



October 2018

“Towards Sustaining Peace through Participation of All”: Synergies of a Cross-pillar Approach to Peace and Security, Agenda 2030 and Human Rights

Event Summary

On July 13, 2018, for the first time, the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Human Rights Council convened publicly—alongside the Security Council presidency-holder—to underscore the centrality of cross-pillar approaches to achieving the United Nations’ core missions.

The high-level dialogue, “Towards Sustaining Peace through Participation of All: Synergies of a Cross-pillar Approach to Peace and Security, Agenda 2030, and Human Rights,” took place on July 13, 2018, at UN Headquarters. It was co-organized by the Permanent Missions of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia, in association with the Center on International Cooperation (CIC).

Three key areas of action on cross-pillar approaches were highlighted: moving from rhetoric to action, improving coordination and cooperation in practice, and letting national examples lead the way.

Participants

The roundtable brought together—for the first time in a public forum—the sitting presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the Human Rights Council (HRC) to discuss the commonalities in their work. H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák (Slovakia), President of the General Assembly, H.E. Ms. Marie Chatardová (Czech Republic), President of ECOSOC, and H.E. Mr. Vojislav Šuc (Slovenia), President of the HRC, spoke. Additionally, H.E. Ms. Irina Schoulgin Nyoni, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden, represented her country’s July 2018 presidency of the Security Council.

Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, completed the formal dialogue, which was then followed by responses highlighting national experiences with cross-pillar approaches from H.E. Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, H.E. Ms. Maria Helena Lopes de Jesus Pires, Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations, and Mr. Lamin Faati, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Gambia to the United Nations. The event was moderated by CIC Director, Sarah Cliffe.

From rhetoric to action

To tackle the enormous challenges of sustaining peace and implementation of the 2030 agenda, participants urged the UN to move beyond rhetoric on cross-pillar engagement and quickly to action. All three pillars of the UN—peace and security, human rights, and development—will need to be engaged if the UN hopes to make progress.

The four UN presidents provided examples of putting cross-pillar approaches into practice, many based on the experience of their presidencies. One example concerned developing a closer relationship between the Security Council and human rights instruments such as the Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review process, commissions of inquiry, and Special Rapporteurs.

As the Secretary-General's reform proposals move ahead, participants were eager to support efforts to bring the three pillars together, for example, through engagement with the Secretary-General's Executive Committee. The role of the reforms in making the organization more relevant and effective, particularly in delivering at field-level, was underscored.

The examples, however, highlighted an ongoing deficit with the cross-pillar approach, which continues to find itself too often in a theoretical space as opposed to a practical one.

Improving coordination and cooperation in practice

There were numerous calls for specific, practical efforts to improve cooperation—and the need to hold various UN entities accountable for their role in ensuring improvement, both within the UN system and beyond it, to include coordination with actors from civil society such as youth organizations, women's networks, and the private sector.

The need for an increased level of coordination at the Member State-level was also emphasized, with discussants noting the inconsistency in positions that countries at times take in Geneva and New York, suggesting a need to harmonize the work between the two headquarters. Groups such as the Human

Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus were mentioned as a positive example of bridging this gap through a cross-regional approach.

Some examples of good practices with respect to cross-pillar coordinated efforts on the ground included the Peace and Development Advisor initiative, which combines longer-term development approaches with conflict analysis, and the UN-World Bank *Pathways for Peace* report, which highlights inclusive approaches to prevention. But there is a need to make these good practices and examples the norm. As further examples, the Presidents noted the inclusion of cross-pillar, holistic approaches at their major meetings, for example, the ECOSOC Special Meeting on sustainable, resilient, and inclusive societies and the PGA's High-level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

The perception of certain topics as “New York only” or “Geneva only” also needs to continue to be broken down. Positive practices include the HRC President's enhanced engagement with the Third and Fifth Committees and the Secretary-General, and a more active presence of Special Rapporteurs from Geneva in the Third Committee. Furthermore, a current effort in Geneva to rationalize decisions and the resolutions from the HRC was also mentioned as an ongoing process to ensure a more effective and efficient approach to human rights that will benefit interaction with other pillars as well.

National examples can lead the way on cross-pillar collaboration

The experiences of Colombia, Timor-Leste, and the Gambia underscore the fundamental value of cross-pillar approaches to restoration of the rule of law, albeit in very different contexts. In each case, the state needed to restore confidence in institutions, ensure justice and the defense of human rights of those affected by the conflict, and secure social and economic rights for citizens. The need for engaging with civil society and vulnerable populations was also highlighted as important points within these cases.

Ambassador Mejía (Colombia) highlighted her country's collective efforts through the Acción Social program, which has worked across the agencies of the Colombian government to restore security and human rights in regions formerly outside the control of the government through projects that provided citizens with security, justice, and social and development assistance. She emphasized the importance on implementing an accord that not only allows for a restoration and strengthening of military and the security forces (including through budgetary means), but that also empowers affected citizens, namely rural girls and women, while also thinking of ways of transforming former combatants into law-abiding citizens.

Ambassador Pires (Timor-Leste) discussed national efforts on a similar scale, with an emphasis on the reestablishment of property rights, which had become an issue due to high number of internally displaced people after the country's episodes of violence. The response thus centered on reconciliation, justice, and delivering humanitarian assistance for those affected. Similar to the Colombian experience, it required working across the security forces, police, and social and economic agencies in government to build peace, human rights, and a return to development. In this regard, Ambassador Pires particularly highlighted the multidisciplinary aspect of the UN's mission to the country and the role that the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators played in ensuring different aspects of the reconciliation process.

Finally, Mr. Faati (Gambia) noted his country's multidisciplinary approach to the fragile situation in 2015 through the establishment of commissions on human rights and on truth, justice, and reparations, as well as a national development plan. He discussed the encouraging results of the government's approaches by noting a sharp fall on migration since the advent of democracy, and the excitement for the national development plan on behalf of civil society. He also highlighted the success of preventive diplomacy in his country.

Additional to these specific examples, the dialogue noted a key role for cross-pillar engagement by the Peacebuilding Commission in countries on the Commissions agenda. The Commission can contribute much-needed analysis on root causes and drivers of conflict, and play an important facilitative role in supporting a sustaining peace approach to transitions.

Conclusion

Participants expressed renewed hope that momentum will continue to build for more integrated or crosscutting approaches to the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars. Transforming declaratory intentions into action is essential in shaping the UN to achieve Agenda 2030 and sustaining peace. Continued proliferation of positive examples, framing concepts, and practical methods to implement cross-pillar approaches within the system is needed—alongside continued dialogue by leadership representing the pillars, who can signal through their rhetoric and their action the centrality of these approaches to achieving the UN's core mandates.

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