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GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Future of International Cooperation Report 2023

Building Shared Futures:
Innovating Governance for Global
and Regional Problem-Solving

Global Governance Innovation Network

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Related Publications (Co-published by Doha Forum and Stimson Center)

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Rethinking Global Cooperation: Three New Frameworks for Collective Action in an Age of Uncertainty (2022)

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Future of International Cooperation Report 2023

Building Shared Futures: Innovating Governance for Global and Regional Problem-Solving

> **By offering concrete proposals for strengthening collective action, the** *Future of International Cooperation 2023* **report gives Doha Forum participants and concerned citizens worldwide the tools to help meet two pressing challenges to global order and the well-being of peoples.**

Although profound crises confront the world, humanity has also never had such an abundance of knowledge, resources, or technological means to effectively tackle international problems through collective action. Against this backdrop, the *Future of International Cooperation Report 2023* (FIC'23) seeks to facilitate deeper collaboration between governments, civil society, religious leaders, the media, the business community, and international organizations to help present and future generations realize their full potential. It focuses on what the institutions and practice of global and regional cooperation need to keep pace with disruptive trends in cyber-technology and the destructive challenges of persistent conflict. It shows how carefully designed and responsible initiatives in cyber-governance, including the regulation of artificial intelligence, and in reinvigorated peacebuilding can benefit peoples and nations and influence the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit this September and the Summit of the Future in September 2024. Humanity has no time to lose in revitalizing global and regional problem-solving in these and other critical issues through principled and future-focused international cooperation.

Foreword

From confronting climate change and extreme forms of poverty to protracted conflict and the erosion of human rights, effective international cooperation represents both a moral and practical imperative. Given these colossal challenges, the coming together of world leaders in New York at this month's SDG Summit and next year's Summit of the Future is both timely and critical. With only 15 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals' targets on track this decade (and over 500 million people still likely to live in extreme poverty by 2030), achieving success in both summits depends on the identification and pursuit of the deep and varied connections between them.

In preparation for this year's Doha Forum on December 10th and 11th, the *Future of International Cooperation Report 2023* seeks to better inform forum participants and concerned citizens worldwide, by addressing vital dimensions of global and regional cooperation alongside concrete recommendations for strengthening collective action in meeting major challenges, threats, and opportunities of the present era. Under the sub-heading "Building Shared Futures: Innovating Governance for Global and Regional Problem-Solving," the report gives special attention to harnessing the power of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, and reinvigorated peacebuilding for effective collective action. Both sets of tools are poised to accelerate follow-through to the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future.

While their risks (explored at length in this report) are increasingly well-known, artificial intelligence and other kinds of cybertech wield immense potential for public good, from stepping up the delivery of international disaster aid to supercharging research into deadly diseases and their cures. Similarly, innovations in peacebuilding that empower local stakeholders, including women and youth, can help to prevent the outbreak and recurrence of violent conflict in fragile countries and regions. Never has humanity had the know-how based on experience, combined with technological and financial means, to tackle complex international problems through international cooperation—and never have the stakes been so high.

We wish to express our appreciation to the authors of this report, which represents the latest intellectual collaboration between Doha Forum, the Stimson Center, and the Global Institute for Strategic Research (based at the Qatar Foundation's Hamad Bin Khalifa University). We hope it will inform a rich and open exchange at the upcoming Doha Forum and other international dialogues dedicated to promoting joint pathways toward greater solidarity, peace, and prosperity. By rethinking international cooperation through novel and lasting partnerships, including the revitalization of global and regional organizations, we can build a shared future that better fulfills the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

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List of Abbreviations

3D's.............. Dialogue, Diplomacy, and Diversity
4P's .... Prevention, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
ACUNS .... Academic Council on the United Nations System
AI .... Artificial Intelligence
ASEAN......... Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATT .... Arms Trade Treaty
AU .... African Union
BRICS .... Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
BTWC.......... Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention
CBRN........... Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear
CCW .... Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
CERF............ Central Emergency Response Fund
CWC .... Chemical Weapons Convention
DPO .... (UN) Department of Peace Operations
DPPA .... (UN) Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DRR.............. Disaster Risk Reduction
EOSG........... Executive Office of the Secretary-General
ESG .... Environmental, Social, and Governance
FFD .... Financing for Development
G7 .... Group of Seven countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy,
                    Japan, United States, and United Kingdom)
GCC .... Gulf Cooperation Council
GDC............. Global Digital Compact
GDP .... Gross Domestic Product
GGE .... Group of Governmental Experts
GGI............... Global Governance Index
GGIR .... Global Governance Innovation Report
GGS .... Global Governance Survey
GNI .... Gross National Income
HDI .... Human Development Index
HLAB .... (UN) High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism
HLPF............ (UN ECOSOC) High-Level Political Forum
IA2................ International Artificial Intelligence Agency
IAEA............. International Atomic Energy Agency
IASC............. (UN) Inter Agency Standing Committee
ICAIP........... Intergovernmental Cyber and AI Panel
ICC .... International Criminal Court
ICISS .... International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
IDP .... Internally Displaced Person
IFP................ International Fund for Peacebuilding
IHL .... International Humanitarian Law
INGO .... International Non-Governmental Organization
IoT .... Internet of Things
IPCC............ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
iSDG .... integrated Sustainable Development Goal
LAWS........... Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems
MAD .... Mutually Assured Destruction

