

2R2Ps for Sustainable Peace Initiative

2021 ROUNDTABLE FINAL REPORT

Achieving Sustainable Peace and Protection under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Held at the United Nations Headquarters in Ankara, Türkiye on December 17, 2021

This final report comprises of the reflections on and outcomes of the 17 December 2021 Roundtable¹ entitled “Achieving Sustainable Peace and Protection under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda” and the follow-up open debate under the 2R2Ps for Sustainable Peace² Initiative carried out by the co-conveners of the Initiative, the Embassy of Costa Rica, Hacettepe University and the University for Peace.

The meeting was organised by the three co-conveners in cooperation with and with the valuable contributions of the Embassy of Spain and the United Nations Mission in Turkey.

I. Background

On 12 December 2019, Hacettepe University and the University for Peace, with the collaboration of the Embassy of Costa Rica, organised a meeting entitled “The Interrelation between the Right to Peace and the Responsibility to Protect: The path towards ‘peace, justice and stronger institutions’” in Ankara, Turkey. Different United Nations entities and diplomatic representatives participated in the debate. The primary outcomes of this discussion is published [online](#) and publicly available.

Elaborated by a working group of graduate students at Hacettepe University under the supervision of Associate Professor Pınar Gözen Ercan, the main ideas of the debate were included in a document entitled “Achieving Sustainable Peace and Protection under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”. This global reflection concluded that the connection between the Right to Peace and R2P is through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, focused on “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the concept of “Sustaining Peace”, as outlined in Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (2016), are complementary and mutually reinforcing. While sustainable development underpins sustainable peace,

¹ Roundtable Participants:

Moderator: H.E. Gustavo Campos Fallas, Ambassador of the Republic of Costa Rica in the Republic of Turkey.

Speaker 1: H. E. Ramón Blecua, Ambassador at Large Mediation and Intercultural Dialogue, Director General for United Nations, International Organizations and Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain.

Speaker 2: H.E. David Fernandez Puyana, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the United Nations University for Peace to UNESCO in Paris and the United Nations Office-International Organizations in Geneva.

Speaker 3: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Gözen Ercan, Head of the Public International Law Branch, Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University, Turkey.

Meeting Rapporteurs from Hacettepe University:

- Selin Kul, Research Assistant, Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University.
- Vildan Taştemel, PhD Candidate, Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University.
- Buşra Küçük, MA Student, Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University.
- Ezgi Koç, MA Student, Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University.

² Acronym for the Right to Peace and the Responsibility to Protect for Sustainable Peace Initiative.

more peaceful and inclusive societies create an environment conducive to sustainable development. Sustainable peace is both an enabler and an outcome of sustainable development.

The UN Secretary-General remarked in 2018 that since the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint for reaching a more peaceful society, and the Alliance of Civilizations plays an essential role in nurturing the productive cooperation among countries and peoples that is so essential in an era of growing global interconnectedness. SDG 16—which addresses peace, justice and strong institutions—is clearly related to conflict resolution as it promotes an institutional framework that allows maintaining social stability and guarantees based on the rule of law. However, we need to study in-depth the conditions required to offer public policies and socio-economic conditions that are just, inclusive and innovative. Justice and strong institutions must be supported by communitarian participation, solidarity and education.

The recent call of the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in the General Assembly requesting urgent action by the international community to address the interconnected crises of climate change, environmental degradation and growing economic and social inequalities, compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, should not fall on deaf ears. The coupling of these systemic crises with the proliferation of armed conflicts and big power confrontation is the most crucial threat to the multilateral system in decades. The UN's international peacebuilding and security architecture requires new global alliances, incorporating new technologies, artificial intelligence, and technological diplomacy that will define a new Agenda for Peace to be adopted at the Summit for the Future proposed by the UN Secretary-General.

II. Objectives of the event:

Held in the context of the International Human Solidarity Day, the objectives of this follow-up meeting were defined as follows:

- To address various aspects in consideration of achieving sustainable peace.
- To receive feedback and suggestions for and comments regarding the document on achieving sustainable peace and protection prepared by Hacettepe University 2R2Ps Research Group.
- To elaborate on a strategy for the steps to be taken within the multilateral system.
- To maximize the joint efforts in the prevention of conflicts.
- To bring academics and practitioners together for further conceptual and practical development of the overlapping frameworks of peace and protection to seek ways to achieve the main targets of SDG 16.

III. Program of the event

Open Panel for Discussion

Chair: H.E. Mr. Gustavo Campos Fallas, Ambassador of the Republic of Costa Rica in the Republic of Turkey.

- Welcome remarks by Tom Delrue, Head of Office of the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Turkey on behalf of Dr. Alvaro Rodríguez, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Turkey.
- Introduction of the topic by the Chair: “Present and future actions in the multilateral system”
- Presentation 1: “Alliance of Civilizations, Mediation and Intercultural Dialogue by Ambassador” by H.E. Ramón Blecua, Ambassador at Large Mediation and Intercultural Dialogue, Director General for United Nations, International Organizations and Human Rights - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain.

