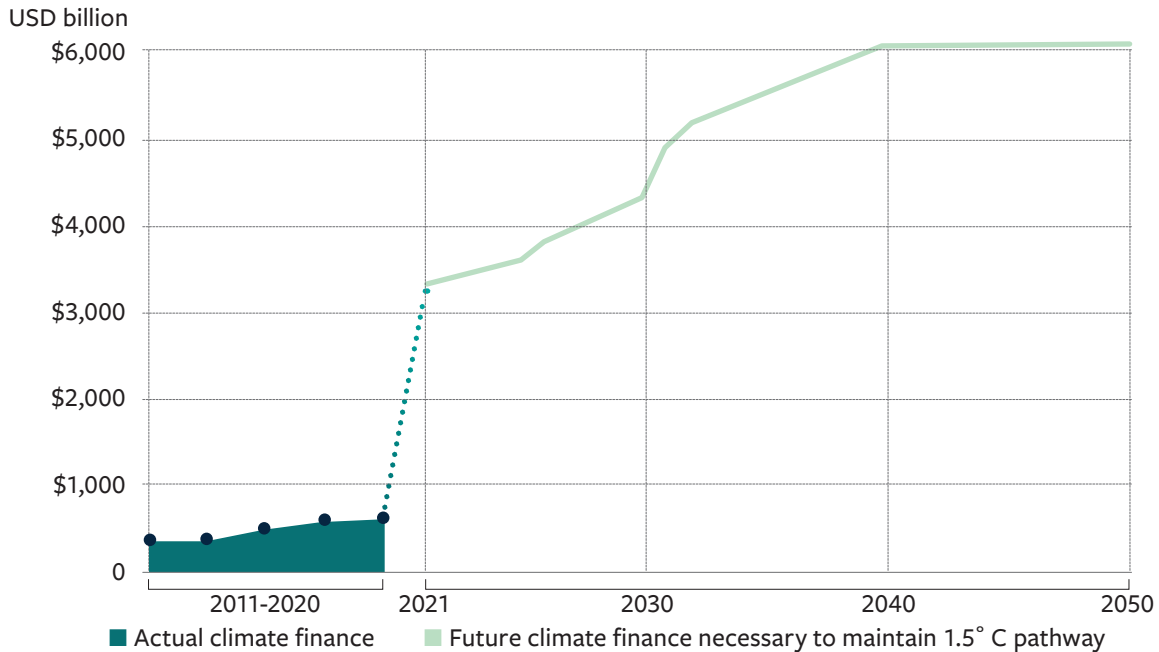
Source: Climate Policy Initiative, *Global Landscape of Climate Finance* 2021.

Foster Local Climate Initiatives

Non-party stakeholders to the UNFCCC, such as sub-national entities, other international organizations, civil society, academic institutions, and businesses, can supplement Member States' efforts, thereby enhancing ambition, supporting transparency, and enabling accountability.[172] In recent years, groups of cities have taken it upon themselves, with the help of international organizations, to form collaborative networks that leverage collective knowledge and strategically target at-risk areas with high-reward ideas. Programs like the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, whose members are home to eighteen percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)-Local Governments for Sustainability, which supports urban planning and conferences for hundreds of local governments, represent important examples.[173] Collaboration between multiple platforms that orchestrate climate action could improve flexibility and effectiveness of governance practices, and help generate outcomes that are considered more than just trade-offs between different aspects of sustainable development.[174] Though smaller in scale, locally-led Climate Action Plans could complement the UNFCCC in achieving emission targets.

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With the lead-up to the September 2023 Summit of the Future, and next year's COP28 meeting in the United Arab Emirates, there is a window of opportunity to make significant headway in combating climate change. Although the annual COPs currently appear hindered by their own inner workings, they remain a valuable platform, with an overwhelming number of participants committed to their renewed and updated goals each year. With necessary structural reforms, the UNFCCC framework and the COPs can foster ever greater cooperation in dealing with an ever more urgent collective global threat.

5.3 Manage and Regenerate Natural Resources through Global Forestry Governance

Recommendation

A new Global Forest Management Body operating on the principles of Multilateral, Effective, Sustainable & Holistic (M.E.S.H.) Governance would facilitate interaction between local, national, and regional levels of forest governance, and provide guidance on government engagement with non-state actors.

Gaps in Global Governance

Despite the fact that forests account for 80 percent of all biodiversity on the planet and act as a critical vehicle for the capture of CO_2, the issue of deforestation is only briefly touched upon in *Our Common Agenda*.[175] Notwithstanding the existence of 40-plus governance instruments (see table 5.1), global deforestation has increased in recent years, including during the pandemic. For example, between August 2019 and May 2020, Brazil experienced a 72 percent increase in deforestation compared to the previous year.[176] The COVID-19 pandemic has additionally affected forest conservation and management efforts through budget cuts and lax policy enforcements, as in Mexico and Ecuador, which announced cuts with direct implications on ministries enforcing climate regulations; adverse effects have followed from surging demand for commodities and lax regulation by consumer states, such as the U.S., some European countries, and China.[177]

Furthermore, the existing global governance architecture surrounding forests is weak,

fragmented, and inefficient.[178] The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, which brought together 172 countries to address the unsustainable global use of natural resources, failed to deliver a global forest treaty, due to powerful industry lobbies and mobilization in favor of national sovereignty by a number of key states. Moreover, following the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (adopted by only a subset of UN Member States), interstate agreements on climate issues have been nonbinding, leading to an absence of strong enforcement mechanisms.[179] At the national level, institutional structures and specific roles are ill-defined or have weak capacity, and the presence of silos in domestic ministries and agencies hinders efforts to prevent deforestation even further.[180] Despite the proliferation of global forestry governance instruments, discussions on forest policy are, nevertheless, occurring outside of forest focused instruments, such as the United Nation Forum on Forests, thereby leading to fragmented policies.[181]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Create a Global Forest Management Body Operating on the Principles of Multilateral, Effective, Sustainable & Holistic (M.E.S.H.) Governance

In order to tackle the silos and fragmentation in the global forestry governance architecture, a technically-adept and well-resourced global forest management body is needed, which responds to the severe limitations of current

> *At the national level, institutional structures and specific roles are ill-defined or have weak capacity, and the presence of silos in domestic ministries and agencies hinders efforts to prevent deforestation.*

Table 5.1: An Illustration of some 40+ Global Forestry Governance Mechanisms

Name	Type of Arrangement	Entry into Force
Forest Principles	Non-Binding Multilateral Agreement	1992
United Nations Forest Instrument	Non-Binding Multilateral Agreement	2007
Amazon Fund	Non-Binding Multilateral Agreement	2008
New York Declaration on Forests	Transnational Public-Private Partnerships	2014
Sustainable Development Goal 15	Multilateral Declaration	2015

Source: Plataforma CIPÓ. "Global Forest Governance Arrangements."

international environmental conventions and approaches to forest governance worldwide. The management body would aim to cement international norms around effective and proper implementation of forest policies, as well as establish comprehensive forest monitoring, assessment, and reporting mechanisms.

Operating on the principles of Multilateral, Effective, Sustainable & Holistic (M.E.S.H.) Governance, the global forest management body can provide a platform where ministries from UN Member States connect at international, national, and domestic levels. In doing so, this forum can assist states in mainstreaming international forest policies and principles in national policymaking, while supporting technology transfers and innovative financing (e.g., blended, public-private-partnerships).[182] By prioritizing technical capacity assistance and education, the management body can improve forest data coverage, including by collaborating with civil society organizations in collecting local-level aerial data on deforestation for greater understanding of the changing nature of forest loss patterns.[183]

While most global forest governance frameworks have been focused on the role of states, forest protection represents a global collective action problem that requires intense collaboration between diverse global, regional, national,

and local actors.[184] As such, a "M.E.S.H. governance" approach, consisting of a multi-stakeholder and iterative process, would facilitate interaction between local, national, and regional levels of forest management, drawing upon Responsibility Chain Task Force research undertaken by Plataforma CIPÓ and the broader work of the Climate Governance Commission.[185] Crucially, indigenous communities must be placed at the center of such governance approaches, and their participation should go beyond consultation, towards actively obtaining their consent on the design and implementation of relevant projects for countering deforestation.[186]

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In addition to the anticipated September 2023 Summit of the Future in New York, COP27 in Egypt, in November 2022, and COP28 in the United Arab Emirates, in 2023, as well as the 18th Session of the UN Forum on Forests in 2023 at UN Headquarters in New York, provide unique, near-term opportunities for advocating and deliberating upon this proposal. Given the twin, inter-related crises of deforestation and biodiversity loss, all possible avenues should be explored for greater multilateral action on global forestry governance and broader natural resource management.

5.4 Make Green Technology More Accessible to Developing Countries to Combat Climate Change

Recommendation

The pernicious effects of climate change necessitate innovative approaches to assist vulnerable populations, including a licensing facility for green technology and an information sharing platform to strengthen the UN's Green Technology Startup Hub. This would encourage licensing and transfer of technology to developing countries, while protecting intellectual property rights to incentivize the development of green technology and increase its availability worldwide.

Gaps in Global Governance

Developing countries (including low-lying and island countries) feel the effects of climate change more keenly than developed countries, with the United Nations noting that nearly 99 percent of casualties to date related to climate change have occurred in developing countries.[187] According to World Bank estimates, climate change will push 132 million people into poverty by 2031, thereby seriously impacting the economies and livelihoods of growing populations in the developing world.[188] Many nations already struggling to uphold their commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement will find it ever more difficult, without assistance.

While the global development of green technology (such as waste-sourced biofuel, electric automobiles, nuclear energy, and carbon capture) can open up new avenues for development, reducing climate-induced inequality while increasing GDP and opening global markets, all of this depends on access to relevant technologies and the development of requisite technical expertise. In least developed countries, less than one percent of GDP is spent on research and development for green technology, while facing additional issues in relation to high material costs, poor logistics management, and supply chain issues.[189]

A complex web of patent and intellectual property laws also hinders the effective international exchange of information and technical expertise, creating barriers to licensing green technology applications. While the international community has attempted to support policies to promote access to green technologies, such as the Climate Technology Center and Network (a joint effort of UNEP and the UNIDO) which offers technical assistance and increases cooperation among climate technology stakeholders, an adequate equilibrium has, nonetheless, not been found.[190] Insufficient funding is also a key obstacle. While the *Our Common Agenda* outlines a general direction for addressing climate change, reaching goals such as "net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner" requires innovative mechanisms and bridging the resource, knowledge, and trade gaps between developed and developing countries (see figure 5.3).[191]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Create a new Green Technology Licensing Facility within the UN Green Climate Fund

The facility would work toward eliminating existing financial barriers to green technology applications and disseminating environmentally sound technologies by issuing internationally-binding licenses that could be applied to any country, preventing one country's patent laws from impeding green technology applications in other countries. Accordingly, the Green Technology Licensing Facility would encourage licensing and technology transfer, while protecting intellectual property rights, thereby incentivizing the development and increasing the availability of green technology.[192] The facility could develop tailor-made programs for countries in order to promote their absorptive capacities, while additionally increasing public awareness. Ultimately, this facility would promote use of technologies rather than focusing on intellectual property rights protection. Both UN Member States and private companies would need to contribute to and endorse the facility.