MAS .... Mutually Assured Survival
MDB............. Multilateral Development Bank
MSU .... (DPPA) Mediation Support Unit
MVI .... Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index
NA4P .... New Agenda for Peace
new PBC ..... (UN) Peacebuilding Council
NGO .... Non-Governmental Organization
NPT.............. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
OAJ.............. (UN) Office of Administration of Justice
OCA............. Our Common Agenda
OCHA.......... (UN) Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs
OECD .... Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR....... (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS............ (UN) Office of Internal Oversight Services
OPCW .... Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PBC.............. (UN) Peacebuilding Commission
PGA.............. President of the United Nations General Assembly
R&D .... Research and Development
R2P .... Responsibility to Protect
R2Pre .... Responsibility to Prevent
SAARC......... South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SALW........... Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDG(s) .... Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SEA .... Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SG .... (UN) Secretary-General
SIDS............. Small Island Developing States
SIPRI .... Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOTF .... Summit of the Future
SSI................ Safety, Sustainability, and Inclusion principles
SVI................ Social Vulnerability Index
UCDP........... Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN................ United Nations
UN60 .... United Nations' 60th anniversary
UN75 .... United Nations' 75th anniversary
UNAMID ..... United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur
UNDP .... United Nations Development Programme
UNEP........... United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO..... United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNGA.......... United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR .... United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC .... United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF....... United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDIR........ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNODA....... United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNODC....... United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC........... United Nations Security Council
UNSCR .... United Nations Security Council Resolution
UPR.............. Universal Periodic Review
WPS............. Women, Peace, and Security
YPS .... Youth, Peace, and Security

Executive Summary

> "*Rarely are opportunities presented to you in a perfect way. In a nice little box with a yellow bow on top. 'Here, open it, it's perfect. You'll love it.' Opportunities—the good ones—are messy, confusing and hard to recognize. They're risky. They challenge you.*"

—Susan Wojcicki, Chief Executive Officer of YouTube.[1]

Under the banner of "Diplomacy, Dialogue, and Diversity," Doha Forum has promoted for more than two decades a spirited and open interchange of ideas to innovate and improve international policy-making that drives action-oriented networks. Through this *Future of International Cooperation Report 2023* (FIC'23), Doha Forum, Stimson Center, and Global Institute for Strategic Research seek to better inform forum participants and concerned citizens worldwide, by addressing vital dimensions of global and regional cooperation alongside concrete recommendations for strengthening collective action in meeting major challenges, threats, and opportunities of the present era. Effective and legitimate action requires the participation of governments, civil society, religious leaders, the media, the business community, and international organizations, both global and regional.

Two major areas much in need of effective collective action are **cyber-technology**, including **artificial intelligence** (**AI**), and **peacebuilding**. AI and other cybertech present powerful tools for global and regional problem-solving, but they pose equally serious challenges, including the potential for unfettered competitive action that may lead to a "tragedy of the commons" for all. Moreover, with more violent conflicts underway now than at any time since the Second World War, the need to build just and sustainable peace has never been more urgent, but present peacebuilding tools seem less effective than ever.

With a special focus on "Building Shared Futures," this report demonstrates how carefully designed and responsible initiatives in these two critical areas can contribute to positive outcomes at the intergovernmental and multistakeholder **Sustainable Development Goals** (**SDG**) **Summit** this September and the **Summit of the Future** (**SOTF**) in September 2024. In part to strengthen the linkages between the SDG Summit and the SOTF, three fundamental principles must anchor the responsible scaling-up and basic functioning of AI and other cyber-technologies, namely: *safety*, *sustainability*, and *inclusion*. For effective peacebuilding to perform a similar role, upholding the five principles of *addressing the root causes of violent conflict*, *local capacity development*, *just and meaningful inclusion*, *accountability and transparency*, and *solidarity and social justice* are essential too.

> "…[We] seek to better inform…concerned citizens worldwide, by addressing key dimensions of global and regional cooperation…"

With an eye toward making artificial intelligence, cyber-governance, and peacebuilding accessible and beneficial to present and future generations in all countries by reflecting these core principles, among the report's chief recommendations are:

