Center on International Cooperation

Business Plan

September 2020 – August 2022
# CIC Business Plan, September 2020–August 2022

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Cover photos: United Nations 75th General Assembly, September 2020 (UN Photo/Manuel Elias); March for racial justice in North Carolina, September 2020 (CC BY 2.0 Anthony Crider); Rohingya women making facemasks at a UN Women center in Bangladesh, May 2020 (UN Women/Nadira Islam); Fire crews from Idaho assist with Australian bushfire, February 2020 (CC BY 2.0 Clay Stephens/Bureau of Land Management Idaho); UNMISS peacekeepers from Nepal receive UN medal, September 2020 (UN Photo/Isaac Billy).
Executive Summary

Vision
CIC’s vision is to advance effective multilateral action to prevent conflicts and crises and to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Mission and comparative advantage
Our mission is to strengthen cooperative approaches among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community to advance peace, justice, and inclusion. CIC’s comparative advantage lies in three areas:

• First, the Center specializes in the links between politics, security, justice, humanitarian responses and sustainable development: we have staff with expertise in these different areas, and as an institution we forge links between them.

• Second, we focus on analysis and idea generation that is principled, practical, and policy-relevant. CIC is ambitious, while also being sensitive to evolving political realities and constraints to collective action on international problems.

• Third, we have built strong understanding and relationships of trust with multilateral institutions over the past two decades. In particular, we have a proven track record of working closely with the member states and organizational leadership of the United Nations (UN) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

Context
The global context has changed dramatically since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since January 2020, COVID-19 has spread to 213 countries and territories, with 27.4 million cases and over 900,000 deaths. The socio-economic impact is now predicted to exceed 5 percent of global GDP, with double-digit impacts in some countries. Millions of people have been thrown out of work, poverty is estimated to increase by 8 percent, and food insecurity is expected to double compared to pre-pandemic trends.

The multilateral arena has become even more tense. Secretary-General António Guterres has made a number of clear calls for unity of action. At the same time, the UN has had difficulty in building the coalitions that would take these calls into implementation. Meanwhile, the IFIs have been asked to take an outsized role in COVID-19 economic recovery. Senior leadership directions at the IFIs have also changed: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has new leadership sympathetic to peacebuilding and humanitarian objectives and partnerships, while the World Bank’s leadership has in some ways become more conservative with a focus on structural reform delivery. The UN—in particular the WHO—and the IFIs, including the regional development banks (AFdB and IADB), have also become an increasing terrain of international contestation between the large powers.

At the same time, popular demand for multilateral action in the year of the UN’s 75th anniversary, and for bold new socio-economic policies, is at a new high: it is as if COVID-19 has reminded us all what governments and international cooperation are for, and that there are critical problems which individuals and individual countries cannot address alone. This creates an opportunity for transformative change, but a time-limited one.
We believe our mission is strongly relevant to the COVID-19 era. We are not a public health organization, but we do specialize in many of the “second generation” impacts of COVID-19, from the shape of the multilateral response across the “triple nexus,” to demand for action on inequality and exclusion, and risks of conflict and violence. All of our programs have adapted, without jettisoning their core mission and values, to work on these second-generation risks and opportunities. This plan describes our continued adaptation in 2020-22.

Goals
The central goals of CIC’s work over the next two years are to contribute to the prevention of new crises, and the promotion of peace, justice, equality, and inclusion, and the triple nexus in the context of COVID-19.

Summary of activities

- In our Promoting and Defending Multilateralism work, we will continue to produce rapid turnaround analysis on COVID-19’s links with peace and political justice, equality, and inclusion for a direct audience of governmental and multilateral decision-makers. This will include a strong focus on demonstrating the value and continued relevance of multilateralism as the UN turns 75 years old amidst the most serious global crisis in recent history. To support and maintain accountability pressures on the UN’s internal reform efforts, we will contribute to results planning and will launch a dashboard to monitor diversity in senior leadership appointments.

- Jointly between our multilateral, prevention & peacebuilding, and humanitarian programs, we will intensify our 2020 engagement with the UN, World Bank, and IMF on links between COVID-19 impact, macroeconomic pressures, and conflict by supporting a number of regional, country, and policy level discussions, analysis, and recommendations.

- In our prevention and peacebuilding program, we will adapt our work on country-level prevention approaches to the context of COVID-19 and will support the member state discussions on the Peacebuilding Architecture Review. We will also support initiatives to both improve data for peacebuilding and integrate mental health and psycho-social support into peacebuilding approaches.

- In our humanitarian crises program, we will focus on how to link peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development assistance (the triple nexus) in a number of situations where COVID-19 is affecting complex emergencies, including Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Afghanistan, and the Sahel. In collaboration with our Pathfinders Justice for All program, we will also look at how to ensure justice for refugees in the ever-increasingly-complex environment for refugees and migrants during and following COVID-19.

