Instruments for Sustaining Peace: The Contribution of Strategic Foresight

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Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General recently observed that "We have war reporters, but there are no peace reporters".[1] Building and sustaining peace is a long-term endeavour and does not create the headlines that war does. However, it is not only the attention of the media, but also that of governments, regional and international organisations, and others that have difficulty focusing on the long-term efforts required to build and sustain peace, and instead focus on short-term crises associated with conflict. This perpetuates a cycle whereby the issues that are growing in importance are not tackled early enough and become the crisis of the day. How can this cycle be broken?

The concept of sustaining peace provides one answer.[2] This concept, as the UN proposed in 2016, emphasises "a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes".[3] It recognises that the stages or phases of any conflict are not clearly defined categories, and therefore attempts to break down barriers between artificially defined phases. It also includes explicit direction for approaches that are integrated across all sectors, and emphasises early action based firstly on the input of a wide group of stakeholders from across the society of a conflict-affected country and secondly on strong local, regional and international partnerships.[4] The implementation of the sustaining peace concept is ongoing.[5]

Another component of the answer to the question of how to break the cycle referred to above comes from strategic foresight. Strategic foresight is the "structured and explicit exploration of multiple futures in order to inform decision-making".[6] It thus includes both a strategic thinking dimension, but also one of action and agency. Strategic foresight has a long history of increasing application in the public and private sectors across a variety of

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[1] UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the UN Security Council 8906th Meeting, S/PV.8906, 16 November 2021, p.2, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N21/340/53/PDF/N2134053.pdf?OpenElement.

[2] UNSC (UN Security Council), Resolution 2282 (2016), S/RES/2282 (2016), 27 April 2016, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/118/51/PDF/N1611851.pdf?OpenElement; UNGA (UN General Assembly), Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, A/RES/70/262, 12 May 2016, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_262.pdf.

[3] UNGA, 2016, p.2.

[4] These sectors include development, human rights, humanitarian action, peace operations, peacebuilding and political action (C. de Coning et al., *Adaptive Peacebuilding: A New Approach to Sustaining Peace in the 21st Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, pp.3-4, https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-18219-8)).

[5] Ibid., p.4.

[6] OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), "Strategic Foresight for Better Policies: Building Effective Governance in the Face of Uncertain Futures", October 2019, p.3, https://www.oecd.org/strategic-foresight/ourwork/Strategic%20Foresight%20for%20Better%20Policies.pdf.

topics.[7] While rapid technological change and the growing impact of climate change were increasing the prominence and value of strategic foresight approaches prior to 2020, more recent events like the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have led to an increasing interest in this approach, including in the peace and security domain.

How strategic foresight can support efforts to build lasting peace received strong support from the UN Secretary-General in his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*, when he recommended that the New Agenda for Peace (which is due to be published in the form of a UN Secretary-General Policy Brief in June 2023) focuses in part on "Strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new peace and security risks".[8] Initiatives by Mexico in November 2021 and Japan in January 2023 in the UN Security Council (UNSC) under their respective presidencies of that body have provided opportunities for debate on themes related to sustaining peace.[9]

A further debate scheduled by Switzerland during its UNSC presidency in May 2023 will renew attention on the issue in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future in 2024 and at a strategic time before the New Agenda for Peace is due. At least one permanent member of the UNSC, the United Kingdom (UK), explicitly encouraged the UN to strengthen its "foresight capabilities to anticipate risks and inform our responses" in the context of the prevention of conflict and the implementation of nationally owned peacebuilding processes during the 26 January 2023 UNSC debate.[10]

An important backdrop to these recent efforts is the overarching commitment made in the preamble of the UN Charter "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war",[11] and renewed emphasis on what today's policymakers owe future generations.[12] This is an issue that

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[7] I. Dreyer and G. Stang, "Foresight in Governments – Practices and Trends around the World", *Yearbook of European Security, European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 2013, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2.1_Foresight_in_governments.pdf.

