

**Preparing the UN2020 Summit:
Civil Society Information and Planning Meeting**

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), New York, NY
Thursday, 21 June 2018 | 10:00am – 1:00pm

I. A Strengthened & Renewed UN System: What can and should change?

UN2020 Initiative: Update & Overview

The UN2020 Initiative is calling for a 75th anniversary summit for the United Nations that includes a meaningful process of stocktaking, review and strengthening for the organization.

With several [UN +5 events and processes scheduled for 2020](#), the proposed UN2020 Summit would generate a dynamic whereby these separate processes may find mutually reinforcing elements rather than operating within their own silos. Language on preparations for a Summit is incorporated in the current **“zero draft” resolution of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (AHWG)**. The language in the “zero draft” resolution does not speak to [modalities](#). Additional discussions are required.

The preparatory process leading up to the proposed Summit aims to support and build on the [reforms proposed by the SG](#). UN2020’s [Global Call to Action](#) aims to document support and serve as a basis for letting Member States know that the proposed 2020 summit process carries the support of civil society.

Historical Rationale for UN2020 Summit

Drawing a comparison between the UN’s 50th anniversary and the upcoming 75th anniversary, we see fundamental differences in the geopolitical environment, with greater dangers posed today than in 1995, which was far more optimistic and hopeful. Between 1989-1995, both governments and civil society demonstrated a strong commitment to using the 50th anniversary as an opportunity for reform, whereas today, most governments have not paid any thought to the 75th anniversary. Moving forward, our goal is to get governments thinking long-term to 2020. Having concentrated on the “how” of reform for the past two years, we now need to shift our focus to the “what.”

Status of Ongoing UN Reform Measures

UN Human Rights Machinery:

- Contending approaches to HRC reform, with the U.S strongly opposing the existence of the Council’s Agenda Item 7 (Palestine and other OT). The U.S. has now left the HRC and the strengthening process is ongoing with a focus on short and medium-term urgent reforms.
- HRC is scheduled to undergo a GA-led status review in 2021, possibly continuing until 2026. Some would like to open the question regarding whether the HRC should exist as a subsidiary or main body.
- Concerns expressed that CSOs are not paying due regard to 2020 Treaty Body strengthening process.
- **Suggestions / Recommendations:**
 1. In the lead-up to 2021, there will be a preparatory review examining the Council’s fulfilment of its mandate. Geneva NGOs should contribute and leverage this opportunity.
 2. Persuading states to upgrade the Council from a subsidiary organ to a main organ would be a big accomplishment.

3. Ensure that we don't lose political space provided to NGOs at the HRC.

UN Peace & Security Architecture:

- General agreement amongst States that the Sustaining Peace agenda embodies a shift in the understanding of peacebuilding from post-conflict settings to the full cycle, including prevention. After the ACABQ report, the reform package is moving through with general support for structural changes.
 - SG has proposed three regional offices to be headed by an ASG, which will be key in bridging activities across silos. The combination of offices translates into efficiency measures, which means cutting positions. Funding is also a problem. Hence, the risk is that despite commitment, there may not be the capacity to deliver.
 - 5-year Review of PBA in 2020, although the scope for civil society participation is not yet clear.
 - 2019 will focus on financing (SG has called for quantum leap), while 2020 will look at operational aspects of Sustaining Peace.
 - **Suggestions / Recommendations:**
 1. Set up a process which includes robust multi-stakeholder engagement. A key development is the Action for Peacekeeping Initiative (A4P), which calls for collective engagement and requires UN partnerships with the EU, AU and G5 Sahel Force.
 2. With the current "shuffling" of institutions, there is a need to work more efficiently across silos, be more politically engaged, and look beyond just "hard security".
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II. How can civil society best organize to make the most of the 2020 opportunity?