The Green Technology Licensing Facility, once created, could remove impediments to the use and transfer of green technology by protecting the legitimate interests of IP-holders and

Climate

**Figure 5.3: Exports and export shares of green technologies
for countries of the Global South and Global North**
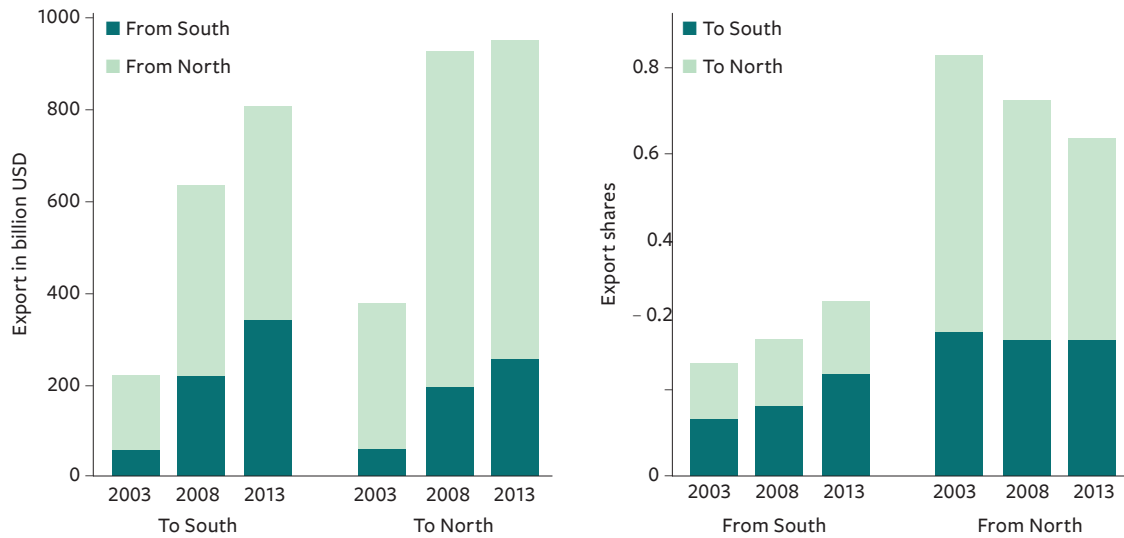
Source: Walz, R., et al, *Innovations for reaching the green sustainable development goals –where will they come from?* 468.

promoting the dissemination of technology. It could serve as a trustworthy hub for green technology, capable of ensuring the secure use of IP and facilitating access to technologies by providing an alternative type of contribution to the Green Climate Fund through the "buying" and receiving of licenses from the private sector. Lastly, public-private partnerships would be another way to fund these initiatives, with the private sector already involved in promoting intellectual property rights.[193] The funding streams tapped could help to cover research and development, education of a new "green" workforce, green technology implementation, and creation of green initiatives.

Build an Information Sharing Platform to Strengthen the UN's Green Technology Startup Hub

Green technology should be made more easily accessible to all vulnerable countries, especially in the Global South. The UN has recently launched the Green Technology Startup Hub, which serves as an accelerator and incubator for environmental action. Specifically, it allows developing countries to examine policies and actions required to employ technological innovations that promote greener and more sustainable living.[194] While the

hub has attracted some initial attention and interest, the international community through the United Nations could leverage and expand the hub's knowledge management role through the introduction of an online Information Sharing Platform. It would seek to attract more developed countries and green technology-savvy corporations to contribute to an expanding green technology knowledge base, helping developing countries to cope better with intellectual property rights and other green technology access related challenges.

**

The 2023 IEEE Green Technologies Conference, Summit of the Future, and COP28 Climate Summit in the United Arab Emirates provide important intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder avenues for consideration of these proposals, designed to make green technology more accessible to developing countries to more effectively combat climate change. While pushback can be anticipated from some wealthy nations and large multinational corporations, both sets of ideas can be made politically palatable, as they seek to strike a proper balance between intellectual property rights protection and saving the planet.

5.5 Expand and Safeguard Connectivity through a Global Digital Compact

Recommendation

Challenges such as the digital divide, increased cyber-crime, and global disinformation underscore the need for a rules-based order governing all facets of digital life worldwide. Rooted in human rights, a Global Digital Compact could foster shared principles for addressing all aspects of the technological life-cycle—from its development, through to its accessibility and protection of rights online.

Gaps in Global Governance

Nearly half of the world's population—an estimated 3.7 billion people, the majority of whom live in the Global South—lacks access to the internet (see figure 5.4).[195] Even prior to the pandemic, this digital divide presented a challenge to achieving the SDGs.[196] However, COVID-19 made things worse globally by reinforcing and accelerating inequalities across the board.[197] The shifting of essential services online, such as banking and education, has disaffected millions of individuals, and those who are able to access the internet face other risks, such as cyber-crime, disinformation, and having their rights violated online.[198] Cyberspace, in other words, remains a domain with deficiencies both in terms of justice and security.

At present, there is still no overarching mechanism instituting "shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all."[199] Brazen violations of human rights in the digital space are possible, in part, because of the weak and fragmented global cyber-governance architecture.[200] Existing conventions primarily address cyber-crime, lack binding dispute resolution mechanisms, and are often state-centric in nature, despite the multiplicity of actors operating in cyberspace.[201] Moreover, states have shown marked diffidence towards the development of customary international rules specific to cyberspace, thereby leading to challenges in its governance.[202]

In 2018 and 2019, UN Secretary-General António Guterres convened a High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and, in 2020, developed a Roadmap on Digital Cooperation, offering recommendations on overcoming the digital divide through improved connectivity, respect for human rights online, and mitigation of digital security threats.[203] Seeking to translate these recommendations into concrete and overarching global principles, the Secretary-General, in *Our Common Agenda*, proposed the development of a "Global Digital Compact."

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Forge a Global Digital Compact

As a framework outlining consensual principles on all matters related to the development of an equitable digital future, a Global Digital Compact (GDC) could serve to "turbocharge" the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As an inclusive yet non-binding pact, a GDC would contribute to a rules-based order for all existing and emerging dimensions of digital life, while reinforcing intergovernmental strategies, such as those outlined in the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.

The development of the GDC should ensure the meaningful participation of diverse stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, youth, academia, grassroots organizations, and concerned individuals. Their engagement must not be limited to initial consultations. Rather, they should be encouraged to contribute to all programs and initiatives stemming from the Global Digital Compact's adoption. The GDC must be built on a foundation of respect for human rights, with an agenda that seeks to break down silos, while addressing both risks and opportunities.[204] This human rights-based approach should be woven into every aspect of the GDC, respecting existing human rights standards, while also applying them toward the development of new technologies.

Ideally, the Global Digital Compact would consider the following four principles:

Climate

Figure 5.4: The Digital Divide: percentage of population with no internet access

More than 75%   Between 50-75%   Between 25-50%   Less than 25%   No data
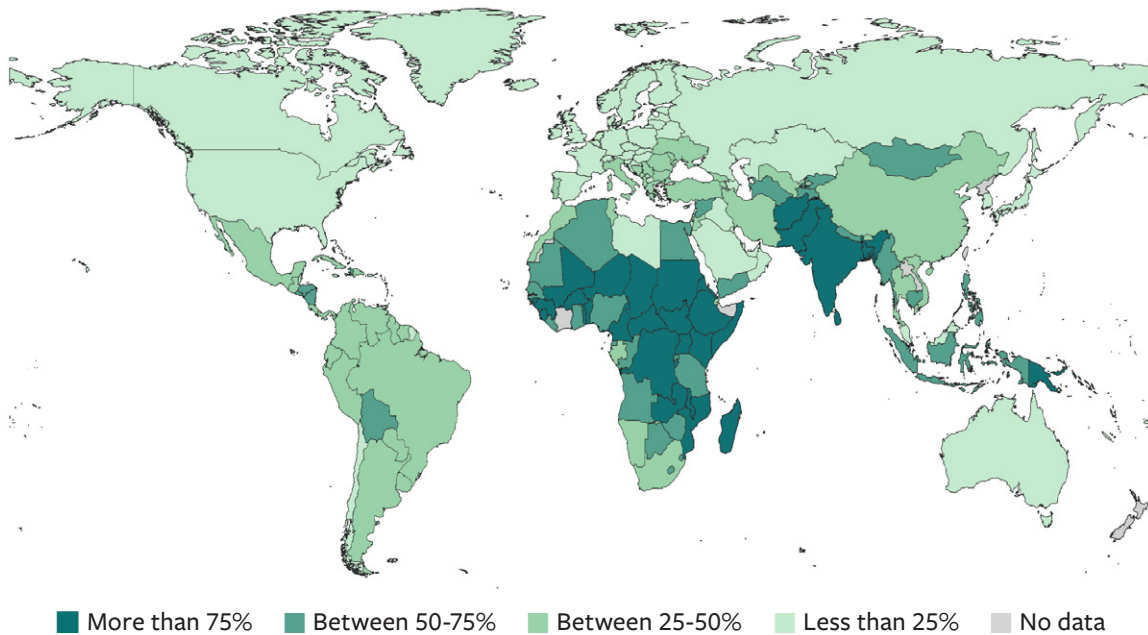
Source: Dreesen et al. "Promising Practices for Equitable Remote Learning," 2.

Innovation: Institute a human-centric approach toward the responsible innovation and regulation of emerging technologies, ensuring the existence of appropriate safeguards and risk mitigation measures.[205] This should include "obligations for ex-ante testing, risk management and human oversight" of technology to mitigate against any likely infringements of fundamental rights.[206]

Infrastructure: Ensure fair and equitable access to digital infrastructures as a basic human right, while promoting international cooperation in digital capacity-building and digital infrastructure development.[207] Address the digital divide by enhancing connectivity through innovative global financing mechanisms.[208]

Information: Ensure the protection of individuals, governments, and all stakeholders from breaches in information and cyber-security by providing unified and cohesive human rights-based principles of cyber-protection.[209] Additionally, develop strategies to combat disinformation and ensure data protection for individuals.[210]

Internet Governance: Develop a multi-stakeholder model of internet governance based on respect for all forms of digital human rights.[211] Within this model, governments should regulate the internet as a global public good and protect the concept of net neutrality (the principle that internet service providers should enable access to all content and applications, regardless of the source).[212]

**

A Global Digital Compact could enhance policymaking across all areas of digital development and promote better management of cross-border digital challenges. Consequently, all relevant stakeholders should embrace the current GDC consultations spearheaded by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology. Those contributing to the ITU's Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable and Youth Call to Action are also likely to shape the trajectory of this new cyber-governance instrument. Rather than an open-ended negotiation, UN Member States would be wise to build on the current momentum for change and have world leaders adopt the Global Digital Compact at next year's Summit of the Future.