- In Pathfinders for Peace, Justice, and Inclusion, we will focus on a set of immediate priorities in the Grand Challenge for Inequality and Exclusion and the Justice for All partnership, to help promote inclusion, equality, and justice in COVID-19 recovery. We will also launch a new movement to halve global violence centered around the challenge of SDG16.1, which is increasingly relevant in a world of rising risks of conflict and violence. For all Pathfinders members, we will aim to support results on the ground and expand partnerships, hence supporting multilateral objectives.
Our regional and country level work will also continue to adapt to the COVID-19 environment:

- In the Congo Research Group, we will continue our work on the political economy and organization of the Ebola response, and extend this to compare it with the country’s COVID-19 response. We will launch new work on democracy and accountability in Congo, building on our successful work of tracking security dynamics in the Kivus.

- In our Middle East and North Africa (MENA) program, we continue to host a member of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, as well as supportive analysis on how to improve justice outcomes for victims and survivors in Syria. The MENA and the Humanitarian Programs also partner to support analysis and public dialogues on Lebanon, Yemen, and other countries in the region.

Key outcomes supported

The 2020-2022 program aims to support:

- Effective multilateral action in the context of COVID-19 that is informed by strong analysis, field research, and debate on practical options and political pathways for implementing them

- Meeting targets of gender parity and diversity within United Nations senior management

- Improved development and peacebuilding outcomes for populations affected by humanitarian crises, in the context of COVID-19 and climate change

- Country-level implementation of better prevention and peacebuilding approaches, in the UN as well as in the IFIs, and an improved understanding of emerging areas such as big data and mental health for peacebuilding

- Accelerated implementation of the SDG targets related to peaceful, just, and inclusive societies through the Pathfinders multi-stakeholder partnership.

- Our regional programs in DRC and the MENA region apply these approaches through in-depth analysis at country level and an engagement with national and regional media
CIC Business Plan
September 2020-August 2022

The Center on International Cooperation (CIC) is a non-profit research center housed at New York University (NYU). CIC’s vision is to advance effective multilateral action to prevent crises and to build more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Our mission is to strengthen cooperative approaches among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community to advance peace, justice, and inclusion around the world.

CIC’s comparative advantage lies in three areas. First, the center works on the links between politics, security, justice, humanitarian responses, and sustainable development: we have staff with expertise in these different areas, and as an institution we specialize in the links between them. Second, we focus on analysis and idea generation that is principled, practical, and policy relevant; ambitious while also sensitive to evolving political realities and constraints to collective action on international problems. Third, we have built up a strong understanding and relationships of trust with the member states and organizational leadership of multilateral institutions over two decades, in particular the UN and the IFIs.

We believe that our mission is strongly relevant to the COVID-19 era. We are not a public health organization, but we do specialize in many of the “second generation” impacts of COVID-19, from the shape of the multilateral response across the “triple nexus,” to demand for action on inequality and exclusion, to risks of conflict and violence. In many of the contexts on which we work, these second-generation impacts are liable to be as impactful, if not more so, than the pandemic’s direct health effects. All of our programs have adapted accordingly, without jettisoning their core mission and values, to work on these second-generation risks and opportunities. This plan describes our continued adaptation, within the context of CIC’s overall strategy and business plan, for September 1, 2020 to August 30, 2022.

1. Factors shaping CIC’s strategy

The environment for CIC’s 2020-2022 business plan has changed quite dramatically, including:

- **COVID-19.** COVID-19 has affected almost all areas of CIC’s work. Our partners in governments, multilaterals, and civil society have been hit strongly by the public health and humanitarian impacts of the crisis, closely followed by deep socio-economic impacts and macroeconomic and fiscal pressures. For some, these have also translated into rising political uncertainty or unrest. At the same time, COVID-19 has created opportunities to transform domestic and international policy and create new alliances in areas such as prevention, the triple nexus, peace, justice, equality, and inclusion.

- **Continued global political uncertainty.** Uncertainty in the global context has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Relations between the big powers—in particular the US, China, EU, and Russia—have continued to deteriorate, and the Security Council has become even more divided. Emerging contestation over access to COVID-19 vaccines, trade, migration, and remittances, and the relative scale of stimulus programs in

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1 CIC is a research center in the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) at NYU. It shares with NYU the status of a tax-exempt 501 (3)(c) nonprofit under the US Internal Revenue Code.
the developed versus developing worlds, seem set to worsen international relations.

- **Rising demand for action, from national governments and the multilateral system.** At the same time, peoples’ trust in governments and demand for international collective action has risen: it is as if COVID-19 has reminded us all what governments and international cooperation are for, and that there are critical problems which individuals and individual countries cannot address alone. This is an opportunity to build new coalitions on global public health; on peace, justice, equality and inclusion; on climate.