AI & Cyber-Governance Innovations for Global and Regional Problem-Solving

*Establish an International Artificial Intelligence Agency (**IA2**):*
The agency would serve to: i) improve visibility, advocacy, and resource mobilization for global AI regulatory efforts; ii) provide thought leadership on General Assembly and Security Council AI and cyber-technology-related initiatives and agreements; iii) monitor, evaluate, and report on AI industry safeguards in compliance with an emerging international regulatory framework; iv) enhance coordination across Member States and regional bodies to leverage AI's positive development applications; and v) coordinate transnationally across initiatives and frameworks on AI governance to support knowledge-sharing of best practices and lessons learned. IA2 should be supported by an expert Intergovernmental Cyber and AI Panel, modeled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Require Digital Advocates as Integral to a New Treaty on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems:
Today's soldiers are educated on the rules of war, inculcating international humanitarian law (IHL) to minimize the human cost of armed conflict. Similarly, this report calls for *digital advocates* as a mandatory component of the software governing autonomous weapons. When humans relinquish decision-making power to machines, they have an obligation to equip them with IHL principles to reduce unnecessary suffering, especially if a weapons system is programmed to continue a mission after it loses contact with its controllers. States may be unwilling to part with the source code of their weapons, but sharing information on digital advocates could provide an avenue for greater transparency, trust, and norm proliferation.

*Harness the Global Digital Compact as an integrated SDG (**iSDG**) on Technology:*
Coordination across existing SDG targets concerning technology and filling in gaps where targets were not identified in 2015, such as the positive use of AI, will position the Global Digital Compact as an accelerator of the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Leveraging the Compact in this way underscores the social contract that guides international cooperation and collective responsibility in bridging the digital divide, sharing risks and benefits to encourage greater investment in digital access, and enhancing technology's value as a global public good.

Peacebuilding Innovations for Global and Regional Problem-Solving

*Advance the Next Generation Women & Youth Peace & Security (**WPS and YPS**) Agendas:*
Cultural stereotypes and barriers to participation in policy development, decision-making, and implementation for women and youth can be addressed through awareness campaigns, internal UN system-level accountability frameworks, and education, as well as logistical and financial support, that together equip women and youth as peacebuilders. Additionally, the UN system, alongside regional bodies such as SAARC, ASEAN, the GCC, and the AU, should work with national counterparts on robust WPS and YPS National Action Plan monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track, for instance, gender-based violence and gender inequality in areas affected by conflict.

Transform the Peacebuilding Commission into an Empowered Council for Sustaining Peace:
With an expanded mandate, the UN Peacebuilding Council would have enhanced powers and responsibilities to lead on conflict prevention (including through a new Peacebuilding Audit tool) and peacebuilding policy development, coordination, and resource mobilization on critical second- and third-order conflicts, freeing up the Security Council to concentrate on first-order conflicts that most threaten international peace and security. In addition, a reinvigorated focus on prevention calls for adequate, predictable, and sustained funding of the Peacebuilding Fund, including from assessed dues, thereby strengthening the world body's core mission of sustaining peace.

> *"...artificial intelligence...and peacebuilding wield immense potential for revolutionizing how diverse state and non-state actors can...grapple with some of the most complex issues at the heart of the SDG Summit and SOTF Action Agendas."*

Offer Greater Details (and Ambition) to Collective Security Architecture Reform Proposals:
As a contribution to next year's Summit of the Future, UN Secretary-General António Guterres' New Agenda for Peace speaks briefly to ideas for improving the Security Council, General Assembly, and Peacebuilding Commission—but given present gaps in international governance, there is room for going further. For example, the number of non-permanent seats on the Council should be expanded by six, while allowing for the immediate re-election of non-permanent members, through an appropriate amendment of UN Charter Article 23. The Secretary-General should also lend his support to more frequent use of the Uniting for Peace resolution when the UNSC fails to act in critical matters of international peace and security.

The Future is Now: Advancing the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future Action Agendas

Next year's Summit of the Future is designed to realize—through well-conceived, politically acceptable, and adequately resourced reform proposals—the international systemic changes needed to fill the global governance systems gaps identified in the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit. The SOTF's "Pact for the Future" and associated instruments (including a Global Digital Compact, New Agenda for Peace, and Declaration on Future Generations) are poised to take forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, and wider UN agenda, including in the areas of economic governance and debt relief, science and technology, peace and security, human rights, and the needs of younger and future generations.

As elaborated in the FIC'23 report, artificial intelligence, cyber-governance, and reinvigorated peacebuilding wield immense potential for revolutionizing how diverse state and non-state actors can jointly and creatively grapple with some of the most complex issues at the heart of the SDG Summit and SOTF Action Agendas. With courage and imagination that fully employs these tools, our leaders can yet pull humanity back from the brink of overlapping crises and emerging shocks—including potential mass displacement from sea-level rise, recurring health crises, and the outbreak of deadly armed conflicts—toward a path of solidarity, peace, and shared prosperity. We have no time to lose in revitalizing global and regional problem-solving through principled and future-focused international cooperation.

I. Introduction: Trends and Concepts

> *"There are no incurable diseases—only the lack of will.*
> *There are no worthless herbs—only the lack of knowledge."*
>
> —Ibn-Sina, 11th Century Philosopher and Physician.[2]

Although profound crises confront the world, from climate change and extreme forms of poverty to protracted conflict and the erosion of human rights, humanity has also never had such an abundance of knowledge, resources, or technological means to effectively tackle global and regional problems through collective action. At the same time, the institutions and practices of global and regional cooperation are failing to keep pace with fast-changing socioeconomic, environmental, peace and security, and technological trends.