VI. Collaborative Economy and Promoting Global Public Goods

6.1 Accelerate Equitable Socioeconomic Recovery through a G20+ Biennial Summit

Recommendation

Convene a Biennial Summit between the Group of 20, the UN's 193 Member States, the Secretary-General, and heads of international financial institutions—during the General Assembly's High-Level Week—to shepherd a more sustainable and resilient global economy. Importantly, focus this "G20+" on fostering socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic, mitigating and managing cross-border shocks, and addressing rising global economic inequality.

Gaps in Global Governance

Following the 2008 global financial crisis, through three consecutive summits, the G20 became, in effect, the "premium forum" for convening Heads of States and Governments to facilitate effective economic policymaking between major countries.[213] Fourteen years later, the G20 now accounts for more than 80 percent of world GDP, 75 percent of global trade, and 60 percent of the world's population.[214] However, the G20 (with nineteen member countries plus the European Union) does not give representation to 174 other UN Member States, many in the Global South. Nor does it provide for systematic, inclusive, and transparent engagement with those outside the club.

The exclusion of most countries from critical economic decisions could exacerbate global inequality, especially in the wake of a global pandemic that saw an estimated 3.3 percent contraction of global GDP in 2020, which the IMF viewed as unprecedented in recent history, due to its speed and synchronized nature.[215] Moreover, the G20 could better address global vaccine inequity, which disproportionately challenges low- and middle-income countries, by engaging more regularly and effectively with left behind and under-represented countries.[216]

Crucially, the G20 lacks representativeness (of many of those most economically vulnerable), and embeddedness in the wider system of global governance, which includes diverse global and regional organizations. In other words, while the G20—given the sheer size and influence of its members—wields "output legitimacy," it lacks the necessary "input" and "throughput legitimacy."[217] Past reform proposals, such as adding a few new members or expanding regional representation through regional organizations beyond the EU, have failed to gather political traction. Moreover, no combined socioeconomic and environmental body at the global level currently exists to consider long-term decision-making frameworks, strategic foresight, and integrative initiatives beyond the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our Common Agenda proposed convening a Biennial Summit of the G20, ECOSOC, the Secretary-General, and other international financial institutions (IFIs).[218] Such a platform might: (i) focus on the "ultra-long-term"; (ii) support investments for a green and just transition for some countries; (iii) encourage research and development incentives to foster innovation; (iv) rethink the shortcomings in the international debt architecture; and (v) form a "last mile alliance" to leave no one behind as countries work to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[219] However, during the President of the General Assembly's second thematic dialogue on the OCA (February 14-15, 2022), several Member States felt that simply integrating the above institutions with ECOSOC would not be inclusive enough or sufficient in fulfilling the proposed new platform's intended goals.[220] In response, the following proposal remodels the Biennial Summit as a "G20+" that engages the full membership of the United Nations through the General Assembly.[221]

Collaborative Economy

Box 6.1: Core Functions of a G20+ Biennial Summit

1

Facilitating multi-stakeholder, *cross-disciplinary dialogue and policy solutions,* by adopting integrated approaches across economic, social, and environmental areas, in consultation with non-state actors.

2

Promoting inclusive economic reform, by offering political support and other incentives to countries and regions that pursue difficult reforms to achieve growth and job creation.

3

Enabling global economic crisis response, by identifying threats and urgent crisis response needs and taking concrete actions to promote global economic stability and growth.

Source: Original Box, Stimson Center

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Convene a G20+ Biennial Summit to Accelerate Equitable Socioeconomic Recovery

To some observers an inherent trade-off between effectiveness and representation pervades comparisons between the twenty-member G20 and 193 member United Nations.[222] At the same time, the idea of a "G20+," conceived initially by the Albright-Gambari Commission, is built on the belief that, in the proverbial long run, effectiveness and voice must go hand-in-hand.[223] The concept was further elaborated, in September 2021, in a policy brief for the T20.[224]

Operationally, this entails assembling the G20 at the Heads of State level every two years at UN Headquarters, timed to coincide with the gathering of all world leaders at the start of the UN General Assembly in September in New York. The enterprise should be supported by a small, full-time UN-G20-IFIs secretariat, which would preserve knowledge capital across summits and, in the off-year, serve as a knowledge center to collect, validate, and push out collective intelligence and analysis across the international system, in preparation for the year to come. This should include disseminating recommended policy priorities from the Secretary-General's proposed annual meeting with all heads of regional organizations.[225]

In taking into account the concerns of all countries, whether large, small, advanced industrialized, or developing, with inputs from regional convenings, the proposed G20+ Biennial Summit should focus on priority-setting of critical issues for the world economy. Specifically, its three core functions are described in box 6.1.

The G20+ Biennial Summit would also provide an opportunity to review the relationship between intergovernmental bodies and the private sector (see Overview 6.4), to clarify and, where appropriate, strengthen the interplay between international agencies, donor governments, private investors, and other stakeholders for a given global policy issue.[226] This new platform could also focus on global economic stocktaking and measuring success against clearly identified baselines.[227]

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Though reforming and opening up the G20 will face political headwinds in the run-up to the September 2023 Summit of the Future, several entry points exist, including, for instance, the Alliance for Multilateralism, formed initially in September 2019 by foreign ministers from more than fifty countries (including the G20 members Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, and South Africa) and dedicated to mobilizing support for multilateral institutions and key principles of a rule-based international order.[228] These leaders can expect allies from among the 174 Member States not represented in the G20, as they have much to gain from influencing the policy deliberations and priorities of the European Union and the world's 19 largest national economies.

6.2 Revitalize and Streamline the General Assembly for Improved Global Decision-making

Recommendation

To revitalize and streamline the work of the United Nations General Assembly, the Office of the President of the General Assembly should be given greater authority to manage the Assembly's agenda and monitor its implementation. When the Security Council fails to act in maintaining international peace and security, the General Assembly should invoke the Uniting for Peace resolution, in collaboration with a qualified majority of Security Council members.

Gaps in Global Governance

The United Nations General Assembly is the most representative intergovernmental body in the world. Member States have increasingly come to expect and demand that the UNGA take a greater role in fulfilling UN duties laid out in its Charter, and efforts to revitalize and strengthen the UNGA have grown in recent decades (see figure 6.1). Unfortunately, many of the same problems identified by the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly (AHWG) in 2006 remain, the most prominent being the resolution implementation deficit—or the body's sheer inability to clear its calendar.[229]

In recent years, the AHWG did change the election dates of new UNGA leadership to occur at least three months before the start of the new session, and election dates of new non-permanent members of the Security Council and of ECOSOC are now held six months prior to their assuming their responsibilities, among other procedural changes.[230] The number of duplicative and repetitive agenda items has also been reduced, but the agenda of the 75th General Assembly still contained over 180 main items—more than when the "revitalization" process started, over thirty years ago.[231]

Additionally, the February 2022 emergency session on Russian aggression against Ukraine demonstrated support for a more prominent General Assembly role in the realm of peace and security. The invocation of emergency special sessions by means of the *Uniting for Peace* resolution, initially introduced in 1950, shows that the UNGA can assert itself and even circumvent a deadlock within the Security Council. To overcome "bad faith" uses of the veto in the UNSC, understood in *Uniting for Peace* as preventing the Security Council from exercising its primary responsibility of maintaining peace, the General Assembly, in representing all UN Member States, will need to assume a leadership role on occasion.[232]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Improve Global Decision-Making through a Revitalized and Streamlined General Assembly

For the UNGA to create a culture of accountability and follow-through on decisions undertaken by its membership, the Assembly must overcome its implementation deficit. To this end, the President of the General Assembly (PGA) could report on the implementation status of major resolutions based on assessment, monitoring, and evaluation frameworks with clear metrics for each. These reports would increase transparency on resolution implementation and create opportunities for input on ways to improve a resolution's effectiveness in terms of achieving concrete outcomes and impact.

Furthermore, the number of UNGA Agenda items should be reduced to allow for greater focus on implementation; we suggest a maximum number of 120, or twenty for each of the six Main Committees. Learning from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, General Assembly resolutions could define end goals in discrete and measurable terms, but then allow for the actual actions to deliver on these goals to be determined by individual Member States.

Member States have come to see the value that Presidents of the General Assembly provide by coordinating among various actors and overseeing implementation of General Assembly resolutions. To ensure that the effectiveness, professionalism, and diplomatic support

Figure 6.1: Cumulative Number of UNGA Resolutions on Revitalization
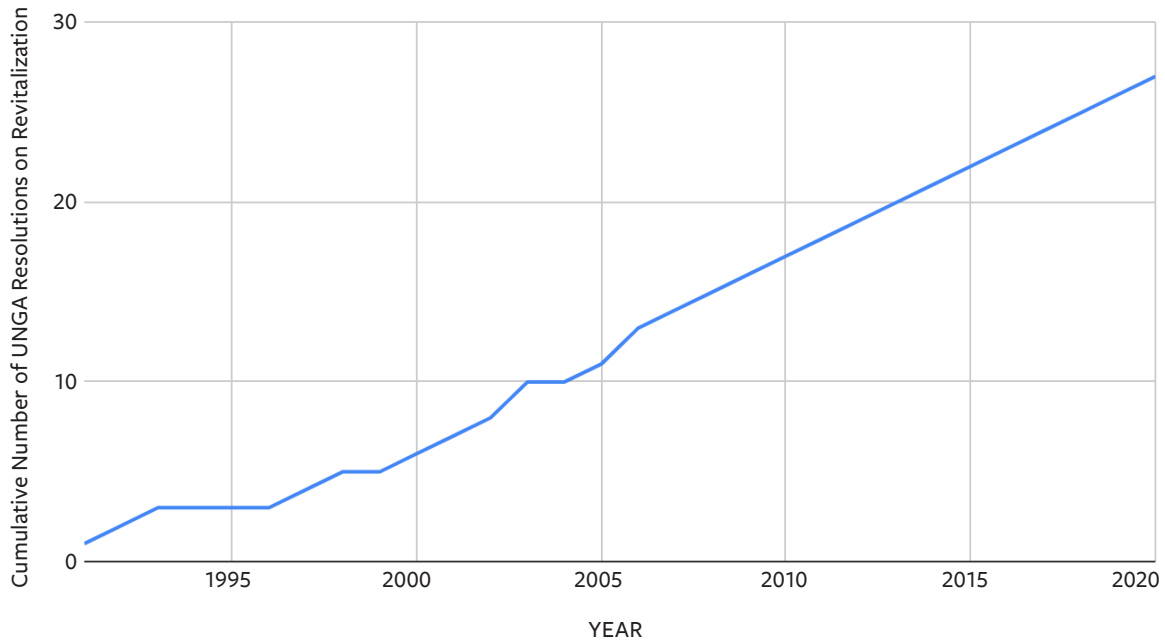
Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center. Data from: United Nations. "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. Background." Website. Accessed April 24, 2022.

expected by Member States is maintained, the PGA's term in office should be extended to two years. Furthermore, the rotation of the PGA and chairs of the six Committees should occur on January 1st, so that these executives are well prepared for the fall instead of stumbling into office during the most intense period of the year.[233] Staff should also be adequately resourced and retained for longer periods to improve service quality, as well as to lower the high transaction costs of assembling a new team every year.[234]

Better Utilize the Uniting for Peace Resolution

On March 2, 2022, General Assembly action under *Uniting for Peace* denounced the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine with the support of 141 Member States.[235] It was followed, on April 26th, by the consensus passage of Resolution 76/262, which calls for the PGA to convene the UNGA "within 10 working days of the casting of a veto" and to hold a debate on the subject of the veto.[236] An initiative of Liechtenstein, Resolution 76/262 should complement more frequent use of the *Uniting for Peace* resolution when the UNSC fails to act in critical matters of international peace and

security. To avoid appearing to usurp the Security Council's primacy, invocation of *United for Peace* could require a two-part process initiated by a procedural vote of a qualified majority of the UNSC determining that a veto was used in "bad faith," followed by a two-thirds majority vote in the UNGA, as is required for important questions.[237] As such, the debates mandated by Res. 76/262 on veto usage might inspire UNSC members to initiate this process.