- **Changing relations at and between the UN and the IFIs.** Secretary-General António Guterres has made a number of clear calls for action before and during COVID-19, from his “four horsemen” framing of global threats to his emphasis on humanitarian ceasefires, and on the need for inclusive, better recovery. At the same time, the UN has had difficulty in building coalitions that would take these calls into implementation. Meanwhile, the IFIs have been asked to take an outsize role in COVID-19 economic recovery. Senior leadership directions at the IFIs have also changed: the IMF has new leadership sympathetic to peacebuilding and humanitarian objectives and partnerships, while the World Bank’s leadership has in some ways become more conservative in its focus on structural reform delivery. The IFIs, including the regional development banks (AfDB and IADB), have also become more of a terrain of international contestation between the large powers.

### Lessons from CIC’s work during the pandemic

Like everyone else, CIC had to adapt quickly to the game-changing effect of COVID-19 on our substantive work, as well as to lockdown, remote work, and cancellation of planned travel and events. Our main lessons thus far are the following:

- **Our decision to stick to our long-term mission but adapt our analysis to COVID-19 across all our programs has been welcomed by partners: in particular the scope, focus, and speed of the analysis produced in our weekly emails to decision-makers.**

- **Our main programs experienced less-than-expected delays in implementation during COVID-19, with an average of one month in no-cost extensions for different activities scheduled to end during 2020. In general, we believe that this is because we frontloaded analysis and research (exceeding targets) and continued with most planned convenings that could be done remotely. We also increased our work with local partners to compensate for lack of field visits.**

- **Remote convenings have been surprisingly successful in addressing difficult questions: for instance, we ran a quite frank and in-depth series of meetings between UN, IMF and World Bank managers after COVID-19 forced remote work. We have found it possible to bring a broader group of voices, sometimes at shorter notice, than in the past. There are also limitations to this: we find that in-depth discussions on strategy are harder to conduct with full participation when remote meetings are limited in duration due to time differences.**

- **Remote work has tended to foster more rather than less collaboration across CIC’s different programs, with a much larger than normal number of co-authored analyses and joint plans for the 2020-21 year. We intend to build on this in the coming year.**
Our business plan is also by necessity affected by the seismic shifts in travel and face-to-face meetings caused by COVID-19. Our 2020-22 plan assumes remote working through at least December 2020. As we did from March to August, we will convene and attend virtual gatherings, work increasingly with local partners, use the location of staff in different regions to facilitate contact where this is possible, and frontload analysis and research rather than events. Our business plan and budget envisage some travel and events resuming in 2021, although not yet at such a high level as the pre-COVID era.

2. Objectives
The central goals of CIC’s work over 2020-2022 are to contribute to preventing new crises, and to promote peace, justice, equality, and inclusion and the triple nexus in the context of COVID-19. CIC will focus on the following program-specific objectives to deliver these goals:

Thematic programs:
- Defend and promote multilateralism, in particular by promoting collective multilateral action on COVID-19 impacts in the year of the UN’s 75th anniversary; strengthening UN-IFI partnerships on COVID-19 recovery and the links between COVID19 impacts, macroeconomic pressures and conflict risk; and supporting gender parity and other forms of diversity amongst UN senior management.
- Identify and support practical country-level opportunities for conflict prevention and sustaining peace; strengthen data for peacebuilding, incorporate mental health and psycho-social support into peace-building approaches; and support a successful conclusion to the Peace-Building Architecture Review.
- Support the implementation of the triple nexus between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors at country level in the context of COVID-19 recovery, climate-induced displacements, and macroeconomic crises.
- Make the most out of the window for transformative change to accelerate delivery of SDG16+ targets for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, including support for policy implementation to promote equality, inclusion, and justice for all in COVID-19 recovery, as well as launching the Movement to Halve Global Violence.

Country/regional programs:
- Provide hard-hitting analysis on the DRC and wider Great Lakes region to inform national and international debates in the political, security, justice, and development spheres.
- Promote triple nexus approaches in selected MENA region countries (e.g. Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen), in the context of COVID-19, to prevent new crises and in support of peace, justice, equality and inclusion initiatives.
3. Thematic programs

Promoting and Defending Multilateralism

Our objectives for this program are to defend and promote multilateralism, in particular by promoting collective multilateral action on COVID-19 impacts in the year of the UN’s 75th anniversary, strengthening UN-IFI partnerships on COVID19 recovery and the links between COVID19 impacts, macroeconomic pressures, and conflict risk; and supporting gender parity and other forms of diversity among UN senior management.