[8] UN (United Nations), *Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-GeneraI*, 10 September 2021, p.60, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/our-common-agenda-report-secretary-general?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhIHz3tHs_gIVwtPtCh2JNQ7gEAAYASAAEgKl2vD_BwE.

[9] UNSC, "Statement by the President of the Security Council", S/PRST/2021/23, 16 November 2021, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/341/85/PDF/N2134185.pdf?OpenElement; UNSC, "Letter Dated 5 January 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General", S/2023/19, 5 January 2023, Annex, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N23/007/48/PDF/N2300748.pdf?OpenElement.

[10] UNSC, 9250th UNSC Meeting, S/PV.9250, 26 January 2023, p.20, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9250.pdf.

[11] UN, United Nations Charter: Preamble, 26 June 1945, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/preamble.

[12] Our Common Agenda has a number of explicit proposals, such as the appointment of a Special Envoy on Future Generations (pending) and a Policy Brief on Future Generations, "To Think and Act as One" (issued by the UN in March 2023 and available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-future-generations-en.pdf).

Switzerland reminded the UNSC of in the 26 January 2023 debate, stating "the New Agenda for Peace must serve as leverage for building sustainable peace. In these dark times, we owe it to all generations, everywhere in the world, to join our efforts and seize this opportunity".[13]

This Policy Brief will address the gaps that exist in the steps we need to take today to build long-term sustainable peace. At its heart it will be a discussion of the instruments that link insights on how the future may evolve with decision-making around building peaceful societies. It will be argued that these foresight instruments need to be both routine and agile, and that they should be embedded in institutions involved in building sustainable peace.

Challenges

Why is it so difficult to plan to build peaceful, secure societies with the long term in mind? There is no one or quick answer to this question. Building peace is multifaceted and, above all, highly specific to a particular context. Therefore, much emphasis is placed on putting local actors at the centre of all efforts to build and sustain peace. On the other hand, however, the future is uncertain. Foresight can be a constructive contribution to sustaining peace and enhancing security and is geared towards building on existing practice.

Foresight's contribution to peace and security can be thought about around three connected lines:

1. *issues and alternatives*, which involve exploring the issues that affect efforts to sustain peace[14] (including identifying weak signals, for example), devising scenarios of how the future may unfold, and exchanging strategically on the implications of these scenarios;

2. *instruments*, which involve exploring how insights based on foresight processes are translated into decision-making and the creation of effective mechanisms for sustaining peace; and

3. *settings*, which involve a nuanced approach to diverse settings, in particular fragile settings, but with a universal perspective that threats and the possibility of conflict can occur anywhere and at any time.

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[13] Switzerland, "Swiss Statements at the United Nations Security Council", "Open Debate on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace", 26 January 2023, https://www.aplusforpeace.ch/open-debate-peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace.

[14] There is a strong emphasis in foresight on identifying both challenges *and* opportunities when analysing emerging issues. This connects well with the move from a negative peace to a positive peace in the sustaining peace concept.

While underlining the connections between these areas, peace- and security-related foresight practice indicates that particular challenges can affect the process of devising effective instruments to build and sustain peace. These are briefly discussed below.

Short-termism

Acting before conflict has broken out and humanitarian efforts and calls for ceasefires become the imperative is always the aim. Much effort is invested in preventive diplomacy and mediation, but the situation is often at a critical stage when these processes are initiated. National and international actors involved in building and sustaining peace then spend their time fire fighting and not planning with long-term dynamics in mind. With so many competing priorities and limited resources, initiatives to build long-term peace and sustainable development may meet with widespread theoretical agreement, but do not receive the attention they deserve in practice. Strategic foresight tools and techniques can support efforts to overcome such a clash of priorities by speaking to the need to first focus on the here and now, and then, based on a foresight analysis, create common visions for the future and devise actions today that can bring these about. A critical part of the design process is to create a safe space for a participatory and representative discussion.