This year's Doha Forum takes place between two historic intergovernmental and multistakeholder gatherings: this September's SDG Summit and the closely associated September 2024 Summit of the Future, both held at the start of the UN General Assembly's High-Level Week in New York. Through this *Future of International Cooperation Report 2023*, Doha Forum, Stimson Center, and Global Institute for Strategic Research address key dimensions of global and regional cooperation and provide creative, pragmatic, and future-oriented recommendations for strengthening collective action toward the present era's major challenges, threats, and opportunities. Under the banner of "Diplomacy, Dialogue, and Diversity," the report gives attention to modernizing multilateral institutions and other transboundary cooperation approaches to global and regional cooperation. In doing so, it aims to serve as a primer for Doha Forum participants and other informed citizens, equipping them with strategic foresight and knowledge-based tools to help all countries and peoples—both present and future generations—chart a just and sustainable course to greater solidarity, peace, and shared prosperity.

With a special focus on "Building Shared Futures: Innovating Governance for Global and Regional Problem-Solving," FIC'23 explores the potential for artificial intelligence, cyber-governance, and reinvigorated peacebuilding to revolutionize how governments, civil society, religious leaders, the media, business community, and international organizations interact and grapple with some of the most complex and at times menacing policy issues facing humanity. Before examining these themes, the report first presents a brief overview of major developments in global and regional affairs.

Global Backdrop

Underpinning the *Future of International Cooperation 2023* report is an acknowledgment of four key global currents—all presenting huge opportunities and concurrent threats—across socioeconomic development and recovery, the environment, peace and security, and technology. Their intersectionality is reflected, for instance, in the crossover between socioeconomic development and technology, which sees digital innovation promising new economic opportunities for billions, while the digital divide remains, excluding over one-third of the world from access to the Internet.[3] The four currents also converge around the Sustainable Development Goals, whose progress has been knocked severely off-course by a confluence of both anticipated and unforeseen—natural and human-led—occurrences.

SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECOVERY

The UN's 2023 assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals reveals a world off-track: only 15 percent of the Goals are on target for reaching their 2030 deadline.[4] Extreme poverty is rising after decades of improvement, and with the COVID-19 pandemic erasing recent gains, over 500 million could still live in extreme poverty by 2030 (figure 1.1). Hunger has reached alarming levels not seen since 2005, with over one-in-three people experiencing food insecurity.[5]

Figure 1.1: Global Poverty Projections up to 2030 Compared to World Bank Target of 3%
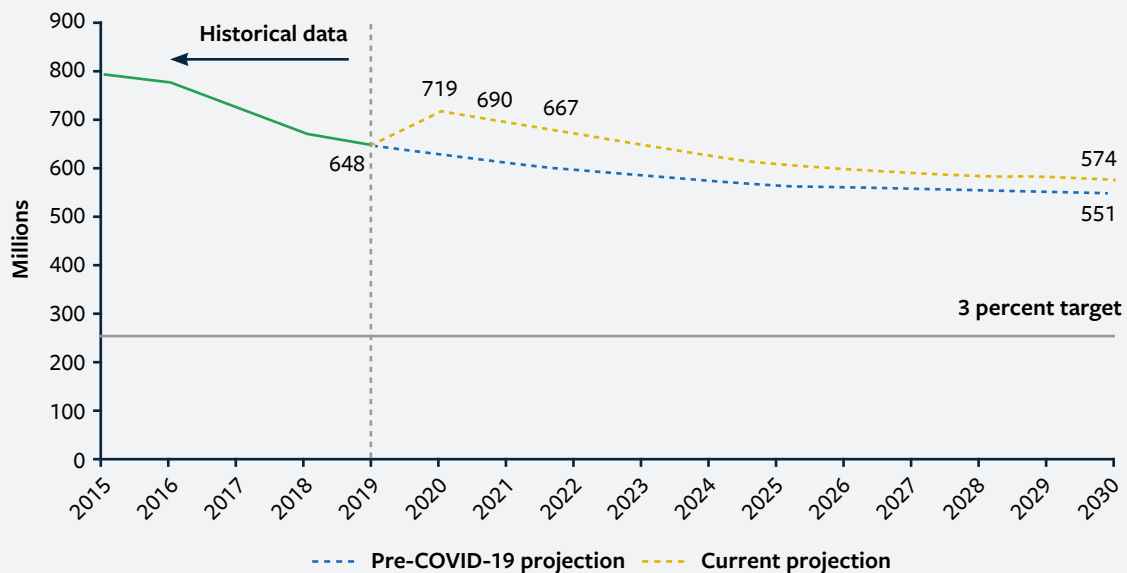
Source: World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course*, 2022.