We have worked systematically to support Secretary-General Guterres in his efforts to reform the United Nations. In 2016-17, this included the provision of several analytical notes to the transition team, as well as the publication of a comprehensive analysis of the restructuring of the peace and security pillar which was used as a starting point by the internal review team for peace and security reform. In 2017-18, we continued to support peace and security reform with analysis of perspectives of host nations of peace operations, and also deepened our analysis of the development system reform. We produced confidential studies on the regional UN system and peacebuilding and on the funding compact, as well as assisting the office of the President of the General Assembly with consultations in advance of the High-level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

In 2018-19, we worked with the EOSG to publish an easy guide to progress on reforms as they moved into implementation, and to support two successive presidents of the General Assembly to convene cross-pillar meetings on defending and promoting multilateralism. In 2019-20, we supported the Peace Building Architecture Review, provided supporting analysis, and published independent commentary on the UN’s COVID-19 response, as well as moderating or briefing discussions in the General Assembly and Security Council.

For the early period of 2020-22, we will support member state coalitions, often of middle powers, who are prepared to take forward specific collective action endeavors such as on equal access to COVID-19 vaccines, or socio-economic targets for a transformative COVID19 recovery. We will also support the Executive Office of the Secretary General, based on their priorities, with analysis that may contribute to the Secretary General’s report. We will endeavor to make these efforts a proud symbol of the potential and the challenges of multilateralism fit for the UN’s 75th. We will also continue to publish regular, rapid turnaround analysis on opportunities for collective action in the era of COVID-19 and to participate in and co-convene events led by member states. Lastly, we will conduct the support to the UN Development System Funding Compact which was postponed, at the UN’s request, from 2019-20; and where useful will input to QCPR discussions.

In the UN-IFI partnership, we have made three shifts that we believe will be important to deliver results. The first is the inclusion of the IMF as a full partner in discussions between the UN and the World Bank. The second is to focus on specific country circumstances where there are strong links between COVID-19 impact, macroeconomic pressures, and conflict. The third is to focus on specific instruments central to the operation of the three institutions (humanitarian response plans, and matrix-based operations of the IFIS) and seek to strengthen them.

For the Gender Observatory, we will launch a new dashboard in fall 2020 which provides interactive monitoring of gender parity and other forms of diversity in the UN’s senior leadership appointments. We will work closely with the UN and member states to draw on this new data and analysis.
Target audiences
CIC’s target audiences and partners include: member states, EOSG, the office of the Presidents of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, the PBC, and the Security Council; the office of the DSG and DCO; ASG responsible for the 75th anniversary celebrations; and senior leadership and country-level management in the World Bank and IMF. The main outcomes and outputs that CIC will produce are shown in the table in Annex 1.

Prevention and Peacebuilding
The prevention and peacebuilding program provides innovative, policy-relevant, and real-time evidence and arguments to advance the chances for sustainable peace. The program’s approach and comparative advantage lies in two areas: a multisector approach to peacebuilding and prevention with deep links to development actors, including IFIs; and its exploration of innovative and data-driven approaches to prevention, peace operations, and the women, peace, and security agenda. The program also leverage links with CIC’s country programs and other thematic work to bring fresh perspectives on prevention and peace operations to policy-level discussions. In particular, this workstream is closely linked to the Multilateral Reform program, the Humanitarian Crises program, and to Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies.

Objectives for the next two years focus on two issues: strengthening the operationalization of the UN prevention agenda to support national upstream prevention efforts; and cultivating innovative, data-driven approaches to improving peacebuilding and prevention.

Strengthening operationalization of the UN prevention agenda to support national upstream prevention efforts
In line with the 2018 UN–World Bank report, Pathways for Peace, and the sustaining peace agenda, CIC pursues initiatives aimed at strengthening national approaches to prevention and sustaining peace. In 2020-2022, CIC will also focus on forging more crosscutting links with the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus by identifying opportunities for more integrated, conflict-sensitive approaches (especially to COVID-19 response) and strengthening the peace approach from the onset of a crisis. We will also be integrating a thematic focus on mental health and psychosocial support as part of peacebuilding and prevention initiatives, as it is a critical yet underexplored element that also provides links to the HDP nexus.

We will work in three areas: technical expertise on prevention at the UN, increasing demand for prevention by national actors by showcasing the benefits of this approach, and supporting efforts for good peacebuilding donorship for more integrated and sustainable approaches to prevention. We will thus engage more deeply with UN actors to provide technical assistance in policy development at headquarters level, and strategic thinking around prevention at field level. We will document these efforts and use them to continue showing the benefits and the effectiveness of prevention approaches to member states, in New York, and garner their support for the prevention agenda. Finally (with the multilateral program), we will support stronger collaboration between donors, as well as the UN and the World Bank, to facilitate the operationalization of integrated strategies on prevention.

Innovative, data-driven approaches for strengthening prevention, peacebuilding, and peace operations.
CIC will also continue to use its comparative advantage on data production and analysis to build a community of practice on data-driven approaches to peacebuilding and prevention. This will build on the international workshop
hosted by CIC in March 2019, “Data for Peace and Security: Practitioners’ Workshop on Harvesting Best Practice and Building a Community of Practice,” and a follow-up meeting hosted by the Netherlands MFA in February 2020. More than 200 participants from around the world showcased roughly 75 data-driven applications projects for peace and security in these workshops. These included, among others, governments and multilaterals working on early warning, private sector approaches to reducing misinformation in polarized spaces, and UN actors’ use of machine learning techniques to help in peace mediation processes.