Complexity

The complexity of the issues and volatility of the international environment are widely cited as affecting efforts to build sustainable peace and enhance security. Threats are highly interconnected, but our institutions are organised in terms of siloed domains (foreign affairs, economy, agriculture, etc.). The issues impacting international peace and security are often highly technical and require the involvement of specialist expertise, be it of a technological or environmental nature, for example. Challenges to building sustainable peace do not only originate locally, but are mixed with regional and global challenges, including larger existential risks.[15] Foresight methods are particularly fitted to working across silos and involving different domains, addressing the interconnections and impact cascades between issues, and looking at the policy implications of these interconnected processes.

Institutional design

The ways in which institutions are designed and their human resources are managed (rotation, training, evaluation, etc.) perpetuate a short-term logic around programmes and policies for sustaining peace. Firstly, incentives for partnerships which work across domains at the national or international level are insufficient. The sustaining peace concept is a step in the right

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[15] See, for instance, the work of the Centre for the Study of Existential Risks at the University of Cambridge (https://www.cser.ac.uk/) or the Global Challenges Foundation (https://globalchallenges.org/) in Stockholm.

direction and important efforts have been made to break down walls around peace and security, development and human rights pillars within the UN. Secondly, impact of responses to conflict must often be demonstrated too rapidly and explicitly, leaving insufficient room for long-term peacebuilding efforts to grow and develop or for conflict prevention initiatives to be recognised. Because of this, rethinking results-based management approaches to include the elements of complexity and agility is key. Thirdly, the modus operandi of staff and leaders is largely focused on the short term and deeply engrained in institutional cultures and human resources planning and evaluation. If staff do have a mandate for long-term strategic planning – e.g. in national ministries in fragile settings or in peacebuilding missions – they may lack resources (human or financial) and are largely not strategically engaged close enough to the leadership to influence decisions. Paradoxically, however, they should also have enough distance to allow open, free thinking. They thus often find themselves in a position that requires the ongoing maintenance of an extremely delicate balance.

Absence of mechanisms

Another policy challenge is quite simply that the mechanisms to include long-term thinking on sustainable peace and security in effective and meaningful ways are often missing. Insights from foresight may be readily available, whether they be weak signals identified in a potential conflict area or scenarios that offer critical insights into how a situation may evolve and how meaningful responses could be designed. However, they may not be effectively presented so that decision-makers can use them for policymaking. It is this tension that lies at the heart of the challenge.

Attempts have been increasingly made to address this challenge. The UK's initiative in horizon-scanning briefings that the UN's Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) presented to the UNSC between 2010 and 2013 (with notable breaks) is one example.[16] The European Union (EU) is at the forefront of demonstrable efforts to connect foresight and policymaking,[17] and has implemented specific mechanisms to do so such as its resilience dashboards.[18] However, much more thinking on how foresight can contribute to conflict prevention can be done to complement existing work on conflict analysis, and early warning and early response systems.[19]

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[16] UNSC, *In Hindsight: Horizons-Scanning Briefings*, 1 May 2013, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2013-05/in_hindsight_horizon_scanning_briefings.php; UNSC, *Horizon-Scanning Briefings*, October 2017, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/working_methods_horizon_scanning.pdf.

[17] See, for instance, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight_en#supporting-eu-policy-making.

[18] European Commission, *Resilience Dashboard for the Social and Economic, Green, Digital, and Geopolitical Dimensions*, 29 November 2021, https://commission.europa.eu/publications/resilience-dashboards-report-and-annex_en.

[19] See for example, H. Willmot, *Improving U.N. Situational Awareness*, Stimson Center, August 2017, https://

Given the impetus created via the *Our Common Agenda* report, this is an opportunity to design mechanisms for long-term thinking on sustaining peace that increase the inclusivity of stakeholders, put local actors at the centre of efforts, and are embedded in existing structures in order to increase effectiveness and ensure an action orientation.