Challenges for civil society moving forward

1. Between now and 2020, there is both limited time and latitude to organize civil society.
2. In regard to peace & security, our ability to implement "best practices" will be highly dependent on ongoing reforms. PBSO is where Sustaining Peace is housed, but it doesn't have an operational mandate or presence on the ground, so it is difficult to comprehend what "sustaining peace" looks like in practice.
3. Significant skepticism over U.S. support, disposition toward UN – Last year, 18 NGOs sent a private joint letter to the U.S. and other missions, opposing the US strategy of unilaterally negotiating a GA resolution to advance their HRC reform proposals. Following U.S. withdrawal from the HRC, each NGO received a letter stating that the U.S. would no longer be working with them.
4. UN embarking on an annual budget starting in 2020. Member States are not likely to approve add-ons once the initial budget is submitted by the SG, even if this is a non-recurrent sum of money.
5. Considering the plethora of UN reviews and processes over the next 10 years, Member States may be wary of adding another major item on the agenda.
6. Heavy reliance on the support of Western States isolates governments from the Global South (groups like NAM), who could potentially view a 2020 Summit as a "finger-pointing" exercise.

Suggestions / Recommendations Regarding Proposed Next Steps

1. Start in a timely fashion and reach out to people who have been involved in similar processes in the past. Bear in mind that coordination is very time consuming so "tight organization" is key.
2. Find a balance between overly ambitious proposals which fail to gain traction and pragmatic changes based upon political expediency.

3. Messaging of the campaign is key. Ensure that it is not overtly technocratic and establish a clear vision for change.
 4. Additional clarity / discussion required for the following key questions:
 - a. **Ultimately, what is the UN2020 Summit for?**
 - b. **What is UN2020's desired starting point and end-point, and how do we want to position that?**
 5. Prioritize building a strong base of Member State support. Avoid proposals which require Charter revision.
 6. Using the Summit to incentivize a broader civil society involvement, it would be wise to build on creative, bottom-up ideas. Identify grassroots partners and Member States who can work together from the ground up and prioritize attaining the support of "we the people", not just large elitist organizations.
 7. The SG's instructions for the 2020 budget will be going out in Oct/Nov 2018. For the Secretariat to undertake an additional event, we need to support the submission of an appropriate PBI (Project Budget Implication assessment) following the September AHWG resolution.
 8. Regarding civil society participation opportunities, refer consultation processes established through the SDG process & Open Working Group and the Climate Conference COPs. Encourage governments to include CSOs as a part of their delegations.
 9. **UN 2020 Call to Action:**
 - a. Consider adopting a theme of "inclusion" or "We the Peoples"
 - b. Consider proposing "10 ideas for change" to flesh out what is the UN2020 "ask".
 - c. Draft a one-paragraph letter to send out to foreign ministries or missions, which endorses the 75th anniversary commemoration proposed in the AHWG resolution.
 10. **Modalities Resolution:**
 - a. Recall that Sean Cleary of the World Future Foundation has drafted a draft GA resolution that proposes to establish an Open Working Group of Member States that would receive inputs from national consultations organized by governments worldwide to create a report on global governance reform. These could be part of a modalities resolution.
 - b. Also consider the PyeongChang Appeal for Peace (PCAP) 2019-2020, shared by Anselmo Lee of the Asia Development Alliance that was conceived during the PyeongChang Olympics and Paralympics (Feb-Mar 2018). It is based upon the Hague Appeal for Peace (1999),
 11. **Platforms to leverage:**
 - a. Awardees of the New Shape Prize initiative, convened by the Global Challenges Foundation
 - b. Global Town Hall on 21-23 July (Boulder, CO)
 - c. UN2020 and the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development could co-sponsor a workshop at the upcoming 67th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference entitled "We the Peoples... Together Finding Global Solutions for Global Problems" (August 22-23 2018).
 12. **Key allies:**
 - a. Partners and advisors should include both the usual suspects and new organizations (especially Southern-based organizations)
 - b. With the AHWG resolution gaining momentum, a key ally will be the next PGA
 - c. In 2015, the Elders made four recommendations to reform the UN Security Council and SG selection process. They are interested in using their influence to promote the multilateral system and to make the case of multilateralism.
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