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The 2023 Summit of the Future affords the opportunity to improve General Assembly effectiveness, including by strengthening its vital role in the peace and security space. Capitalizing on this moment requires countries to build on the momentum generated by the work of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly and the recent five-part thematic consultations on *Our Common Agenda* convened by the PGA. It further depends on deriving appropriate historical lessons from how best the General Assembly can fill, at times, a void in Security Council leadership in maintaining international peace and security (as detailed in Overview 3.2).

6.3 Enhance Democratic Legitimacy and Effectiveness through a UN Parliamentary Network

Recommendation

Reducing the United Nations' intertwined democratic and implementation deficits through a UN Parliamentary Network (UNPN) is a moral and practical imperative. By creating a formal channel for parliamentary input into UN governance, the UNPN would better align a country's domestic policies with UN General Assembly resolutions, increase public awareness of UN policy priorities, and further accountability of the world body's decisions.

Gaps in Global Governance

Currently, UN Member States are almost exclusively represented by their executive branches, with no formal channels for input from legislators.[238] However, the transnational nature of today's global challenges requires cooperation and collective action based on multilateral principles of transparency, participation, and accountability, all reflected in *Our Common Agenda's* call for more inclusive multilateralism. Figure 6.2 shows how the percentage of international organizations with parliamentary institutions has steadily increased since the 1940s, reflecting efforts to improve their representative legitimacy. The UN should follow suit with a structure that formally welcomes advice from national and regional parliamentarians.

Through parliamentarian input, international organizations have experienced more compliance with their policies, engendering greater legitimacy at the national level.[239] Yet, the resolution implementation deficit identified by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly at its first meeting, in September 2006, still pervades this most universal of UN organs (see Overview 6.2).[240] Resolution implementation progress depends on regional and national legislative follow-up, which, in turn, requires greater public support for these policies. Democratization through parliamentary input would help increase global awareness of UNGA decisions, furthering scrutiny of and accountability for the Assembly's

resolutions, while making it easier for parliamentarians to pass national legislation in line with its resolutions.

Influential global governance actors are improving conditions for bringing parliamentarians closer to UN policymaking. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called for more inclusive multilateralism through increased representation and participation of people at the global decision-making level. The "We the Peoples" campaign, launched in April 2021, calls for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, among other proposals, and has received endorsements from over 210 civil society organizations worldwide and 133 elected members of national parliaments.[241]

In addition, many parts of the UN system already informally coordinate with parliamentary networks, such as when the President of the General Assembly Abdulla Shahid hosted hundreds of parliamentarians from around the world in February 2022 at UN Headquarters. At the meeting, he argued that parliaments are "the platform through which UN resolutions can be turned into national legislation."[242] While parliamentarians are crucial for implementation, they need to be involved in the development of policy too. Although their acknowledged benefits to UN governance are widespread, parliamentarians (and their champions) confront vested interests within certain national executive branches, who have repeatedly impeded progress toward new models for effective engagement with legislators.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Establish a UN Parliamentary Network to enhance the Democratic Legitimacy and Effectiveness of the UN

To improve parliamentary engagement with the UN, while helping to tackle the General Assembly's intertwined resolution implementation and democratic legitimacy deficits, a UN Parliamentary Network (UNPN) is needed. The

Collaborative Economy

**Figure 6.2: Rise in number of International Organizations with
Associated International Parliamentary Institutions since the 1940s**
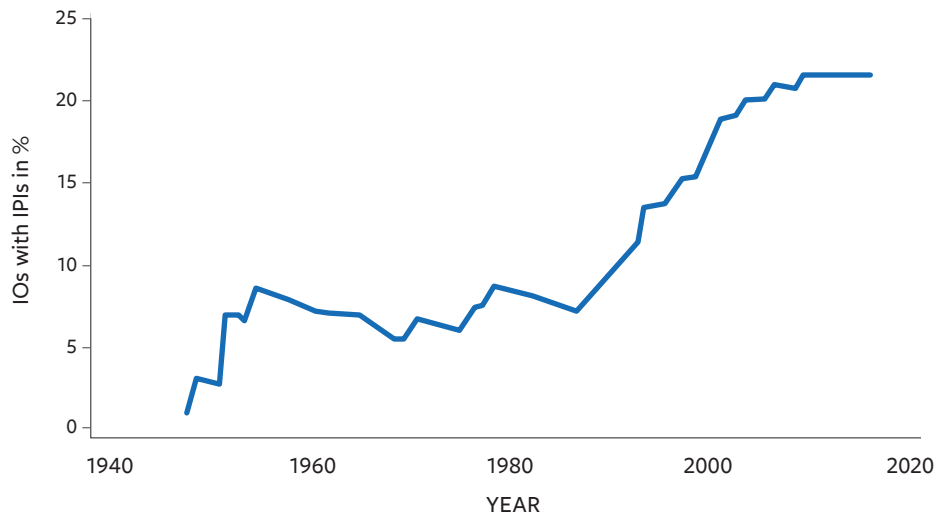
Source: Adapted from Rocabert et al., *The rise of international parliamentary institutions: Purpose and legitimation,* 609.

UNPN would be an advisory body to the UNGA created under Article 22 of the UN Charter, made up of parliamentarians of national and regional parliaments, as well as existing parliamentary networks that opt in.[243] By involving parliamentary actors, the UNPN would increase public participation and oversight in global policymaking in UN affairs, while simultaneously raising awareness of global issues to the national level.

The UNPN was first proposed in the 2015 Albright-Gambari Commission report, which argued that such a body would enhance democracy and legitimacy by expanding public knowledge and direct participation in UN decision-making and promote transparency, oversight, and accountability.[244] This requires UNPN involvement, in a purely advisory capacity, in both the formulation of UN policies and monitoring of UNGA resolution implementation.

A UNPN would not require legislative powers to be effective. Even though the Pan-African Parliament is supposed to be vested with legislative power, Ogochukwu Nzewi argues that it does not require this for political legitimacy and influence in the African Union.[245] A UNPN could also make an impact through relationships with Member States and other UN organs to improve transparency and accountability of UN decision-making.[246]

Parliamentary networks, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, have contributed to international treaty implementation and partnerships with UN agencies, such as the UN Development Program.[247] As a mechanism for parliamentary input embedded formally within the General Assembly, a UNPN could, similarly, strengthen United Nations policy implementation through a combination of oversight and by offering creative ideas during the policy formulation phase.

**

With active support from the "We the Peoples" campaign for inclusive global governance and related initiatives, the September 2023 Summit of the Future presents a unique opportunity to advocate for increased parliamentary input through a UN Parliamentary Network to address democratic legitimacy and effectiveness issues within the General Assembly. Over time (once the proof-of-concept is tested), the UNPN could transition into a more authoritative—and less advisory-oriented—UN Parliamentary Assembly that gives citizens even stronger representation and greater participation in global governance.[248]

6.4 Forge a Sustainable Development Funding Compact that Leverages Public-Private Partnerships

Recommendation

Establish a Global Funding Compact with the participation of international financial institutions, governments, and the private sector that combines accountability tools with blended finance mechanisms aimed at increasing investment in the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, continued debt relief for least developed countries should be tied to commitments to fulfill the SDGs.

Gaps in Global Governance

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 requires significant and reliable financial resources from governments and international organizations, as well as the business community, private foundations, and civil society organizations worldwide. In 2015, through the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, UN Member States agreed to strengthen international cooperation through Official Development Assistance, while the 2019 "funding compact" centered on increasing Member States' commitments to UN core and non-core resources (to support the UN development system's work on behalf of the SDGs).[249]

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic inequalities have aggravated the financing gap, increasing the annual shortfall to achieve the SDGs by 68 percent (from U.S. $2.5 trillion before the pandemic to U.S. $4.2 trillion in 2020), while existing mechanisms have failed to keep pace with growing need.[250] The UN's Joint SDG Fund, for example, has not achieved the annual funding commitments of U.S. $290 million envisaged by the Secretary-General. In 2020, it managed to attract only U.S. $145 million, out of which only U.S. $0.08 million was contributed by the private sector.[251]

The economic crisis and the necessity to redirect resources due to the pandemic can partially explain the sudden fall in financing for the 2030 Agenda. The Ukraine war puts additional pressure on the global economy and has led to a reallocation of resources from other development and relief objectives.[252] However, even before these events, SDGs financing was insufficient; the private sector, for example, invested in advocacy rather than action.[253] In short, these series of crises have exposed severe weaknesses in SDGs financing mechanisms.