This workstream will continue to support actors working on data-driven approaches in the UN’s peace and security pillar to develop links with other UN actors and external partners. It will also deepen engagement with early warning and early response mechanisms, continuing work with ECOWAS and others on this issue. We will act as a convener on early warning, and response, and connect existing and emerging early warning systems with actors working on predictive analytics.

**Target audiences:** The research engages two overlapping constituencies. The first consists of a regionally and politically diverse group of more than 20 member states, with whom we have initiated dialogues and workshops on prevention to map positions and identify areas of agreement and practical forward movement. We will continue this and include MHPSS issues. We also will work with the 97+ countries to highlight their experiences with upstream prevention, including MHPSS issues, and to engage donors on the funding of integrated prevention strategies and peacebuilding from the onset of a crisis, in line with the HDP nexus. The second constituency comprises the UN and IFI staff working to implement the upstream prevention agenda.

**Humanitarian Crises**

CIC’s Humanitarian Crises program aims to strengthen and support new ways of working between humanitarian, development, peace, and climate actors in countries affected by chronic or repeated crises. Since 2018, we have been undertaking a major review of efforts by the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding communities to adopt more comprehensive and cohesive ways of working in countries affected by chronic or repeated crises. Having completed the first phase of work, we launched *The Triple Nexus in Practice*, in New York in December 2019. The overall conclusions of our analysis and engagements are positive: behavioral change is occurring across the system, for instance with regards to localization, cross-pillar collaboration, and development involvement in crisis contexts. But we also found that deep challenges remain: many promising developments are still at a pilot stage; funding and programs continue to bypass local and national systems; prevention and preparedness too often remain afterthoughts; and many organizational incentives still favor competition over collaboration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, while creating new ones. For that reason, the program adapted quickly to the pandemic, publishing analyses and leading policy discussions on how best to continue and strengthen triple nexus responses globally and in specific contexts such as Syria and Yemen.

Over 2020-2022, the program will build on this work and continue to adapt it to the age of the coronavirus. In particular, we will focus in the next two years on efforts to reinforce rather than replace national and local systems, and to strengthen international and national governance structures in three overlapping “hard case” contexts:

- fragile humanitarian contexts struggling with the health, economic, and political fallout from COVID19
protracted (internal and refugee) displacement situations
• conflict/displacement settings with a nexus to the climate crisis

Toward that end, we will continue to work closely with fellow CIC programs on several crosscutting themes—such as linkages between macroeconomic and political risks and humanitarian needs, the compounding effects of the climate crisis on insecurity and vulnerability, and the importance of addressing mental health in fragile contexts—as well as with global policy actors and local partners engaged on the triple nexus. We will also continue our unique role within global refugee policy discussions, with a specific focus in coming years on climate-related displacement and on the justice needs of refugees.

Target audiences: Our target audiences will continue to include governments and civil society stakeholders in affected states, UN agencies such as OCHA, UNHCR, UNDP, and UNICEF, Resident Coordinators and country teams, development and peacebuilding partners engaged in crisis contexts, and national civil society and affected communities.

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies
The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies is a member state-led, multi-stakeholder partnership that works to accelerate the delivery of the SDG targets for peace, justice, and inclusion (SDG16+). The Pathfinders was co-founded and is hosted by CIC. It acts as “docking station” for those working on SDG16+, bringing together 36 countries, international organizations, global partnerships, and civil society networks.

Following the publication of the Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies in 2017 (updated and reissued in 2019), the Pathfinders has acted as a platform for action, through a program with three principal components: supporting national ambition, coherence, results, and reporting; strengthening strategies, momentum, and political will at the international level; and shaping debates and mobilizing action in areas of justice, inclusion, and violence prevention. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic’s devastating impact on peace, justice, and inclusion has underlined the importance of working to achieve the SDG16+ targets and of mobilizing to demonstrate measurable change and results ahead of the second SDG Summit in 2023.

Strengthening strategies and mobilizing political will and continued momentum at the international level will continue to be a priority in 2020-2022 as we work with selected governments and other partners to identify commitments on SDG16+ and help mobilize for continued delivery. This is all the more critical in the time of the COVID pandemic when the importance of focusing on peace, justice, and inclusion in national responses has been highlighted as a priority. CIC will make that the cornerstone of our contribution to “build back better.” We will work with our growing network of global partners to identify solutions and best practices as well as future priorities, identifying gaps in research and implementation that require additional substantive support and financing strategies. We will also explore the potential for a training course on SDG16+, given the need to build a greater understanding of the evidence and results that its effective implementation can bring about.