Politicisation

At its heart, conflict prevention is the process of taking measures so that something does not occur. Considerable uncertainty and discomfort are involved in this process, because those involved may not be able to base policies and programmes on as firm an evidence basis as would be ideal. There can be disagreements on whether a combination of factors may lead to conflict. Furthermore, international peace and security can be a sensitive area where factors such as alliances and national sovereignty figure prominently. Taboos may be broached, leading to potentially tense exchanges and allegations of warmongering or unwarranted idealism – or, worse, no exchanges at all. Priorities may not be the same for all stakeholders, for a variety of reasons.

Realistically, however, it is not always possible to put politics aside. Where possible, stakeholders should use a foresight approach as a bridge. Foresight can be used to create a conducive setting for dialogue around a common vision for the future in a particular context and how to achieve that vision today. They can thus present a set of alternatives to decision-makers and stress the implications of both action and inaction.

Policy implications

A continued focus on the short term in efforts to achieve sustainable peace leads to the ineffective prevention of human suffering and a high financial burden. The World Bank's 2018 Pathways to Peace report stated clearly that conflict prevention is cost-effective, estimating that US$5-70 billion can be saved with preventive action.[20] In 2020 the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee found that "Current levels of ODA [official development assistance] are not sufficient in reducing poverty and addressing other crises in conflict-affected, fragile states, specifically in supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives", indicating that only 4% of ODA is spent on conflict

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www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/file-attachments/UNSituationalAwareness_FINAL_Web.pdf; Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform, "The New Agenda for Peace: An Opportunity to Advance Prevention through Civil Society-United Nations Partnerships", 9 February 2023, p.8, https://gppac.net/resources/new-agenda-peace-opportunity-advance-prevention-through-civil-society-united-nations.

[20] World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, 2018, p.3, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/publication/pathways-for-peace-inclusive-approaches-to-preventing-violent-conflict.

prevention and 13% on peacebuilding.[21] In terms of human suffering, while there were fewer conflicts in 2021, they were more deadly, with 119,100 deaths linked to organised violence.[22] In 2022 a UN Development Programme report stated that 1.2 billion people live in conflict-affected areas.[23] Furthermore, people's general levels of insecurity are high: an estimated six in seven people worldwide felt moderately or very insecure even before the COVID-19 outbreak.[24]

Recognition of the mismatch between the scale of the problem and the level of the response is growing, and policy action is being taken. More and more countries and individuals around the world, including young people, are investigating and adopting strategic foresight as a valuable approach to dealing with a whole range of challenges. A future generation commissioner and parliamentary commission for the future have been appointed in some governments.[25] The Next Generation Foresight Practitioners and UNICEF's Youth Foresight Fellows are other initiatives to highlight.[26] Growth in multi-stakeholder foresight initiatives that aim to influence policymaking in fragile settings can also be observed. An increasing number of ministries of foreign affairs and development actors are employing foresight strategies in their approaches. Other work to influence policy decisions that can have long-term implications but require specific expertise is also under way.[27]

In the UN context, the influence of the *Our Common Agenda* report and the Secretary-General's internal UN 2.0 Quintet of Change initiative are critical drivers of a more foresight-oriented approach.[28] UN 2.0 tasks the entire UN family with taking concrete steps to accelerate organisational transformation and offer more relevant and system-wide solutions to the challenges the world faces, in part by using strategic foresight.[29] The UN DPPA Innovation Cell's Futuring Peace initiative is only one example of this implementation.[30]

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[21] DAC-CSO Reference Group, "On Conflict and Fragility and the Importance of Peace in the Triple Nexus", 13 November 2020, https://www.dac-csoreferencegroup.com/post/on-conflict-and-fragility-and-the-importance-of-peace-in-the-triple-nexus. The figures for 2018 were reported in 2020.