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposals

Enter into a new Global Funding Compact in support of the SDGs

To help developing countries, especially the most vulnerable, address their most urgent financing needs in fulfillment of their 2030 Agenda commitments, a Global Funding Compact is needed in the run-up to both next year's Summit of the Future and the 2025 World Social Summit. Building on the 2019 compact, this new proposal is needed for the UN development system as a whole, to better work with developing country counterparts in fostering greater sustainability, effectiveness, and a value-based orientation.[254] It would aim to reduce

> *Debt suspension, restructuring, and relief from donor organizations should be used as levers to promote greener and more resilient growth in developing countries, especially low-income countries.*

Figure 6.3: Structure of Debt-for-Nature Swaps

AVOIDED DEBT SERVICE
PAYMENTS TRANSFERRED

| Creditor* | Debtor Nation | Escrow or a Transparent Fund | Climate Projects |

Sovereign debt

CREDITOR NATION PARTLY
FORGIVES SOVEREIGN DEBT

PROCEEDS USED IN AN
AGREED UPON MANNER
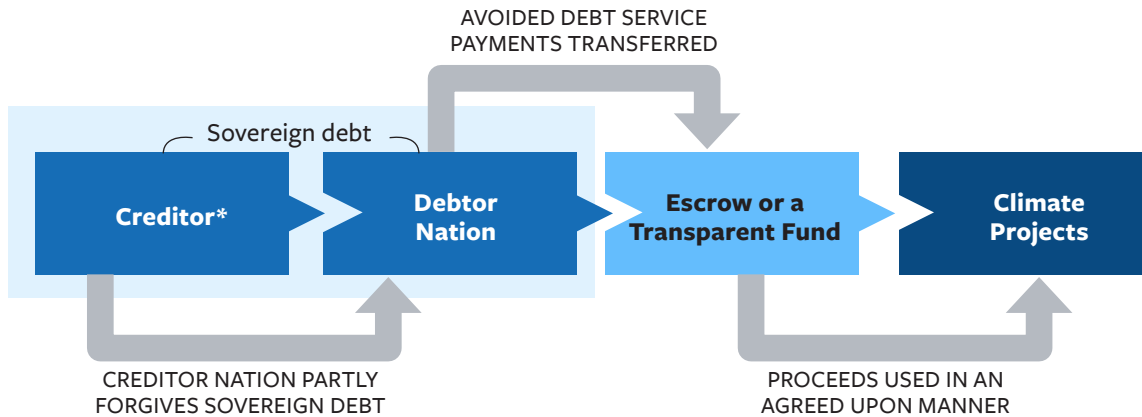
Source: Singh and Widge, *Debt for Climate Swaps* (2021), 11.

the tying of financial contributions to a specific program, project, or entity; increase financial transparency across the UN system; meet high standards of due diligence; and channel financial resources from both public and private actors to Sustainable Development Goals implementation through innovative blended finance approaches. The new funding compact would help to create more predictable and sustained SDGs financing, while reducing the influence of a few large donors who presently dominate the funding landscape and influence decision-making, priorities, and agenda-setting–all of which skew implementation across the system.[255]

Ensure Financing of the SDGs through Debt Relief

In response to the pandemic, the G20's Debt-Service Suspension Initiative allowed for temporary debt-service suspensions to bilateral creditors. The initiative helped forty-six of seventy-three eligible countries, in 2020, defer U.S. $5.7 billion in debt service payments—freeing up funds for governments to fight the pandemic and shore up their economies. This important initiative discontinued in late 2021 with a potential debt crisis still looming, so development finance providers must do more to ensure a smooth transition toward more durable, broad-based, and long-term recovery

that privileges Sustainable Development Goals implementation. Debt suspension, restructuring, and relief from donor organizations should be used as levers to promote greener and more resilient growth in developing countries, especially low-income countries. At the same time, new instruments, including debt for climate swaps, could be deployed to re-purpose debt in support of the environment and social protection (as illustrated in figure 6.3).[256] For instance, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has recommended the Green Climate Fund to step in to buy the external debt of participating countries in exchange for payments into a climate-resilience fund.[257]

**

The Biennial Summit proposed by the UN Secretary-General is an opportunity to reassess these reforms (see Overview 6.1). Both the 2023 Summit of the Future and the 2025 World Social Summit can also serve as useful intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder vehicles for advancing a Global Funding Compact and a possible continuation of the Debt-Service Suspension Initiative. To succeed, they will require a skillful balancing of different interests between the Global South and Global North, as well as between public and private sectors.

6.5 Combat Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows through an International Anti-Corruption Court

Recommendation

While Our Common Agenda stresses the need to "build trust" through combating corruption, a legal punitive response at the global level is missing. To combat illicit financial flows, which fuel both corruption and excessive income inequality, an International Anti-Corruption Court, based on the principle of complementarity with national jurisdictions and located in The Hague, is urgently needed.

Gaps in Global Governance

Acute income inequality and rampant corruption are two issues facing the international community, despite global efforts such as the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force, and strides toward achieving SDG 10 (Reduce Inequalities). Income inequality is a key factor that leads to corruption (and vice versa), with both having adverse effects on economic growth and human development.[258] It is estimated that nearly U.S. $1 trillion is paid annually in bribes, amounting to more than 5 percent of global GDP.[259] Further, illicit financial flows from Africa rob it of about U.S. $88.6 billion—3.7 percent—of its GDP annually.[260] The COVID-19 pandemic only worsened existing economic disparities, with Transparency International noting multiple instances of COVID-19-related corruption diverting over U.S. $1 billion in public funds (see figure 6.4).[261] This has adverse consequences for developing countries in particular, which tend to lose more than ten times the amount of money they receive in foreign aid to corruption, not only hurting intended aid recipients but also decreasing trust in governments and intergovernmental institutions.[262]

While many countries have already passed anti-corruption legislation and adopted some preventative policies for illicit financial flows, conventional approaches have not always had the intended effects. Enforcement can remain deficient when preceded by a lack of political will at high levels of government. Furthermore, given the control exercised by political leaders over the investigation, prosecution, and judicial authorities in many countries, it can be difficult to hold public officials accountable for corruption. The existing International Criminal Court does not have the powers, capacity, or institutional expertise for the investigation and prosecution of grand corruption, as its mandate (under the Rome Statute) only provides jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression (see Overview 3.4). Similarly, regional human rights courts lack direct jurisdiction over corruption investigations, making it difficult to prosecute anti-corruption cases at regional levels.[263]

Road to 2023 Innovation Proposal

Establish an International Anti-Corruption Court

A group of states could set up an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC) as a dedicated facility for the international prosecution of corruption cases where national jurisdictions are unable or unwilling to prosecute. A new Anti-Corruption Court should be an international institution of last resort, like the ICC, operating on the principle of complementarity.[264] Accordingly, its jurisdiction would extend to the prosecution of kleptocrats due to the inability (e.g., lack of capacity) or unwillingness of national governments to prosecute; it should also wield the power to recover and repatriate assets stolen from victims.[265] Furthermore, the IACC could repurpose recovered assets towards development or humanitarian services in countries where the funds were stolen, in cases where repatriated assets would be likely to be re-captured by corrupt officials.[266]

Accordingly, the IACC—again, similar to the ICC—should have a chief prosecutor who could pursue alleged corruption offenses committed by sitting and former political figures, including

Figure 6.4: Corruption Perceptions Index 2021
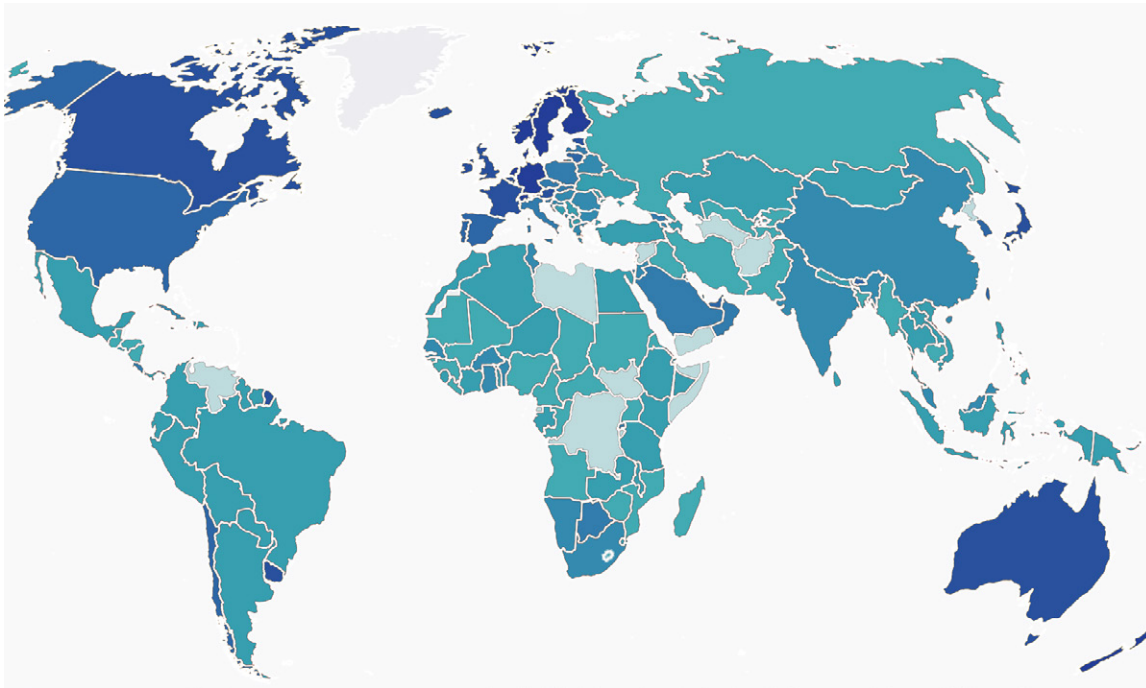
Darkest blue = lowest perceived corruption
Lightest blue = highest perceived corruption

Source: Transparency International, 2021.

heads of state, their senior appointees, and fellow co-conspirators.[267] In prioritizing and targeting cases of "grand corruption" and kleptocracy, the cases filed with the IACC would cover offenses defined in accordance with the criminalized activities outlined in the UNCAC. Consequently, authority should be bestowed upon the IACC to impose criminal sanctions, such as imprisonment, on convicted defendants.[268]

In terms of its internal mechanisms, the International Anti-Corruption Court would need prosecutors experienced in presenting commercial cases, judges experienced in managing complex commercial proceedings, and expert investigators.[269] It could also enhance information and resource exchange with domestic legal officials, thereby strengthening local capacities while increasing the IACC's legitimacy. IACC-supported witness protection programs should ensure the relocation and privacy of witnesses, as a means to protect private whistleblowers.

**

Momentum behind the IACC is growing. A declaration calling for the creation of such a court has been signed by more than 260 eminent individuals from over 75 countries, including more than 30 Nobel laureates and over 40 former heads of state and government.[270] Working with international partners to establish the IACC is now official Canadian and Dutch foreign policy.[271] Further high-level interest in the court is developing in countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America that have been rocked by corruption scandals and related demonstrations of public outrage in recent years. The Summit of the Future in 2023 presents an opportunity for countries and like-minded civil society groups to rally behind this proposed global governance innovation.

VII. Road to 2023: Maximizing the Opportunity

> "The Summit of the Future offers an opportunity to renew global governance and face the collective moral and practical imperatives of our time. ... Building on the active participation of experts from all regions in the thematic consultations, maximum transparency and full engagement of diverse voices will be critical to a successful Summit." — *María Fernanda Espinosa and Danilo Turk.*[272]

In 2020, UN Secretary-General António Guterres' Global Conversation and the UN75 Declaration challenged the world to reimagine and re-energize the global governance system. In 2021, the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda*, offered a vision for a new social contract and concrete actions for UN Member States to consider when taking forward the UN75 Declaration's twelve commitments. Most consequentially, Mr. Guterres called for a Summit of the Future, timed to coincide with the General Assembly's high-level week in September 2023. Preceded by preparatory events and consultations, the Summit would work to "advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in this report, and potentially others ...."[273]

This concluding section explores how the proposed Summit of the Future, and the paths leading to it, could build political consensus on urgently needed, substantial global governance reforms. It further considers three major global fault-lines that will need to be overcome through a proposed "just right" approach, which aims to ratchet-up the Summit's ambition to the highest levels possible without overreaching. Taken together, these steps could help the Community of Nations to better meet the challenges—and seize the opportunities—that this century presents in peace and security, sustainable development, and the ongoing struggle for human rights and dignity (with climate and the environment enveloping all of these issues).

