

Data for Peace Conference Leveraging Data for Fostering Lasting Peace

October 16-17, 2023 - Hybrid
October 18-20, 2023 - Online

CONCEPT

[The Global Peace Index 2023](#) the world's leading measure of peacefulness reveals the average level of global peacefulness deteriorated for the ninth consecutive year. The index also points out that the global conflict-related fatalities increased by 96 percent in the previous year, while the global economic impact of violence increased by 17 percent. Societies are experiencing other threats and shocks, such as pandemics, food crisis, natural disasters, globalization, and urbanization. [The Ecological Threat Report 2022](#) stresses out that ecological threats, such as rapid population growth, water risks, and food insecurity will be exacerbated by climate change, causing mass migration and conflict. Driven by climate change and global crises, a record 280 million people require emergency support. [Yet only 51 percent of data for crisis action is complete](#), making humanitarian, development, and peace operations less effective. The latest [OECD's States of Fragility Report 2022](#) states that multiple, concurring crises are disproportionately affecting the 60 fragile contexts and points out that 1.9 billion people in fragile contexts accounts for 24 percent of the world's population but 73 percent of the world's extreme poor.

Peacebuilding and prevention practitioners are searching for novel approaches to tackle the growing challenges. Emerging technologies and data science methods have been recognized as potential tools to better understand and tackle some of these challenges across the humanitarian-development-peace and climate nexus. GIS, advanced analytics, machine learning, natural language processing and image processing, are some of potential "game changers" recognized by many and already utilized by some of our partners. As a power engine of all these approaches stands data, generated, and collected at unprecedented rates. And yet, there are still many gaps and problems in data availability, quality, and usability that make this work challenging.

"No single actor is able to unlock the full multilateral data and analytics potential on their own, and the proliferation of fragmented approaches creates unnecessary risks to lives, livelihoods, and resources."

The aim of this conference is to avoid these risks, to provide a platform for these actors to share their expertise, get feedback from their colleague experts, avoid duplication, find solutions, and create partnerships. It will provide a "big picture" of where we are currently as a field, what problems are urgent to tackle and what resources we need to do so. We will also provide an overview of the latest technological advancements, making sure that we stay up to date and use the opportunities, while at the same time consider the risks and help participants adopt and sustain an ethical approach to this work. It will also provide a space where skills can be built, and information collected on capacity building gaps and needs.

The conference is hosted by the [NYU Center on International Cooperation](#), with support from [the Complex Risk Analytics Fund \(CRAF'd\)](#) and its partners.

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OBJECTIVES

This conference's objective is to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange on the latest and best practices in the "Data for Peace" ecosystem which consists of 2,000 experts+ active in the field. The ecosystem is constantly growing and open to new participants and contributors. This event will bring together national and international actors working on data-driven approaches to **peacebuilding and prevention, anticipatory action, humanitarian-development-peacebuilding-climate nexus**, and more, to share lessons learned on:

- access to real-time, high-resolution data on complex risks
- data processing, especially considering the work in fragile- and conflict-affected settings
- lessons on accessing and processing online and social media data, as well as geospatial data and considerations of risks that come with that work
- modeling of conflict and risk, with special focus of compound risks
- lessons on predictive modeling
- practices, and methods to influence decision making and enable the change on the ground.
- data responsibility and ethics

The event will facilitate networking, help organizations explore further partnerships and cooperation, and provide some initial capacity building to help organizations "get on board" with latest developments in emerging technologies.

FORMAT

This conference consists of:

- **Two-day hybrid event in NYC**, gathering key stakeholders, and utilizing the proximity of the United Nations, permanent country representations, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Sessions will also be streamed for virtual audiences.
- **Three-day virtual component**, gathering key global stakeholders. This will provide accessibility for participation from the world's global majority.

Event content will consist of expert panel discussions, workshops, online pitches, and networking opportunities.

THEMES AND TOPICS

AT A GLANCE: 2023 CONTEXT – After COVID-19, the world experienced one of the biggest crises of our time and is still experiencing the consequences of a global pandemic. With the war in Ukraine, the rise of hunger, climate change and many other shocks, many are discussing the failure of a multilateral system. The urgent action demands that we first understand the context and its changing nature.

- **DATA GAPS AND DATA NEEDS** – Data is at the center of the digital transformation, and we will concentrate on better understanding data needs and gaps and what are the actions needed to tackle both. We will share some of the newest developments in some of the major datasets, such as the GDELT project, ACLED, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, etc.
- **ANALYTICS** – The event will cover emerging best practices for predictive modeling and analytics. A special space will be dedicated to the anticipatory action analytics and transformation in the field achieved with new data resources and new advancements in deep learning and neural networks.
- **GIS AND SPATIAL DATA IN CONFLICT PREVENTION** – Applications of geospatial technologies, remote sensing, and satellite navigation systems are enhancing old and producing new approaches to conflict prevention. By deploying spatial data and modeling tools, experts can analyze risks, identify where people are most vulnerable, and support risk-informed policies.
- **MACHINE LEARNING AND NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING** – Utilization of social media posts, together with machine learning approaches, such as natural language processing, brings new possibilities in research, analysis, and policymaking. This theme explores the potentials of such approaches to advance data processing, including conflict modeling working streams.
- **DATA VISUALIZATION** – Conflict and related violence are characterized by a high degree of complexity and a rapid rate of change. This makes them exceedingly difficult to follow, understand, and analyze. Using quantitative data to track and map incidents of conflict and violence in real time can help identify trends and inform policymakers and the public.
- **CLIMATE AND CONFLICT** – Evidence generated from different contexts across the world has shown that climate change is closely interlinked with conflict. Data is key for understanding this and informing better policymaking at the climate-conflict nexus.
- **ATROCITY PREVENTION** – This topic will explore potential integration of spatial methods and novel analytics tools into existing atrocity prevention work in effort to add value to early warning and early action work.
- **FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND CONFLICT** – Every year, millions of citizens are displaced around the globe, many of them due to conflict and environmental catastrophes. This topic will explore existing data and potentials of data-driven approaches to advance prediction of these events in advance and help provide effective humanitarian support.
- **PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS** – preventing the recruitment and use of children by armed groups would benefit from greater investment in evidence-based early warning systems that can identify such actions at early stages and funnel evidence to the right stakeholders for preventative action.
- **DATA FOR PEACE AT THE UNITED NATIONS** – The United Nations (UN) strongly committed to focusing on building the data, digital, technology, and innovation capabilities. Our special focus will be on the UN Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping, and the potential of the "Data for Peace" community of practice to help the UN leverage the potential of digital technologies in peacekeeping.

The Center on International Cooperation is a non-profit research center housed at New York University. Our vision is to advance effective multilateral action to prevent crises and build peace, justice, and inclusion. Our mission is to strengthen cooperative approaches among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community to advance peace, justice, and inclusion.