[22] S. Davies et al., "Organized Violence 1989-2021 and Drone Warfare", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.59(4), 2022, pp.593-610, https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221108428.

[23] UNDP (UN Development Programme), *2022 Special Report on Human Security*, New York, 2022, p.5.

[24] Ibid., pp.3, 4, 13, 14.

[25] Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, https://www.futuregenerations.wales/; Committee of the Future of the Parliament of Finland, https://www.eduskunta.fi/EN/valiokunnat/tulevaisuusvaliokunta/Pages/default.aspx.

[26] See https://nextgenforesight.org/ and https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/youth-foresight-fellows.

[27] See, for instance, the work of the Simon Institute for Longterm Governance, https://www.simoninstitute.ch/.

[28] It should be noted, however, that this work began long before this, including at UNDP and UNESCO, for example.

[29] The other aspects that make up the Quintet of Change are data, innovation and behavioural science (UN, "UN 2.0 Quintet of Change", September 2021, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/09/un_2.0_-_quintet_of_change.pdf.

[30] https://futuringpeace.org/.

The *Our Common Agenda* report includes a host of initiatives that are foresight-related and in various stages of development and implementation by the UN and its member states. These include the Summit of the Future scheduled for September 2024 and the ministerial-level preparatory meeting for this summit in 2023, a Pact for the Future to be agreed upon by member states, an annual Global Risk and Foresight Report by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and the creation of a UN Futures Lab. More specifically as regards sustaining peace, the Secretary-General has asked the lead drafters of the policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace (DPPA, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Office of Counter-Terrorism, Office for Disarmament Affairs) to address the role of strategic foresight. The other core themes are also closely interrelated, especially those on reducing strategic risks, investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and supporting regional conflict prevention activities.

However, while policy initiatives and explorations of the value that strategic foresight can bring to building peace and enhancing security exist, much more can be done.

Policy recommendations

Concerted action has been called for in light of the challenges facing efforts to build sustainable peace and constructive approaches have been welcomed. Focus should be placed on building instruments that oblige all actors involved in sustaining peace to take the long term into account in order to effectively influence decision-making today. Making a case for this in terms of reducing human suffering and/or enhancing cost-efficiency is part of the argument, but may not be enough. To overcome the many challenges, incentives need to be created that speak to the interests and realities of all the actors involved. Foresight is offered as a key form of support for efforts to sustain peace and as an approach that can perform a mediating function between today and tomorrow. Specific suggestions as to what can be done are discussed below.

Ensure that foresight analysis for sustaining peace is routine

Foresight is a structured approach to managing uncertainty. Considering how a situation or issue may develop along multiple pathways in the years to come permits an exploration of implications and possible responses. It is an approach that fits well with the concept of adaptive peacebuilding, which recognises uncertainty, encourages experimentation, and adjusts policy directions in light of new dynamics that may arise.[31] Such initiatives

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[31] C. de Coning, "Adaptive Peacebuilding: Leveraging the Context-specific and Participatory Dimensions of Self-sustainable Peace", in in De Coning et al., 2023, p.29.

should become routine, in the same way that we currently conduct conflict analyses and have early warning and early response systems that focus on shorter time frames. These can work in a complementary fashion with foresight in a two-way street, with short-term analysis identifying issues that have high levels of uncertainty where foresight methods can be applied, and foresight analysis identifying issues that may be coming sooner than previously anticipated that conflict-analysis approaches are well suited for. Critical to making this a routine response is that mandates or obligations to conduct long-term planning that take into account change are already in place in several countries, supported by regional, international and civil society actors.[32] Demonstrating the agility of foresight will be critical. Innovations based on how technology can be used to provide insights into the future shape of conflicts are important, as are qualitative approaches. All these approaches have strong principles and standards, but to ensure effectiveness and impact, increased collaboration will be necessary. Concrete initiatives that engage diverse partners, in particular local actors, and are methodologically robust are a good starting point. The Weathering Risk initiative of Adelphi and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research provides inspiration for other initiatives that should be encouraged.[33]