Three Fault-Lines Threatening the Road to 2023

The road to the 2023 Summit of the Future is fraught with uncertainty, complexity and even outright opposition to a meaningful global governance strengthening and innovation agenda. Perhaps the most acute and problematic fault-lines threatening the Road to 2023 are those between Great Powers, between the Global North and South, and between both Member States and the UN Secretariat on the one hand, and between Member States and civil society organizations, on the other.

Renewed Great Power Rivalries

Over the past decade, with the rise of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) but, in particular, an economically powerful China and a politically and strategically re-assertive Russia, opposition to Western and Western-oriented countries has emerged that has eroded fundamental principles of multilateral cooperation in the areas of trade and external promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Not since the Cold War has overtly threatening language been used regarding the specter of a nuclear confrontation between Russia and the West. Equally alarming is how, in the UN General Assembly (where no country has a veto), successive votes since early March vis-à-vis the Ukraine crisis have revealed the emergence of two divided blocs which view all UN issues, big or small, through the prism of the Russia-Ukraine war.[274] More than simply suggesting that a country is pro-Russia or pro-Ukraine, the votes could portend the further fragmentation of the world along pro-authoritarian and pro-liberal democratic lines. Fortunately, even at the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States found ways to cooperate through a web of (admittedly imperfect and politically fraught) norms and legally binding treaties affecting their respective nuclear arsenals and slowing the spread of nuclear weapons capacity in general.

Resurfaced Global North-South Tensions

Beginning in the 1970s, following the height of decolonization and with the advent of the contentious New International Economic Order and New World Information Order debates, already severe socioeconomic disparities between the advanced industrialized countries of the Global North and the developing countries of the Global South spilled over into political divisions. The end of the Cold War and its associated camps and proxy wars improved conditions for North-South cooperation, as manifested in the ambitious action programs of successive UN summits between 1990 and 1996, new debt-relief measures for the poorest countries in the early 2000s, and the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). But many developing countries note the failure of donor nations to deliver on the climate and broader sustainable development financing commitments contained, for example, in multiple climate summit communiques (2009-2021) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015).[275]

Perspectives of leading northern and southern countries also diverged during the recent thematic dialogues sponsored by the President of the General Assembly, in February and March of 2022, regarding the recommendations in *Our Common Agenda* (see box 7.1; see also box 1.1). Besides expressing sometimes opposing views towards the Secretary-General's specific ideas for reworking the international financial system, fighting climate change, and organizing the UN budget, the far majority of advanced industrialized countries expressed broad support for a high-level, multi-stakeholder Summit of the Future in September 2023,[276] while several developing countries, such as Brazil, Egypt, Iran, and Sri Lanka, expressed scepticism and sought clarification on the need for the Summit.

Lingering Member States-UN Secretariat-Civil Society Distrust

Given the consensus behind the UN75 Declaration that commissioned what became *Our Common Agenda,*[277] the vocal misgivings and even distrust expressed toward the UN Secretariat by some Member States—including Brazil, India, Pakistan, and Russia—with regard to the report is perhaps most remarkable among the three identified global fault-lines. It resulted in the watering-down of an otherwise straight-forward follow-through procedural resolution approved, in November 2021, by the General Assembly, ultimately calling into question the value of such "consensus-based resolutions."[278] Indeed, in an effort to move quicker and with greater ambition, sentiment is growing among Member States to allow dissenting votes on such resolutions without derailing them, including for modalities resolutions and major intergovernmental declarations that have historically operated through consensus.

Meanwhile, despite their many contributions to global governance, civil society groups face repeated challenges to secure space at the global decision-making table. In November 2019, for example, CIVICUS warned that civil society space was "under attack in 111 countries," and that more than six billion people live in countries where civic space was "closed, repressed or obstructed."[279] CIVICUS also observed that sixteen of nineteen UN Member States on the UN Economic and Social Council's Non-Governmental Organization Committee, which grants civil society consultative status, imposed "serious civic space restrictions" within their borders.[280] Even those non-governmental organizations that enjoy UN consultative status face difficulty in meaningfully providing advice to policymakers. Resourceful and large civil society organizations from the Global North, for instance, have disproportionate access to policymaking in global institutions compared to their counterparts from the Global South. At the same time, the UN's frequently bureaucratic and heavily state-centric decision-making processes can screen the UN from closely scrutinizing the struggles facing vulnerable groups worldwide, including victims of systemic abuse.[281]

Striking the Right Balance at the 2023 Summit of the Future

To overcome or at least effectively manage these three global political fault-lines—let alone the sheer organizational complexities associated with staging a UN heads of state and government

summit—the international community will confront at least three kinds of choices. Those designing the process leading up to, and ultimate goals of, the September 2023 Summit of the Future should consider the potential negative consequences, in geopolitical, human, and natural terms, of both over- and underreaching, while pursuing an approach that is both ambitious yet realistic given present political conditions.

- *Not grabbing for too much*: The design of—and the individual diplomats and secretariat officials appointed to lead—the Summit of the Future should refrain from entertaining grandiose ideas that could, inadvertently, set back overall negotiations. While well-intentioned given the urgent need for structural (even radical) "root-and-branch" reforms across the international system, we would misread global politics to believe that the present era is ripe for a "San Francisco Moment," allowing for comprehensive Charter reform through Article 109. Ideally, the 2023 Summit of the Future and 2025 World Social Summit can set the world on a new trajectory and create the conditions for comprehensive Charter Review by 2030 or (at the latest) 2045, enabling a serious rethink of all major UN organs. Unfortunately, as the attack on Ukraine and other recent failures in global cooperation demonstrate, the international community remains far from the required geopolitical climate necessary for a successful Article 109 conference.

- *Not settling for too little*: It would be equally troublesome to squander the once in a generation opportunity offered by next year's Summit for lack of vision and ambition. *Our Common Agenda* presents a bold vision of a new social contract and new global deal with concrete proposals, many of which depend on enlightened international leadership and foresight to garner sufficient political support. To focus only on reforms where the Secretary-General already has a mandate (for example, Mr. Guterres' proposed quintet of "UN 2.0" proposals to modernize the secretariat[282]) would amount to tinkering without enacting politically meaningful changes.

- *Striking an ambitious, yet realistic balance*: An ambitious but realistic approach would entail ratcheting up the agenda for the Summit of the Future to the highest level of ambition possible without politically overreaching (admittedly, as much an art as a science). It would involve careful consideration by UN Member States of most recommendations from *Our Common Agenda* and related ideas (including, hopefully, many contained in this report), while laying the groundwork now for addressing any unfinished business after next year's summit—that is, post-2023.

Box 7.1: Diverging Viewpoints during the PGA's OCA Dialogues

LEADING NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES	LEADING SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVES
❯ "Enhanced cooperation and collaboration must build on the comparative advantage, expertise and reach of organizations and institutions that form the multilateral system. We must take advantage of existing bodies and avoid duplication." *Canada, for itself, Australia, and New Zealand* (*CANZ*), *February 14*	❯ "… the existing financial system is one of the key contributors to the growing widening distrust. Therefore, any initiative to build trust would necessarily require a restructured International Financial System." *Mali, for the Africa Group, February 14*
❯ "We also appreciate the … [e]nhanced efforts to fight climate change … and the Secretary-General's move to an annual program budget …" *United States, March 10.*	❯ "We also object to the proposals related to the UN Budget and the undue expansion of the security agenda to address issues such as climate change." *Brazil, March 10*

Sources: Member States' statements (citations and links in the bibliography).

Major elements of an ambitious but realistic or "just right" approach, including the need to maximize transparency and the UN's role as a convenor of both Great Power rivals and diverse voices from across civil society, are elaborated below. Especially in the current tense geopolitical environment and despite lingering suspicions by some governments toward non-governmental organizations, skillful civil society interventions offer one, often under-utilized avenue to bridge divisions and overcome deep-seated differences between countries (whether along Global North-South lines or between Great Powers), as well as between some countries and the UN Secretariat.

Road to the 2023 Summit: Elements of a "Just Right" Approach

Secretary-General António Guterres' *Our Common Agenda* report has begun to take the UN75 Declaration from vision to action. Fortunately, through an anticipated "modalities resolution" to be negotiated soon, UN Member States will outline a formal negotiation process, culminating in the adoption of a proposed "Pact for the Future" and related instruments at a Summit of the Future to be held in September 2023, during the General Assembly's annual High-Level Week in New York. Without such an intergovernmental framework, many of *Our Common Agenda's* and related global governance innovation proposals are unlikely to come to fruition. At the same time, without the active and creative engagement of civil society (including advocacy organizations, religious groups, journalists, and scholars) and the business community, the 2023 Summit may end up merely tweaking the global governance system—rather than weighing seriously more ambitious solutions commensurate with today's challenges, threats, and opportunities.

Detailed below, a sixteen-month intergovernmental *and multi-stakeholder* process—running from June 2022 until September 2023 and culminating in the Summit of the Future—wields significant advantages compared to single-institution-focused or single-issue-focused reform efforts, including: i) the potential to generate political momentum for a "global systemic reform package" of urgent, interconnected, and mutually reinforcing reform initiatives; ii) strong negotiation outcomes through deal-making and trade-offs across a broad reform agenda that speaks to diverse national interests and values with the potential to break through some long-standing logjams; iii) a defined rallying point for "big-tent" smart coalition of like-minded governments and non-governmental organizations who wish together to raise the ambition of the Summit's outcomes and seek their immediate implementation; and iv) international media attention necessary for mobilizing political support for stronger and more inclusive institutions of global governance.

The 1992 Earth Summit led to the adoption of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests. In addition, during the Summit, the climate and biodiversity conventions were made open for signature (and later ratification by national legislatures) and work toward a desertification convention was initiated, and finalized for signature by 1994. Though quite distinct from this earlier process, the Summit of the Future could deliver on an ambitious and comprehensive global governance innovation agenda too, including through a Pact for the Future, a Declaration on Future Generations, a New Agenda for Peace, and a Global Digital Compact. Achieving, in the words of the Secretary-General, "more inclusive, networked, and effective forms of multilateralism," requires a robust, determined process with inspired leadership both from within and outside of governments.[283]

To prepare for the Summit and maximize its impact in line with the "just right" approach outlined above, seven preparatory and follow-through steps (many running in parallel) are both necessary and desirable (see figure 7.1).

1. *Design an inclusive, forward-leaning Modalities Resolution:* In addition to establishing a Summit secretariat and acknowledging the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Effective Multilateralism, the modalities resolution should recommend transparent negotiations that include and tap the ideas,

networks, and support of parliamentarians, businesspersons, and civil society representatives, including women and youth leaders. In terms of substance, the modalities resolution could focus preparations for the Summit of the Future, from February 2023 onward, around four thematic pillars, whose work would support a fifth, integrative pillar. Key themes could be: i) peace, security, and humanitarian action; ii) sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery; iii) human rights, inclusive governance, and the rule of law; and iv) climate governance.[284] Permanent Representative-led committees in New York, open to all interested Member States, could preside over the work of each of these thematic pillars. Task forces within each committee could focus on developing specific priority initiatives (e.g., a Declaration on Future Generations, a New Agenda for Peace, and a Global Digital Compact).[285] The fifth pillar would promote integrated, system-wide reforms in connection with the ideas put forth by the four other pillars. Together they would be featured in a "Pact for the Future" (P4TF) Summit outcome document, and in related instruments offered for endorsement by world leaders at the Summit.