Since the launch of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies program, the national delivery program has been dedicated to assisting governments in developing and implementing commitments for national implementation of SDG16+. National missions have in the past demonstrated significant demand for assistance from policymakers and a willingness by governments and other partners to explore innovative
approaches to implementation. We aim to develop joint reports with government, providing a focus for further national discussions and helping Pathfinders member countries learn from each other’s experience. We will also continue to work closely with the UN team, the World Bank, and other partners in each country. We will undertake at least five missions during 2020-22 (depending on pandemic recovery). Where visits are difficult due to the pandemic, we will work with local partners to develop country-specific information and policy advice and to identify challenges and practices. Based on experience gained from these visits, we aim to complete an initial design for an SDG16+ Accelerator to act as a companion to the roadmap, providing countries with the methodology, toolkit, and resources needed to underpin SDG16+ implementation. We will intensify efforts to support learning and cooperation between countries, including through increased engagement with regional platforms.

The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies proposed to mobilize commitments to reduce global violence. Over the past two years, we have published research on forecasts for conflict and violence, as well as on how violence can be reduced and arms control and SDG16.1 implemented. We have consulted widely with partners on violence reduction, including with a mini-retreat (early 2019) exploring the potential for an increased commitment to violence reduction; a launching event for a program on disarmament, small arms control, and gender in 2020; as well as a larger Wilton Park discussion (2020) with key experts on how to take such a movement to halve global violence forward. Cities have also stepped up with the mobilization of Peace in Our Cities, launched late 2019. We now move forward toward launching the movement to halve global violence in late 2020 with good networks, partnerships, and considerable interest from key countries, bolstered by increased relevance due to the pandemic. We will communicate our commitments to halve global violence more broadly at the Peace One day event in September 2020, and set up a task force to take this work forward in the months and years to follow. We will in the coming period identify key champion partners to lead the movement and identify key strategies to deliver results, grounded in research, supported by a strong and diverse network of partners, and pursued through action at global, regional, and local levels leading up towards 2024. We will also continue to scale up the support to the Peace in Our Cities (PiOC) platform that includes cities and civil society organizations committed to making significant reductions in violence. In addition, the programming, capacity development, and advocacy support for the members of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC), for which we serve as a secretariat, will be further expanded. Both initiatives will be integrated into our broader efforts to halve global violence by 2030.

The Task Force on Justice, chaired by ministers from Argentina, the Netherlands, and Sierra Leone, and the Elders, took up the Pathfinders’ grand challenge on Justice. Its Justice for All report (2019) sets out a new vision and concrete recommendations for a shift toward people-centered justice. The Pathfinders for Justice program (2020-2023) will implement the agenda for international action set out by the Task Force, bring justice partners together to close the justice gap, and promote measurable improvements in justice in countries from all regions and income groups. Two recent briefings on Justice in a Pandemic provide guidance for justice leaders as they navigate the public health emergency and the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. With the launch of the shared strategy in early 2020, the path is set for massive collaboration around people-centered justice, which aims first and foremost to promote action at the national level to resolve and prevent people’s justice problems, to promote contributions from justice actors to economic recovery, and to build societies that are fair and inclusive.

The Pathfinders will play an ongoing role as an “action platform” for the implementation of SDG16.3, with the aim
of demonstrating measurable change by the second SDG Summit in 2023. The upcoming phase of the program will continue to drive the development and implementation of national commitments to justice for all. With partners, we will bring together justice leaders in regional and thematic groupings (the g7+, OECD member and partner countries, OGP member countries, and IDLO states parties). We will continue to work closely with partners such as OECD, OGP, HiiL World Justice Project, Cordaid, UNDP, UNODC, UN Women, the World Bank, and IDLO to support governments and other national justice leaders. Working with partners, we will gather and disseminate data and case studies to show change is happening, and continue to highlight the social and economic returns on investment in justice. To ensure no one is left behind, we will develop policy solutions and promote implementation of policies for justice for women, justice for children, and justice for refugees. Finally, we will increase support for advocacy and movement-building with the Elders and with the Justice for All campaign.

The Pathfinders' third grand challenge links the focus on inclusive societies in SDG16+ with SDG10’s focus on reducing inequality within and among countries. Rising inequality and exclusion are fueling profound economic, social, and political grievances and contributing to global instability. Since research has primarily focused on analyzing the problem, however, we lack evidence of convincing policy alternatives and solutions to address it, as well as sufficient political will to deliver real results on the ground around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed further light on the vulnerability of current systems in all countries, and resulted in greater demand for action to tackle inequality and exclusion: two thirds of people in global polls say the pandemic has made them more aware of inequality, and that they want to see bolder policies to address it.