Inequality within and between countries continues to grow, with fifty-two nations in debt default or edging toward it, as impacts of stultified development disproportionately affect the poorest.[6] At the same time, hundreds of millions in developing countries have gained access to basic amenities like water and electricity, with an additional 687 million gaining access to fresh water since 2015. Still, huge deficits remain as, for instance, 1.1 billion inhabit slum-like urban conditions.[7] Urbanization has, in effect, swelled slum populations, while discrimination against women still persists across much of the world.

The economic fallout from COVID-19 reveals stark fragilities in international cooperation and support structures. Financing gaps impede investment in the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, reaching more than U.S. $4 trillion annually across the public, private, and aid sectors.[8] Concurrently, debt distress has soared, with 60 percent of lower-income countries at risk of default, laying bare global safety net failures and threatening many of the SDG targets.[9]

ENVIRONMENT

July 6, 2023 saw the highest recorded average global temperature in a single twenty-four-hour period: 17.23°C.[10] This has contributed to alarming conditions in Antarctica, wildfires, and other intensified weather patterns, with UN Secretary-General António Guterres declaring climate change "out of control."[11] Environmental trends have continued toward the "'cliff-edge'" scenario—potentially irreversible changes to earth's habitability for both humans and animals, according to the latest (March 2023) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change synthesis report.[12] Climate and broader environmental chaos also continue to spur migration and intensify armed conflicts.[13] Meanwhile, across G7 and BRICS countries surveyed in the *Global Governance Survey 2023*, majorities in several countries agree that their governments are not doing enough to combat climate change and other kinds of environmental damage, with majorities of over two-thirds in favor of debt for climate swaps, compensating countries for climate damage, and even criminalizing acts of environmental vandalism (figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Views on Policies to Promote Climate Action

	Percent in favor of each
Cut poorest countries' debt for climate action	67%
Duty to compensate for climate damage	68%
Criminalize willful, long-term international climate damage	69%

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center & Charney Research.
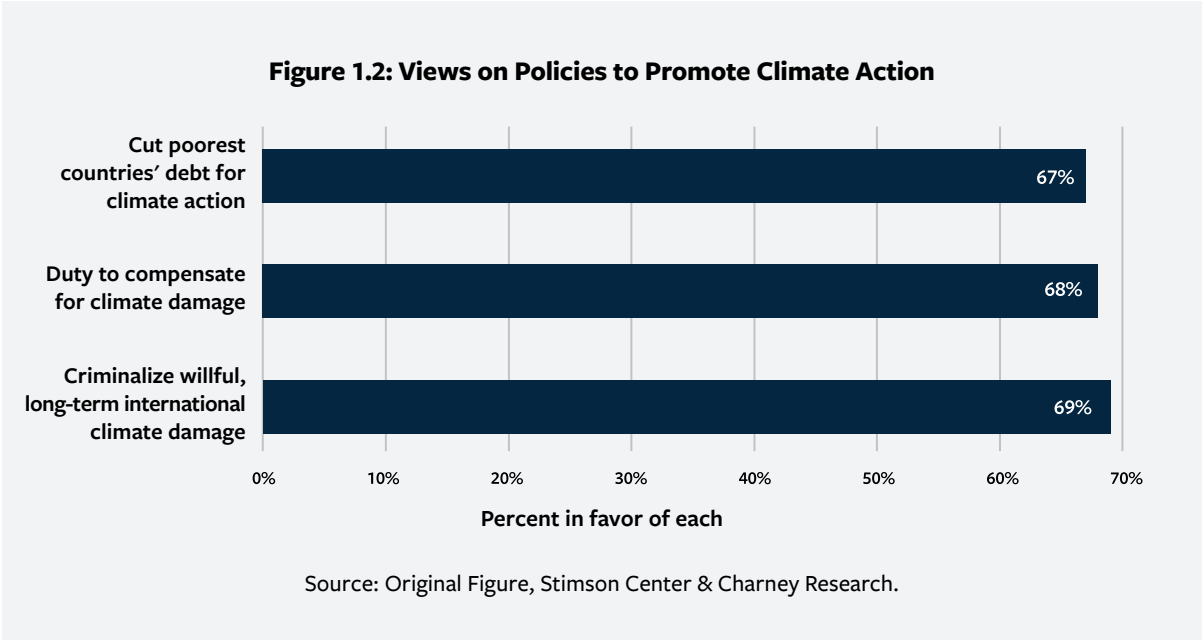
PEACE AND SECURITY

This report comes at a time when progress on vital disarmament issues has stalled, thwarted by limited political will and technical obstacles. Military spending sits at an all-time high, reaching U.S. $2.2 trillion in 2022, as arms control efforts flounder amidst rising tensions among the Great Powers.[14] According to the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, the risks of nuclear conflict are now the highest since the Cold War,[15] while prospects for replacing the expiring New START treaty, which limits the number of nuclear warheads permitted between Russia and the U.S., appear remote.[16] Conventional weapons proliferation continues despite arms control treaties, with the total value of arms exports from the top ten exporters increasing by 56 percent between 2020 and 2022.[17] Moreover, emerging technologies like lethal autonomous weapon systems are exacerbating asymmetries on the battlefield, as well as disrupting traditional arms control approaches (see section two).