2. ***Set up a small UN Secretariat organizing team with expertise in communications and in the subject matters of the four thematic pillars:*** A small, experienced and well-networked secretariat—building on the *Our Common Agenda* team, while including secondments from across the UN and international financial institutions—should be stood-up to support planning for the Summit of the Future. In addition to backstopping preparations for the Summit, it should bring together world class experts (from within and outside the UN system) to consult with Member States, and provide substantive support to all aspects of the Summit's preparations, including the thematic committees and their subsidiary task forces. The organizing team should also design and execute a sophisticated communications and social media outreach plan that could, for instance, underscore "early wins" to garner momentum for achieving more ambitious milestones as the Summit nears, as well as to help reframe narratives to overcome potential spoilers.

3. ***Promote globally the findings and recommendations of the HLAB on Effective Multilateralism:*** The HLAB, established in early 2022 by the Secretary-General and co-led by former president of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former prime minister of Sweden Stefan Löfven, has been tasked to "...build on the ideas in *Our Common Agenda* ... to make concrete suggestions for more effective multilateral arrangements across a range of key global issues."[286] The HLAB will issue an independent report in support of this objective in early 2023 (immediately prior to the anticipated formal negotiations on the Pact for the Future).

If past precedent is a guide, this high-level group of former global leaders and experts could have a significant impact in framing the September 2023 Summit of the Future, as did similar efforts in the relatively recent past. For instance, many of the proposals from the 2004 High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, Change achieved policy uptake at the 2005 (UN60) World Summit, including its proposals for a Peacebuilding Commission and an upgrade of the Human Rights Commission to a more-empowered Council with new tools such as the Universal Periodic Review.[287] Similarly, then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened

The modalities resolution could focus preparations for the Summit of the Future around four thematic pillars, whose work would support a fifth, integrative pillar.

Figure 7.1: Roadmap to the 2023 Summit

(*recommended*)

Intergovernmental (and Multistakeholder) Track*

Civil Society-led Track (with UN/Government participation)*

SEPT 2021 — Our *Common Agenda* launched, followed by GA Res.

FEB 2022 — PGA OCA Thematic Consultations commenced

MAY 2022 — Work started on specific priority initiatives

JUNE 2022 — Modalities Resolution negotiation begun

DEC 2022 — Secretariat sets-up organizing team

JAN 2023 — High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism Report

FEB 2023 — Pact for the Future negotiation commenced

JUNE 2023 — P4TF Regional Forums begun

SEPT 2023 — Summit of the Future adopts Pact for the Future

OCT 2023 — Follow-through Mechanisms established

----- PREPARATION OF THE SUMMIT'S "PACT FOR THE FUTURE" OUTCOME DOCUMENT -----

SEPT 2021 — "We The Peoples" and "Next Gen Fellows" reports presented

MAR 2022 — Global Policy Dialogue on Global Governance Innovation

MAY 2022 — OCA Dialogue Discussion Series commenced

JUNE 2022 — ACUNS Annual Meeting and Global Policy Dialogue

OCT 2022 — Civil Society-led Regional Dialogues begun

DEC 2022 — Global Policy Dialogue on the Triple Planetary Crisis

APRIL 2023 — Global People's Assembly: Toward a People's Pact for the Future

JUNE 2023 — ACUNS Annual Meeting & Global Policy Dialogue

SEPT 2023 — Global Futures Forums for legislators, youth & civil society

OCT 2023 — Monitor Follow-through and pursue "unfinished business"

* Only select recommended activities listed.

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center.

a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda that produced a landmark report, in May 2013, that fed into the General Assembly's Open Working Group that produced, in July 2014, the initial SDG framework.[288] In addition to offering the High-Level Advisory Board its carefully researched ideas, diverse actors across civil society could partner with the United Nations in promoting globally the recommendations of the HLAB in connection with the formal negotiations preceding next year's Summit.

4. ***Encourage robust engagement across civil society worldwide***: Meaningful civil society engagement in the Summit's preparations can reassure all stakeholders that decisions taken in September 2023 are well-informed, enjoy broad social ownership, and generate a sense of co-responsibility in supporting their implementation. Summit preparations should:

- ensure that the intergovernmental negotiations both welcome and deliberate on substantive inputs provided by nongovernmental organizations, major groups, and parliamentarians;

- open formal negotiations to public observation;

- support national, regional, and global multi-stakeholder forums in the run-up to the Summit; and

- encourage the involvement of civil society and parliamentarians in the national delegations preparing for the Summit.

In March 2022, the Global Governance Innovation Network and other partners convened a Global Policy Dialogue in Washington, D.C., with civil society policy advocates and researchers, UN Ambassadors, and other senior officials

to further develop proposals from *Our Common Agenda* and generate new ideas for the Summit of the Future (see box 7.2). Similar "GPDs" are now planned for June 2022 in Geneva (during the Annual Meeting of the Academic Council on the UN System) and this coming December in Recife (which will focus on the Triple Planetary Crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution). Moreover, the Coalition for the UN We Need, the Together First campaign, and other partners across civil society plan to convene regional civil society dialogues, monthly multi-stakeholder dialogues, and a Global People's Assembly, which could rally support for ideas presented in a planned "People's Pact for the Future" in the run-up to next year's summit.

5. ***Build consensus around select global governance strengthening proposals:*** As noted above, the Summit's formal preparatory negotiations, from February to September 2023, could involve diverse, UN Permanent Representative-led thematic committees and smaller task forces organized around four pillars: i) peace, security, and humanitarian action; ii) sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery; iii) human rights, inclusive governance, and the rule of law; and iv) climate governance. The co-chairs of the fifth, integrative pillar Executive Committee would serve, simultaneously, as the overall co-coordinators for providing strategic direction to Summit of the Future preparations, in close consultation with the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, and his representative leading the Summit's secretariat.

One of the most important roles of the Executive Committee Co-Chairs, Committee Co-Chairs, and the Under-Secretary-General's organizing team would be to keep UN Member States focused on building consensus around a select number of priority institutional, policy, legal, operational, and normative global governance strengthening proposals (e.g., around 8-10 per thematic pillar, plus 8-10 more to promote integrated, system-wide innovation). To mitigate against an unwieldy Pact for the Future outcome document and to ensure strong linkages with the twelve UN75 Declaration commitments, proposals from *Our Common Agenda*, and the work of the High-Level Advisory Board, the

members of each thematic Committee could be encouraged to rank their proposals according to criteria involving desirability, policy impact, urgency, cost, and implementation feasibility.

Moreover, between July and August 2023, the Executive Committee Co-Chairs, Committee Co-Chairs, and the Under-Secretary-General's organizing team should conduct consultations on the draft P4TF in all major regions worldwide. Among the goals of these multi-stakeholder regional forums could be to garner broad-based support for and refine the Pact for the Future and related instruments' recommendations among diverse stakeholders beyond the "New York Bubble." Building on earlier diverse, multi-actor gatherings held worldwide during the Pact's negotiation phase, these regional dialogues could further culminate in three global gatherings—"Global Futures Forums" for parliamentarians, young leaders, and global civil society—concurrent with (and as integral parts of) the Summit of the Future. Often neglected in UN summitry, parliamentarians, youth, and civil society have fresh ideas on the future of global governance to bring to the table. Importantly, they all possess agency and, in the case of legislators, an officially mandated role—often including budgetary oversight—to generate a sense of co-responsibility in supporting follow-through to the Summit. This might well serve as a dress rehearsal for the United Nations Parliamentary Network (Overview 6.3), which many hope could emerge from the September 2023 Summit.

6. ***Adopt a Pact for the Future and other strategic frameworks for global action:*** World leaders convening for the Summit of the Future, in September 2023 in New York, should endorse a comprehensive Pact for the Future that introduces concrete, measurable, and adequately resourced commitments across the above mentioned four thematic areas. In particular, the P4TF's select (around 40-50) global governance strengthening and innovation proposals would provide new tools and political momentum to better cope with the next pandemic disease, the growing prospect of runaway climate change, violence in fragile states and involving the Great Powers, cross-border economic shocks, and ever more sophisticated cyber-attacks. In

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Box 7.2: Global Policy Dialogue proposals for the Summit of the Future

①

A high-level, system-wide **envoy for civil society** "to ensure that all UN bodies act consistently and drive the UN's outreach to civil society, especially smaller, locally-led civil society groups."

②

A **Responsibilities Chain Task Force** to better tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution by "addressing the entire value chain of producers, consumers … importers and exporters."

③

A **Renewed Agenda for Peace** by confronting less understood "factors that contribute to violent conflict, including water and food insecurity, illicit financial flows, cyber-tools, and climate change."

Source: Global Governance Innovation Network, *Global Policy Dialogue on Global Governance Innovation: Beyond UN75 & Our Common Agenda: Report on Major Findings and Recommendations,* 2022.

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doing so, world leaders, gathering at the United Nations, would usher in a new compact with citizens worldwide to enhance and begin to rebuild confidence in their common institutions at all levels of governance.

In some cases, the P4TF's specific commitments may require follow-on UNGA, UNSC, or ECOSOC resolutions to operationalize an idea (e.g., creating an Emergency Platform or Biennial Summit for global economic governance) or initiate a Charter Article 108 amendment for signature and ratification (e.g., enlarging the Security Council or changing the mandate and composition of the Trusteeship Council). In addition, the Summit could consider and adopt other complementary international instruments, including a Declaration on Future Generations, a New Agenda for Peace, and a Global Digital Compact. These strategic frameworks for global collective action would provide normative, operational, and institutional reform guidance to improve multilateral governance in discrete areas involving, for instance, the Global Commons, the changing nature of war, and cyber-crimes.

7. ***Establish follow-through mechanisms to ensure effective coordination, monitoring, financing, and other actions to facilitate implementation:*** Setbacks of various kinds—political, financial, and operational—are inevitable when mobilizing and implementing significant global governance reform. To encourage follow-through on the Pact for the Future and related strategic frameworks agreed to at the Summit of the Future, the UN Secretariat could prepare an annual progress report, from which the Summit's Executive Committee, the President of the General Assembly, and participating stakeholders could further assess implementation gaps and recommend early corrective action to relevant international bodies, thereby seeking to hold world leaders and international institutions accountable.