In the next phase, the Grand Challenge will proceed with its research and discussions of practical and politically viable policy options. This will be undertaken with the guidance of the Advisory Council steering group, convened by Sweden along with Tunisia, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and other interested countries, and involving representatives from the UN, the World Bank, the OECD, Civicus, Oxfam and other civil society and multilateral actors. Outreach and consultations, including at the UN High-Level Political Forum and General Assembly High-Level Week, as well as the annual meetings of the IFIs, and Commission on the Status of Women, will also be conducted. Based on a framework of redistribution and recognition, the research will culminate in a comprehensive report to be launched in 2021 focusing on: political inclusion; fiscal compromise; the future of work and building shared assets; spatial inclusion and housing; social protection and social services; and addressing the links between group based and generalized inequality. We will work with Pathfinders member states to consider how the Advisory Council could transform in 2022 into a more formalized and longer-term multi-stakeholder platform that champions delivery on the equality and inclusion agenda aligned with the UN Secretary-General Decade of Action 2021-2030.

4. Regional and country programs

Congo Research Group

The Congo Research Group (CRG) was founded in 2015 to promote rigorous, independent research into the violence that affects millions of Congolese. Today, our research aims to explain the complex interplay among violence, politics, and political economy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to a wide audience. Our earliest reports examined in detail the complex motives behind a series of gruesome massacres in northeastern Congo. Others have scrutinized the wealth of President Kabila’s family, the politics behind the massive Inga dam project on the Congo river, and have investigated the rigging of the 2018 elections.
Our Kivu Security Tracker (KST)—which we manage together with Human Rights Watch—provides a web-based, regularly updated mapping of armed groups and violent incidents in North and South Kivu provinces through a network of dedicated focal points. This is supplemented with weekly blogs, investigative reports, and profiles of armed groups in Ituri, Kasai, and the Kivu provinces.

Over the past year, CRG conducted multi-faceted research on the Ebola response in North Kivu. In the coming months, we will publish a series of reports on three dimensions of this response: its impact on local health infrastructures and communities, the political economy of the response, and the relationship between the humanitarian response and violent conflict.

In September 2020, CRG will launch a new project on political accountability, governance, and the state in the DRC. This will include parliamentary and government trackers designed to inform Congolese about legislative and government progress in key policy areas; multiple reports on accountability within key institutions (political parties, civil society organizations, and citizen movements); and regular blog posts and podcasts designed to stimulate public debate within the DRC.

**Middle East and North Africa region**

The aims of work in the MENA region are to contribute, through selected country engagements, to CIC’s overall goals of preventing new crises and promoting peace, justice, equality, and inclusion. The program began late 2015 with a focus on a rights-based approach to prevention, in this case violent extremism (PVE). CIC’s engagement on PVE has included supporting the Tunisian Government on whole-of-government responses; collaborating with UNDP in reviewing Jordan’s draft PVE country strategy (2017); UNU in assessing the response to violent extremism in Iraq (2018); ESCWA on understanding the risk factors that might lead to the reemergence of violent extremism in NE Syria (2019-2020); and UNOCT in responding to a request from the League of Arab States to develop a new Plan of Action to counter terrorism and violent extremism. The appointment of CIC’s lead person on MENA to the UN Syria Commission of Inquiry has led the program to focus on Syria, in particular supportive analysis on how to improve justice outcomes for victims and survivors. This work has included an ongoing partnership with the International Center for Transitional Justice.

In early 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the program has reduced its focus on PVE and sought to include partnerships with the CIC humanitarian program to support analysis and public dialogues on Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and potentially Libya in the context of COVID-19. Key activities in 2020-2022 will include a focus on improving access to civil documentation since the lack of such documents impacts negatively on the lives of civilians in Syria; the challenges around ensuring safe, dignified and durable return for Syrian refugees and IDP’s and the policy debates around an international mechanism for the missing.

**Afghanistan-Pakistan**

The Afghanistan-Pakistan program carries out analysis and convening of global and regional actors to support peace in Afghanistan. In 2019-20, the program published numerous analyses of the situation in Afghanistan and convened five meetings related to the Intra Afghan Negotiations (IAN) with the Heart of Asia Institute in Kabul and the Doha Institute, with high-level participants from the U.S., Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, China, Russia, India, Turkey, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, Germany, Norway, the EU, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.
In 2021-22, the program will have a reduced schedule until the follow on to the US election make clear the direction of openings to support peace. Until that time, the Afghanistan-Pakistan program will focus on:

- Supporting the group of Senior Advisors to the U.S. Congressionally mandated Afghanistan Study Group, including CIC Senior Fellow Barnett Rubin, which is drafting a report with recommendations on Afghanistan policy for the next administration.
- Completing a policy brief on dilemmas of formation of an interim government in Afghanistan.
- A policy brief on regional requirements of an Afghanistan peace agreement.
- A policy brief on the Taliban’s quest for international recognition.
- Ongoing policy notes on how to organize regional and international support for the peace process.