Despite these worrying signs, there are growing calls for increased international cooperation on security challenges. The *Global Governance Survey 2023* found that 72 percent of the citizens polled from G7 and BRICS countries supported reducing or cutting-off trade in response to aggression by one country toward another; 68 percent viewed the bombing of civilian power grids as a potential war crime; and 70 percent agreed that their country should help to bring accused war criminals to the International Criminal Court.[18] Though many feel the world is divided and dangerous, with widespread fears over conflict trends (50 percent of respondents) topping the list of global concerns, the peoples of the countries polled expressed clearly their desire for the re-establishment of international order, founded on law rather than force.

TECHNOLOGY

This report comes at a critical juncture, as rapid technological transformations present new opportunities alongside risks that require enhanced international cooperation.[19] Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, nanotech, quantum computing, robotics, and biotech hold immense promise for human progress but also pose complex challenges (a theme explored in section two).

Technologies are developing faster than governance mechanisms, outpacing regulations and raising ethical dilemmas.[20] ChatGPT quickly became the world's most successful digital product, gaining over 100 million users within one month.[21] While it has the potential to transform work and productivity for many, AI has also been used to enable disinformation, such as against the safety of most COVID-19 vaccines.[22] With the recent advent of large language models like ChatGPT, people are less likely to spot disinformation generated by AI compared to those generated by humans.[23] Bad actors could therefore use AI to massively increase the output of a disinformation campaign through automation without reducing the believability of false content, turbo-charging the already dangerous phenomenon of digital disinformation.

These technologies often arise in private sector settings beyond national jurisdictions, making governance difficult.[24] Shifts in power facilitated by emerging technologies could prove highly destabilizing if not properly managed, with a recent study finding that over 80 percent of countries "less-prepared to adopt the benefits of AI" reside in the Global South, especially in Africa.[25]

Key Concepts in this Report

The following glossary defines some key concepts, to clarify foundational, but often debated, elements within the scope of this report.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Technology that mimics the problem-solving and decision-making capabilities of the human brain, and typically has wider computing capacity than traditional cyber-technology.[26] While this report does not dive deeply into differentiated regulatory responses for foundational models and generative AI, it does consider the specific use of lethal autonomous weapon systems. It further provides an overarching framework for managing the development and use of emerging cyber-technologies with high uncertainty of risk, potentially large impacts on human rights, and typically concentrated asymmetries of power.[27]

CYBER-GOVERNANCE

The United Nations focuses on digital cooperation when discussing governance of digital and cyber-technology, including principles of universal access and multistakeholder efforts to build better digital futures.[28] Many other platforms define cyber-governance in the context of cybersecurity, encompassing risk mitigation, decision-making hierarchies, and system-level oversight.[29] This report considers cyber-governance at both the technological-system-level management of technology and the global level—specifically, the global collective action required to strike a balance between regulation and innovation that generates sustainable, safe, and inclusive results (see "Revisiting Core Principles" in section two). While artificial intelligence is an emerging form of technology in cyberspace ("cybertech"), it is also increasingly considered a peculiarly powerful and potentially disruptive technology worthy of singling out for special attention.

CYBERTECH

In this report, "cybertech" refers to non-AI technologies that, typically, have been more extensively researched, often subject to regulatory agreements and norms, and largely lacking AI's expansive self-learning capacity. Examples of advanced but non-AI cybertech include behavioral biometrics, "zero trust" architecture, blockchain, quantum computing, cloud security, and "Internet of Things" (IoT) security.

DIPLOMACY, DIALOGUE, AND DIVERSITY

Diplomacy, dialogue, and diversity represent pivotal principles of international cooperation. The first of the "3Ds," *diplomacy* is described sometimes as the principal substitute for the use of force in international relations and the way that states and non-state actors regularly influence each other.[30] At the turn of the twenty-first century, emphasis has been placed on global approaches to the art of diplomacy itself,[31] which includes day-to-day implementation of foreign policies, multilateral and bilateral governmental summitry, and, increasingly, global and regional multistakeholder forums.[32]

Dialogue strengthens community capacity to diagnose, increase shared knowledge about, and respond to the challenges and opportunities faced by a community.[33] Critically, dialogue can generate mutual respect and collective knowledge far beyond what can be achieved without it.[34]

Diversity can take on many layers of meaning including by distinguishing the differences among global actors and their priorities; consequently, including diverse voices is necessary for meaningful international decision-making. Embracing diversity in global and regional governance systems constitutes, among other core attributes, power-sharing for collective agency, transparency, the bridging of trust deficits, and operating inclusively across different spheres of governance, knowledge expertise, and generations.[35]

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Previous Stimson reports, including the recent *Global Governance Innovation Report '23,* have considered the changing nature of global governance:

> *"[**G**]lobal governance is essentially about the steering of institutions and resources to provide for global public goods and tackle global challenges effectively. Such steering requires not only power but also legitimacy and authority. Here, an emerging consensus becomes visible, including through the principles and ideas permeating the Our Common Agenda and High-level Advisory Board for Effective Multilateralism reports, that for global governance to be legitimate and authoritative in contemporary terms, it needs to be conducted in an evidenced-based, inclusive, networked, equitable, and future-oriented way. Global governance innovation typically involves reform initiatives to advance global institutional, legal, policy, normative, and operational change."*
>
> —Global Governance Innovation Report 2023, 36.