The last time the United Nations, including Member States, the Secretariat, and civil society, considered sweeping, system-wide changes was seventeen years ago, in 2005 at the time of the world body's sixtieth anniversary commemoration. While no intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder negotiation design can claim to be an ideal blueprint for achieving intended goals, especially when so much depends on the intangible leadership qualities of those who steer the process, the seven steps articulated in the above "just right" approach can best harness the ideas, networks, and capabilities of a wide range of people and institutions—from governments and international institutions to the private sector and civil society. In doing so, the conditions will be created in the run-up to the September 2023 Summit of the future to meet today's most urgent needs and aspirations and leave both a livable and peaceful planet to future generations.

A Call to Action for World Leaders and Global Civil Society

In addition to fears of emerging new **Covid-19** variants and subvariants, irreversible **climate change**, and eroding **collaboration** in the post-Cold War global economy, an ominous "fourth C" now stresses the globe: **conflict** between Russia and Ukraine has brought destruction and triggered a refugee crisis on a scale not seen in Europe since the Second World War. At the same time, civil wars and extremist violence in Africa and the Middle East continue to wreak human suffering and environmental damage.

Yet, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to review and dramatically improve global tools for managing such enormous challenges, a Summit of the Future, is under serious consideration for September 2023 by the United Nations' 193 Member States. Coping better with the Four Cs and other global challenges will require the development of new conceptual tools, including by enriching—through a just security framework—UN Secretary-General António Guterres' notions of a new social contract, new global deal, and networked and inclusive multilateralism. It will further depend on new policy frameworks, such as a Declaration on Future Generations, a New Agenda for Peace, and a Global Digital Compact.

Adapting our aging but essential United Nations organization to current and emerging crises will also require institutional, legal, and operational (including financing-related) reforms, for which this report offers several ideas, building, in some cases, on the most novel proposals seeded by the Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda*. Taken together, these kinds of innovations can ensure—with the support of a high ambition coalition of like-minded states and civil society organizations—that the Summit of the Future seizes the opportunity to renew global governance and face the collective moral and practical imperatives of our time. They are, as detailed in this report, complementary to, and will better prepare the UN system to help deliver on, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Striking a balance—in the agenda for next year's Summit—between national interests and the provision of global public goods and enlightened global leadership will not be any easy task. Inspiration should be drawn from nearly one hundred years ago, in the aftermath of the devastating First World War, when in 1928 leaders from fifteen major countries signed the Paris Peace Pact, the first global agreement to regard war as a departure from civilized politics.[289] While it clearly did not create world peace, it did spark a series of events that would eventually make inter-state wars far less common. In particular, it facilitated the creation of the United Nations and other international institutions and agreements to privilege cooperation, rather than war, in how states conduct their relations with other states, however big or small.[290]

When Russia, a leading founder of the 1945 United Nations (as successor to the Soviet Union), indicates through its illegal actions in Ukraine a preference for traditional power-politics, where might makes right, the need becomes unequivocal to upgrade and equip our multilateral institutions to, at the very least, secure the gains from decades ago in establishing a more rules-based international order. The case for shifting our thinking on and the design of global governance becomes ever more glaring when one considers the scale and complexity of the ongoing pandemic, the accelerating pace of climate change, and other nearly unparalleled global challenges.

While the Pact for the Future to be endorsed at next year's Summit of the Future—like the Paris Peace Pact—may not lead overnight to the resolution of today's colossal global problems, it could set into motion a series of events and facilitate, over time, a more comprehensive and impactful overhaul of our international system and of the laws and norms that underpin it. Armed with this measured outlook that combines patience with courage and imagination, we cannot afford to aim for less between now and the Summit, because nothing less than humanity's future hangs in the balance.

Annex

Resources on global governance innovation from the Stimson Center and its partners

Reports and Books:

- *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance* (*June 2015*)

- *Just Security in an Undergoverned World* (*Oxford University Press, 2018*)

- *An Innovation Agenda for UN75: The Albright-Gambari Commission Report and the Road to 2020* (*June 2019*)

- *Reimagining Governance in a Multipolar World* (*co-published by the Doha Forum and Stimson Center, September 2019*)

- *UN 2.0: Ten Innovations for Global Governance – 75 Years beyond San Francisco* (*June 2020*)

- *Coping with New and Old Crises: Global and Regional Cooperation in an Age of Epidemic Uncertainty* (*co-published by the Doha Forum and Stimson Center, December 2020*)

- *Fulfilling the UN75 Declaration's Promise: An Expert Series' Synthesis of Major Insights and Recommendations* (*June 2021*)

- *Beyond UN75: A Roadmap for Inclusive, Networked & Effective Global Governance* (*June 2021*)

- *Building Back Together and Greener: Twenty Initiatives for a Just, Healthy and Sustainable Global Recovery* (*September 2021*)

Action Plans from the Global Policy Dialogues series:

- *Preventive Action, Sustaining Peace & Global Governance* (*Doha: Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, December 2018*)

- *Global Security, Justice & Economic Institutions* (*Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, June 2019*)

- *Climate Governance: Innovating the Paris Agreement and Beyond* (*Seoul: Global Green Growth Institute, October 2019*)

- *Global Economic Institutions* (*Washington, D.C.: World Bank, November 2019*)

- *Roadmap for the Future We Want & UN We Need: A Vision 20/20 for UN75 & Beyond* (*UN75 Global Governance Forum, September 2020*)

- *Global Policy Dialogue on Global Governance Innovation: Beyond UN75 & Our Common Agenda* (*Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, Georgetown, and USIP, March 2022*)

UN75 Global Governance Innovation Perspectives policy brief series:

- *Towards Multiple Security Councils* (*June 2020*)

- *Multilateralism for Chronic Risks* (*June 2020*)

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UN75 Regional Dialogues summaries:

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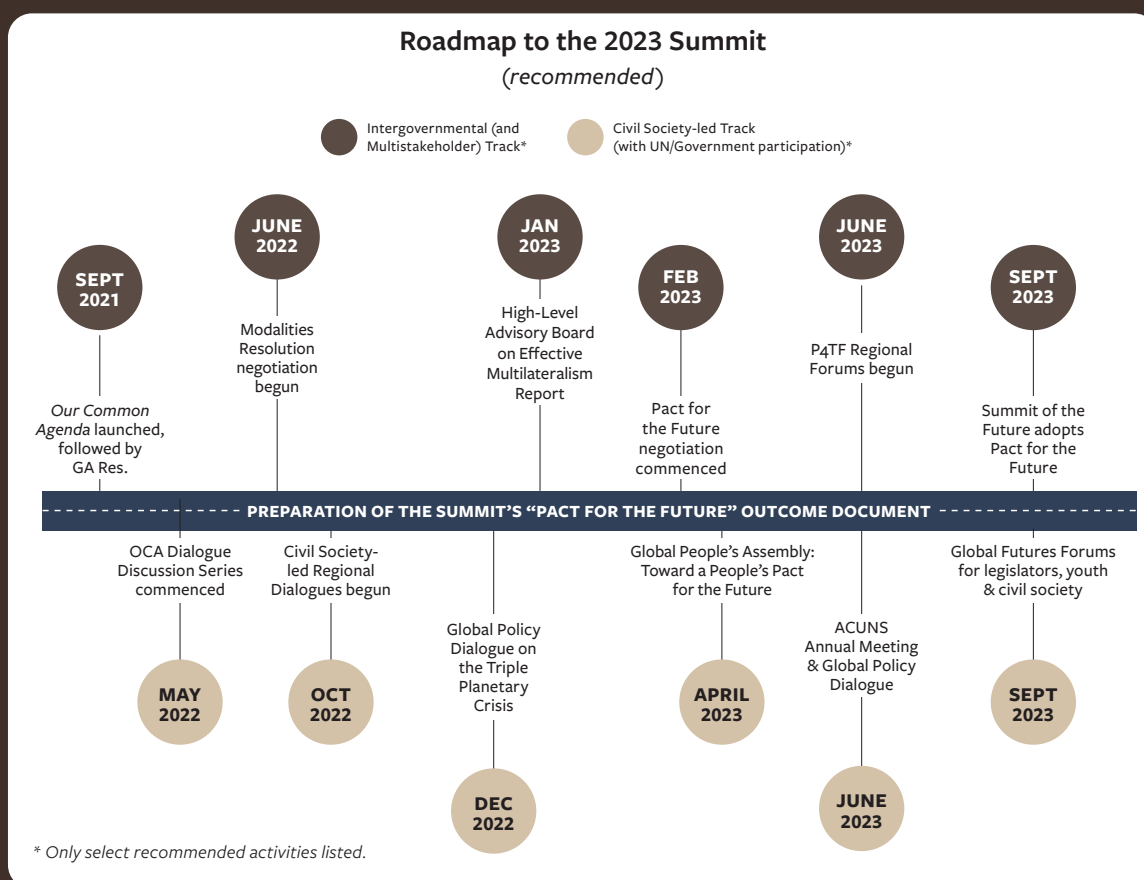
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Road to 2023

Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future

"When the late Madeleine Albright and I launched, in June 2015, *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance* ... both the headlines and the trendlines had begun to foreshadow the return of a virulent form of exclusionary nationalism amidst surging migration ... and the emergence of leaders who dehumanize others and seek power through division, not unity." —*Foreword to Road to 2023, Ibrahim Gambari* (2022)

"[Beyond UN75] charts a path toward an ambitious 2023 World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance to advance the ideas for change emerging from the Secretary-General's 'Global Conversation' of last year and from his much anticipated report, *Our Common Agenda*, to be released in September 2021." —*Foreword to Beyond UN75, María Fernanda Espinosa and Danilo Türk (2021)*

Roadmap to the 2023 Summit
(recommended)

Intergovernmental (and Multistakeholder) Track*

Civil Society-led Track (with UN/Government participation)*

SEPT 2021
Our Common Agenda launched, followed by GA Res.

JUNE 2022
Modalities Resolution negotiation begun

JAN 2023
High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism Report

FEB 2023
Pact for the Future negotiation commenced

JUNE 2023
P4TF Regional Forums begun

SEPT 2023
Summit of the Future adopts Pact for the Future

PREPARATION OF THE SUMMIT'S "PACT FOR THE FUTURE" OUTCOME DOCUMENT

OCA Dialogue Discussion Series commenced

Civil Society-led Regional Dialogues begun

Global Policy Dialogue on the Triple Planetary Crisis

Global People's Assembly: Toward a People's Pact for the Future

ACUNS Annual Meeting & Global Policy Dialogue

Global Futures Forums for legislators, youth & civil society

MAY 2022

OCT 2022

DEC 2022

APRIL 2023

JUNE 2023

SEPT 2023

* Only select recommended activities listed.

Fears of escalating conflict, new COVID-19 variants, irreversible climate change, and eroding collaboration in the global economy threaten to undermine the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other efforts to advance human progress. Yet, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to review and dramatically improve global tools for managing such enormous challenges, a Summit of the Future, is under serious consideration for September 2023 by the United Nations' 193 Member States. Informed by research and policy dialogues—initially undertaken for the Albright-Gambari Commission and its follow-through, and most recently to help flesh out key proposals in the Secretary-General's seminal report, *Our Common Agenda*—this report's twenty main recommendations are intended to encourage more ambitious, forward-looking thinking and deliberation on global governance renewal and innovation in the run-up to next year's Summit.