5. **Risks and risk mitigation**

Our last annual strategy update noted that CIC’s programs, staff, and budget are growing, driven by more demand for action on the areas of our core mission. While we want to target results, not growth per se, we still see high demand. This means that strengthening our institutional systems to underpin a higher level of activity and performance remains a priority.

In 2019-20, CIC went through a series of internal transitions, including the recruitment of a new Finance and Operations Director and team members, and the introduction of a new budgetary system. We also conducted two staff surveys and established a working group to consider diversity and inclusion in CIC’s appointments and workplace behaviors. In the coming year we want to:

- Consolidate the new budget system with the revision of management information processes to make good use of better data
- Better systematize, document, and train staff on a number of internal processes, including for recruitment and onboarding, timely consultant and vendor payments, and grant management and reporting
- Strengthen the diversity outcomes of our recruitment processes, in particular for management, and conduct diversity training for all our staff and managers.

As with almost all of our partner organizations, we also face risks arising from the unpredictable trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of our activities and results, we took an early decision to focus on (i) transitioning to remote meetings where possible; (ii) increased work through local partners; and (iii) frontloading research and backloading events. As noted earlier, we have found remote meetings and local partnerships to be effective and will continue to build on this in our work, while re-engaging with direct travel and events as soon as this is safely possible. We have staff based (remotely) outside the US who have been able to travel in the interim for country support and consultations.

COVID-19 has also affected our offices. As of the beginning of this financial year CIC is still using remote work, with the exception of a small number of staff who are cleared to return to the office on a voluntary basis. NYU has
an extensive test-and-trace system which facilitates this. At present, we are targeting the beginning of 2021 for a full return to the office, but are monitoring COVID-19 conditions closely with NYU leadership to inform whether this is feasible and what physical changes to office premises may be necessary. We have an internal staff working group inputting on issues around office return and will continue this in the coming months. We have also faced difficulties around visa issues for new staff and those who left the US in the early period of the pandemic. We are addressing these on a case-by-case basis and drawing on NYU’s abilities to recruit in other locations.

6. Communications

Over the last two years, CIC has ramped up its communications capacity, adding dedicated people for the Pathfinders and CRG programs, additional to the full-time staff person directly responsible for CIC’s institutional communications. CIC’s institutional communications efforts have focused on strengthening CIC’s institutional brand identity through newly designed products and a corresponding refresh of the CIC web site. It has also used its small communications capacity to work closely with program teams to identify target audiences and potential channels for reaching them, and to collaborate with communications staff of the Pathfinders and CRG programs.

For the Pathfinders, a major focus has been to enhance the initiative’s visibility and influence as a leading voice on the SDG16+ agenda, and to cultivate a broad and engaged audience for Pathfinders’ major “grand challenge” areas. These efforts have been supported by enhanced social media outreach (on multiple dedicated channels), a monthly newsletter, the development of an events app, rich and frequently updated blog content, as well as a concentration on high quality design and dynamic website enhancements and expansion. Pathfinders has also coordinated and engaged in high profile partnerships to reach broader stakeholders, hosting a regular coordination of justice partners surrounding justice for all communications, and engaging with Global Citizen, Global Goals Week, Peace One Day, among others to execute impactful communications campaigns.

For CRG, the focus has been twofold. First, we have cultivated a broader Congolese audience to promote policy discussions and accountability at the national level. It has done this by recruiting a Congolese communication consultant, developing a podcast and a blog, and developing ties with local journalists and a presence Congolese social media. Second, on the international level, CRG has continued to leverage media coverage of its reporting—including TV5, Radio France International, Voice of America, Reuters, the New York Times and Bloomberg among others—while developing a Whatsapp channel, a regular newsletter, and preparing a relaunch of its website.

The COVID-19 crisis created both a need and new opportunities for CIC to ramp up its communications efforts and institutional profile with its target audiences. We began a successful weekly email to key constituencies providing real-time analysis of COVID19’s relationship to our core mission areas of crisis prevention and the promotion of peace, justice, equality and inclusion. Additionally, the Center published 55 blogs, articles, and reports related to COVID-19 from March to August 2020, representing a massive upsurge. Many of these were published in external outlets such as Foreign Policy, World Policy Review, The Lancet, The Mail & Guardian, and the World Economic Forum blog. A number of these were for first-time authors in external publications.

This activity had the effect of raising the profile of and demand for communications at CIC, which we will seize upon over the next two years. A primary focus will be to better leverage direct communications from CIC’s director to key constituencies, and to strengthen CIC’s profile with traditional and online media that our target audiences read. We aim to streamline CIC’s communications capacities, re-organizing them around key functions
(website management, social media accounts, outreach to media, direct marketing, publications management, etc.). Additionally, we will explore the possibility of adding general capacity to support publications processes and website design and maintenance, as well as to support the production of podcasts, infographics, and short videos to bolster our presence on social media and spread our messages to a broader audience.