Integrate foresight into existing structures

The integration of such approaches into existing structures is key. Foresight analysis must speak the language of the local society. As foresight is integrated in this way, it is important to underline that it will still be essential to guard a safe space where possible futures can be fully explored. With the impetus of the *Our Common Agenda* report and UN 2.0, the UN can also play a leadership role by ensuring that existing DPPA analysis outputs on countries and regions supported by input from UN country teams include a dedicated foresight component.[34] It will be especially important to translate this into briefings to UN leadership and member states. More broadly, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) may be considered as an organisational home for foresight-based analysis aimed at preventing conflict and sustaining peace with future generations in mind that is closely connected to decision-making.[35] This is particularly the case in light of recent

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[32] Reporting around the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the EU's Resilience Dashboards provides interesting examples that could be developed in terms of obligations to future generations.

[33] https://www.weatheringrisk.org/en.

[34] This has recently been noted in: DPPA, Strategic Plan 2023-2026, January 2023, pp.22-23, https://dppa. un.org/en/strategic-plan-2023-2026#:~:text=DPPA's%20new%20Strategic%20Plan%20sets,over%20the%20 coming%20three%20years.

[35] Some recommendations have been made in terms of upgrading the PBC to the status of a Peacebuilding Council (W. Durch et al. (eds), *Road to 2023: Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future*, Stimson Center, June 2022, p.30, https://www.stimson.org/2022/road-to-2023-our-common-agenda-and-the-pact-for-the-future/).

calls for the PBC to play a more central role in conflict prevention and the opportunity to review its activities in 2025. A mechanism will most likely need to be created to provide this effort with leadership, structure and staying power. UN members states that have strong experience in national foresight programmes can take on roles within the PBC, and non-permanent UNSC members can be important shepherds of these changes. Another area to keep in mind is the importance of strategic foresight training for all levels of an organisation (top leadership, middle management, lower-level teams, etc.).

Prioritise regional actors and instruments

The leadership of local actors in efforts to sustain peace is an explicit priority, and regional organisations play a critical role here. The UNSC regularly meets with regional organisations, and the statements issued after these meetings indicate a strong emphasis on early warning and prevention.[36] The New Agenda for Peace will also emphasise the role of regional organisations. Further operationalising the role of regional organisations in sustaining peace should be an area of focus,[37] including via joint workshops on relevant emerging issues, engagement in collaborative and collective future-oriented intelligence-building processes, and strategic foresight capacity development. Another specific area of engagement with regional organisations can be through the UN's Strategic Foresight and Global Risk Report. This could take the form of dialogues on aspects of a finished report or solicited inputs to future reports. The latter has the potential to provide an impetus to create foresight initiatives at local levels and to have interesting secondary impacts that may generate momentum within and across regions (depending on the format of engagement) to develop enhanced understandings of future concerns, visions and priorities that can help sustain peace.

Include decision-makers

It is not enough to know how to conduct foresight processes: the leadership of key institutions needs to be sensitised to what foresight is, its role, and the way it can be used in decision-making. Sometimes it is a natural part of a leadership's modus operandi, but other times not, and due to the often-rapid rotation of leaders, it cannot be taken for granted. Knowing your audience – their interests and how to communicate with them – is a key component. One way to address this is through the training and development of middle managers to increase their foresight literacy. These

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[36] S/PRST/2022/1 (League of Arab States); S/PRST/2021/21 (African Union); S/PRST/2021/9 (general); S/PV.9268 (European Union).

[37] On this point, please see the recommendations of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB) on establishing "collective security framework between the United Nations and major regional bodies" (HLAB, *A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future*, 2023, pp.50-51, https://highleveladvisoryboard.org/breakthrough/pdf/56892_UNU_HLAB_report_Final_LOWRES.pdf).

managers will become the leaders of tomorrow and are possible champions of foresight initiatives. Another way is by building partnerships with other organisations that have already embedded foresight into their work. Whatever the case, agility and imaginative practice will be necessary.