By extension, regional governance encompasses the steering of institutions and resources to provide for public goods on a regional basis and tackle regional challenges effectively. Such steering requires not only power but also legitimacy and authority.

GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS AND GLOBAL COMMONS

Global Public Goods are defined by their "non excludability" and non-rivalry in consumption. Whether at the local, national or global level, their benefits are universal. These goods meet the needs for current populations without foreclosing the needs of posterity. Their benefits cut across countries and are enjoyed by the *publicum* or humanity as a whole.[36] Examples of global public goods include: peace, health, and a healthy environment. Global public goods represent *what* are governed, whereas global governance concerns *how* the international community manages (including the allocation of) global public goods.

Global commons are marked by their capacity for rivalry, that overconsumption of these resources by one actor (whether state or non-state actors, including powerful multinational corporations) will adversely affect the ability of others to benefit from it.[37] These resources are not subject to the national jurisdictions of a particular state, but rather shared by multiple states and organizations, if not internationally. The high seas and the deep seabeds, the polar caps, the atmosphere, space—and potentially even cyberspace—provide enduring examples of what constitutes the global commons.[38]

PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding refers to efforts to avoid the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict, giving special attention to developing and rebuilding national and local capacities for the management and resolution of protracted armed conflict to achieve durable, positive peace (see box 3.3).

TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

This involves Global South-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries and often supported by or involving developed countries and multilateral organizations.[39] These partnerships are leveraged to better implement programs, projects, and governance innovations. The different parties leverage their comparative advantages to generate greater shared benefits through collective action.

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Despite worrying global trends, there is hope yet for the second half of play in scoring the 2030 Agenda goals (from 2023-2030). Younger generations in rising powers, such as the BRICS, express optimism about global cooperation.[40] They also favor multilateral approaches on security issues over unilateral policies. Majorities in both the populous BRICS and G7 countries further support initiatives to reform global institutions like the UN Security Council or to establish new bodies, such as an International Anti-Corruption Court and a UN Parliamentary Network.[41]

However, to catalyze progress at a global scale, international cooperation is imperative. This report examines paths to reinvigorate partnerships, deliver on commitments, strengthen global and regional institutions, and close inequality gaps exacerbated by converging crises—spurring action to get the SDGs back on track and optimize the generational opportunity provided by next year's Summit of the Future. It spotlights challenges, threats, and opportunities to reinforce collective action in artificial intelligence and, more broadly speaking, cyber-governance (section two) and reinvigorated peacebuilding (section three), highlights key principles to guide international cooperation in each of these areas, and presents future-forward innovations at global and regional levels of governance for greater solidarity, peace, and shared prosperity. Section four then presents ways to advance these innovations in an expanding Overton window for consideration by world leaders participating in the 2023 Summit of the Future and 2024 Summit of the Future.

II. AI & Cyber-Governance Innovations for Global and Regional Problem-Solving

> *"As more and more artificial intelligence is entering into the world, more and more emotional intelligence must enter into leadership."*

—Amit Ray, Author and Scholar.[42]

Artificial intelligence (AI) and other cyber-technologies offer powerful tools for global and regional problem-solving. Simultaneously, they pose equally serious challenges, where unfettered, competitive action to exploit their rapidly developing potential can lead to a "tragedy of the commons."[43] This section attempts to consolidate and clarify some of the debates in this space, by looking at challenges, threats and opportunities through the lenses of regulation, security, and equity (the "digital divide"). Accordingly, it proposes three common, foundational principles—*Safety, Sustainability, and Inclusion* (*SSI*)—to guide the development of national, regional, and global cyber-governance regimes. The SSI principles, in turn, form the foundation for three proposals to maximize public goods (and minimize social costs) from AI and other cyber-technologies.

Within this context, it is worth clarifying the points of divergence and convergence in the governance of AI versus other cyber-technology (figure 2.1). The section that follows largely springboards from the points of intersection of these two spheres.

Major Challenges, Threats, and Opportunities

AI and other cyber-technology (cybertech) developments are outpacing regulatory and governance responses.[44] In 2022, the global AI market was valued at approximately U.S. $454 billion and is projected to reach approximately U.S. $2.575 trillion by 2032 at a compound annual growth rate of 19 percent.[45] Cybertech is becoming faster, cheaper, and more powerful. It is also increasingly misused as it becomes more ubiquitous, generating serious risks for society.[46] Consequently, the public sector must better manage the rise of AI and other cybertech, comprehend the dual-use nature of the technology and its attendant risks with benefits, and work to overcome the digital divide that results from the asymmetric concentration of power at the frontiers of these technologies.

