



Applying Sustaining Peace

Workshop Series

Background

The 2015 Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on peacebuilding pointed to the urgent need to bridge different parts of the UN system around a long-term vision of peace, one that did not follow the common linear and sequenced approach to conflict response, of humanitarian action, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and development. On April 27, 2016, the “sustaining peace” resolutions adopted in the General Assembly and the Security Council set out to do just that.

The resolutions define sustaining peace as including “activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.” Sustaining peace is an inherently political process that spans prevention, mediation, conflict management and resolution, and integrated approaches to peacebuilding. It aims to ensure national ownership through inclusivity while sustaining international attention and assistance. The messages of the AGE Report and the “sustaining peace” resolutions are aligned with those of other key reviews and processes at the UN, most notably the High-Level Independent Panel of Peace Operations, the Global Study on Women, Peace, and Security, and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as well as the inclusive, transformative and people-centered vision of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It is now time to move beyond rhetorical commitments, and work on the practical application of sustaining peace.

For sustaining peace to gain traction as a conceptual, strategic, practical, and actionable approach, the UN needs to address a number of long-identified deficits and gaps. These include the need to avoid technical and supply-driven approaches and one-size-fits-all solutions, to respect nationally identified priorities, to support local and national mechanisms for prevention, and to interact inclusively with local actors and relevant stakeholders. However, the increasingly dangerous environments where peace operations are deployed, the attention, capacity and resource deficits hampering effective prevention and peacebuilding, and the fragmentation of the UN system make the above tasks hard to implement in practice.

Practical Dialogue

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the International Peace Institute, and the NYU Center on International Cooperation will support member states and the UN system in better

understanding and implementing sustaining peace through an informal workshop series, research and analysis, and strategic convening.

A series of informal workshops on sustaining peace will consider what particular aspects of the framework could look like in practice, and lay out the challenges for implementation. Six workshops will be held by mid-2017 with the following proposed topics: 1) sustaining peace in UN peace operation mandates and throughout mission transitions; 2) financing efforts to sustain peace; 3) inclusivity and community participation; 4) strategic and structural prevention; 5) partnerships and regional organizations; and 6) revitalizing the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). Topics will be chosen based on deemed usefulness and interest and can be adjusted as the workshop series progresses. Each session will analyze relevant country examples, as well as the role of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

Generating New Ideas

The workshops will bring together targeted groups of UN system staff, mission experts, and academics and practitioners in an informal setting, to generate concrete ideas that move sustaining peace forward, to be captured and further researched and analyzed in a short meeting brief on each topic.

The series will result in a policy paper that analyzes how the UN can work differently, and how it can apply the vision of sustaining peace in practice—from putting member states and their populations in the lead, to putting politics and political solutions front and center, giving prevention an uncontested home, leveraging the UN's three foundational pillars in a mutually reinforcing way, and partnering better with relevant stakeholders.

In June 2017, drawing on both the workshop discussions and policy paper, if considered useful, DHF, IPI, and CIC will co-host a seminar to offer recommendations on practically applying sustaining peace across the UN's work. The policy paper and discussion are intended to inform the Secretary-General elect's report on sustaining peace, mandated by the identical Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, due out in late 2017.

Format

The workshops will be informal, practical gatherings, each circa two hours. With a focus on generating ideas rather than discussion, a few specific questions will be formulated for each workshop. The hosting of the workshops will rotate between DHF, IPI, and CIC. The format of a potential broader gathering at the end of the workshop series to consolidate ideas is left open at this stage, to ensure maximum usefulness of such an event.

Participation

The workshops will target a small group of UN system staff, member state experts, academics and practitioners who share a keen interest and willingness to concretely identify and facilitate next steps and changes needed for effective application of the sustaining peace framework.