- Presentation 2: “United Nations: a platform for peace actions”, by H.E. Mr. David Fernandez Puyana, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the UN University for Peace to UNESCO in Paris and the United Nations Office-International Organizations in Geneva.
- Presentation 3: “Achieving Sustainable Peace and Protection under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda” by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pinar Gözen Ercan, Head of the Public International Law Branch at the Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University.
- Question and Answer Session
- Closing remarks - End of the open panel discussion.

IV. Observations and Possible Ways Forward

While there has been progress in terms of the realization of some of the targets of the SDGs in various areas in the international agenda, we are still too far behind in accomplishing the 17 Goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda that was adopted in 2015. New challenges continue to arise as to tackling the issues related to sustainability, development and peace. We have been witnessing increasing violence against displaced people, cultural power competitions, regional struggles for hegemony, as well as proliferation of non-state actors and armed conflicts. This leads us to question whether or not the changes in the international multilateral order transforms the threats to the multilateral system. In the meanwhile, pressing issues such as climate change, environmental degradation as well as economic and social inequalities cannot be disregarded or shadowed by the so-called “hard security” matters as these issues are also closely connected with the agenda for peace as traditional security issues are.

Over the last decades the international system has been changing and its players have multiplied. Non-state actors—be it militias, digital platforms, transnational criminal organisations, or big corporations—have become major players, especially in terms of defining the nature of the conflicts. Mediation and conflict resolution are also transforming, and traditional methods and approaches are no longer enough to meet the needs of our day. For instance, the emergence of ethnocultural sectarian components have made conflicts much more intractable and challenging to address with traditional political tools. Likewise, the nature and conduct of wars have been changing. We are now witnessing wars fought in the cyberspace, for instance. All these changes require the adaptation and/or the revision of the existing system and its tools.

We have to take into account the dramatic call that the UN Secretary-General made before the State Members of the UN General Assembly in September 2019. As António Guterres remarked, the multilateral system is facing probably one of the most dramatic challenges that it has in years. While the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda remains the primary roadmap for the international community, as well as for the new partnership between large powers, small countries, civil society and new international actors, we are far behind in terms of achieving the goals of this common agenda. The world is facing the challenges of a triple systemic crisis of climate change, environmental degradation, growing social and economic inequalities, as well as the proliferation of conflict and big power competition.

Moreover, as the recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown, and also accelerated, a social contract has been emerging, and the new technological order has been shaping the new power struggles and challenging the principles and the foundations of the UN. The new technological order is not necessarily regulated and there is no single authority in control of it. In this vein, there are numerous factors and actors that need to be considered in determining a way forward. Accordingly, some of the main points raised in this meeting and the suggestions for the way forward are summarised as follows:

- The SDGs provide the international community with a roadmap, and a basis for the new reinforcement multilateralism.
- Technological advancements have transformed the threats that states face. Conflicts and parties to conflicts have also changed. Conflict resolution and prevention should be on the top of the list for stabilization and development as ill-managed conflict resolution and prevention is the main cause of destabilization and lack of development. So far, their importance has not been realized or they have been mostly side-lined. This also relates to the effective implementation of the SDGs as part of an international agenda. It is possible only through conflict resolution and conflict prevention.
- In a dynamic world, tackling new challenges is possible with multilateralism and solidarity, and both need to be reinforced and strengthened as it is prone to be undermined by current matters such as rising populism, racism, intolerance, hate speech, etc.
- Focusing on multilateralism, the alliance of civilizations and addressing factors leading to intolerance, hate speech and discrimination are vital to overcome the rising challenges to the peace agenda. The power of education needs to be emphasized and education should be vitalized in terms of tackling all these challenges to peace.
- Technological developments and increasing digitalization in many fields, especially during the pandemic, are making a considerable impact and have led to changes in the social contract. The new technologies, and social media in particular, are prone to be used both for good and bad purposes. Therefore, it is important to recognize the impact of technological developments and increasing digitalization and put concrete efforts into coping with increasing racism, hate speech and intolerance.
- As for the SDGs, we see that there are discrepancies between the SDGs and the process of digitalization. This remains an issue to be addressed. Likewise, the UN represents the present-day social contract in the international arena, and it is crucial that the UN adapts itself to the circumstances of the 21st century. Hence, discussing how the role of the UN may and should change in the circumstances of our age is also vital.
- While the intergovernmental structure of the UN remains the same, the approach should not be solely focused on the States and their governments. It is the people/populations that make up the UN, and a bottom-up approach with a focus on individuals and other non-state stakeholders (such as the NGOs) may prove useful, and this may help governments which make commitments in different UN venues to live up to their promises. In this regard, once again, education is a key element in terms of raising individuals who are conscious of their rights as well as obligations to others. Sustainable peace and prevention can only be achieved by developing a sustainable prevention strategy placing the notion of peace at its core. This requires the internalization of a culture of peace, which can be promoted as a set of values, attitudes, traditions, and modes of behaviour and ways of life as identified in the declaration of the culture of peace through a human rights education system. Overall, the promotion and further development of a culture of peace is necessary for the development of a sustainable peace environment, mutual respect and international cooperation.