Ensuring a supply of and demand for foresight skills is key.[38] An organisation's leaders will need to play their part on the demand side by not focusing solely on crisis management, while at the international level the UNSC must play a role. Change only happens incrementally in the Security Council,[39] but the reformed PBC can be an influencing factor here if specific foresight-related structures are created either before or after the 2025 review. Permanent and non-permanent UNSC members can also be drivers of the process by asking parts of the UN system for briefings that include forward-looking analysis. Continuing with Arria-formula meetings[40] (which can include civil society representatives) on emerging issues and threats to international peace and security is also an avenue, which may in time develop into more systematic initiatives.[41]

Foster multi-stakeholder networks

Networks can be critical drivers of efforts to build support for foresight and places for valuable exchanges on foresight practice and innovation.[42] The building of sustainable peace requires inclusive approaches that engage a multi-stakeholder community, including civil society, in particular in the Global South. Again, it will be important to use existing structures. A Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform exists that could foster an initiative on using future-orientated analysis to achieve sustainable peace. The new UN Futures Lab will be another avenue for bridging expertise on emerging issues with policy requirements and may have an ability to foster a wider community of practice linking the UN system and others. National governments can also play a role by creating a forum to exchange

[38] School of International Futures, *Features of Effective Systemic Foresight in Governments around the World*, April 2021, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/features-of-effective-systemic-foresight-in-governments-globally.

[39] For an interesting discussion of the question of how the highly politicised UNSC innovates, see V. Pouliot, "The Gray Area of Institutional Change: How the Security Council Transforms Its Practices on the Fly", *Journal of Global Security Studies*, Vol.6(3), September 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa043.

[40] Arria-formula meetings were first created to enable dialogue to take place between members and non-members of the UNSC, in a way that would allow member states to be frank in a private setting; see UNSC, "Arria-Formula Meetings", 16 December 2020, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/arria-formula-meetings.php.

[41] It should be noted that both the UK-initiated horizon-scanning briefings (UNSC, 2013; 2017) and the subsequent use of "any other business" for conflict-prevention-related and emerging issues have met with challenges. See UNSC, *In Hindsight: Making Effective Use of 'Any Other Business'*, 1 April 2016, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2016-04/in_hindsight_making_effective_use_of_any_other_business_1.php.

[42] A clear example of this is the EU's European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, which is an inter-institutional EU body that has an international outreach (https://www.espas.eu/).

experiences and good practices on sustaining peace in the long term as a concrete outcome of the Summit of the Future in 2024 and Pact for the Future. This would build on some governments' experience and build up the skills and practice of others in the spirit of solidarity. It could include a multi-stakeholder group of participants from government, academia, think tanks, and NGOs that could exchange approaches, insights, and ideas. A preparatory meeting of like-minded governments could provide leadership and drive to such an initiative.

Conclusion

There is a clear opportunity to enhance the international community's ability to build sustainable peace by tapping into the momentum developing around a policy orientation towards future generations and the related use of approaches such as strategic foresight. This moment brings with it promising developments and areas of work. Strategic foresight needs to be better integrated into efforts to sustain peace. The applications that exist need to be shared and contributions spelt out. Agile collaborations also need to develop, the accessibility of foresight needs to be underlined, innovations need to be pursued, and strategic foresight needs to be embedded in existing structures. Specifically, this Policy Brief recommends that concerted action should be taken to:

• ensure that foresight analysis for sustaining peace is routine;

• integrate foresight into existing structures;

• prioritise regional actors and instruments;

• include decision-makers; and

• foster multi-stakeholder networks.

To move ahead, a focus on long-term horizons needs to be recognised as an approach that delivers a core purpose within organisations involved in building sustainable peace.

People make peace and security possible

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