> *"[**AI and other cyber-technologies**]...pose equally serious challenges, where unfettered, competitive action to exploit their rapidly developing potential can lead to a 'tragedy of the commons.'"*

**Figure 2.1: Characteristics and Intersections Between
AI and Other Cyber-Governance Considerations**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

(Technology that mimics the problem solving and decision-making capabilities of humans, and typically has wider computing capacity than traditional cybertech)

- Self-predicting outcomes using machine learning and deep data
- Expensive infrastructure and therefore dominated by capital-wealthy states and sectors
- Can employ large language models

Common Characteristics

- Requires whole-of-system solutions
- Extensive analysis of data
- Positive uses for development
- Multistakeholder involvement
- Uncertainty surrounding risk and trajectory of growth, including safety, peace, and security risks and implications
- Deep implications of unchecked advancement for human rights and welfare, especially toward vulnerable groups
- Rapid advancement at the frontier of technological innovation
- Mis/Disinformation
- Job losses and sector shifts

OTHER CYBERTECH

(Technology without self-learning capacity, including Behavioral Biometrics, Zero Trust Architecture, Blockchain, Quantum Computing, Cloud Security, and IoT Security)

- Requires strategic decision-making by humans
- Several existing regulatory frameworks in place
- Generally high extant awareness of risks and regulatory needs around cyber systems and governance

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center.

REGULATING AI AND CYBER-TECHNOLOGY

Major technology companies play a primary role in setting the agenda today for the governance of AI and other cyber-technologies.[47] Due to a comparative lack of resources, state regulatory efforts struggle to keep pace with innovation.[48] Existing state-mandated guardrails are insufficient to address the emergent implications of AI, leaving governance largely to the discretion of developers in the private sector. This results in an industry-led race to the bottom on AI safety, as state-led regulatory responses lag behind.[49]

Existing regulatory approaches fall across a broad spectrum (see figure 2.2). On one end is the suggestive approach taken by the current US administration with voluntary guidelines towards safety, transparency, and privacy protections and minimal penalties for non-compliance.[50] On the other end of the spectrum, the European Union and China are adopting specific legislative approaches to governance (albeit with different normative foundations), with the EU's recent regulatory framework focused on the law and autonomy,[51] alongside China's updated guidelines on generative AI that require firms to register products and undergo a security review before release.[52] In the middle, are approaches taken by countries like Singapore's and the United Kingdom's suggestion of regulating use, but not the technology itself, while applying to AI and other emerging cyber-technologies existing principles and best-practices for copyright, intellectual property, and the production of critical medicine.[53]

Figure 2.2: Spectrum(s) of Emergent Regulatory Approaches

Voluntary Principle-Based Guidance — **Application of Existing Regulations** — **New Comprehensive Frameworks/Legislation**

Sources: Original Figure, Stimson Center; data: Engler, "The EU and the U.S. diverge on AI regulation: A transatlantic comparison and steps to alignment," 2023; United Kingdom Office for Artificial Intelligence, "A pro-innovation approach to AI regulation," last modified August 3, 2023; United States Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, "UK AI regulations 2023," last modified June 21, 2023; European Union, "Regulatory framework proposal on artificial intelligence," last modified June 20, 2023; Cyberspace Administration of China, Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission, "Interim measures for the management of generative artificial intelligence services," 2023; Cabinet Secretariat, Japan, "Social Principles of Human-Centric AI," 2019; Habuka, "Japan's approach to AI regulation and its impact on the 2023 G7 presidency," 2023; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for AI Policy Observatory, "Conceptual framework for the regulation of artificial intelligence and robotics till 2023," 2021; African Union, "The digital transformation strategy for Africa (2020-2030)," 2020; Kin, "Singapore's model framework balances innovation and trust in AI," 2020, Australia Department of Industry, Science and Resources, *Australia's AI Ethics Principles*, 2023; Paris Call, *The 9 Principles*, Accessed August 23, 2023.

Still, knowledge deficits (and financial asymmetries) significantly constrain regulatory capacity. Thus, the private sector maintains significant agency and autonomy in this sphere, especially in foundational AI models. In March 2023, industry players including SpaceX, Apple, and Stability AI attempted to promote AI governance by signing a six-month moratorium on training advanced AI systems.[54] However, this call for a pause constituted a relatively small proportion of the global AI community. It further lacked governmental capacity to implement and monitor, within such a short timeframe, representing a "defaulting of standard protocol."

Finally, the combination of these factors means that where regulation exists, the discourse is largely driven by the different discourses of the Global North.[55] This pattern is all too familiar in international governance and risks repeating historic mistakes and marginalizing those governments not currently engaged in global and regional regulatory discourse, but which will be heavily impacted in years to come. Indeed, the "alignment problem" concurrently facing human values and technology runs far beyond national-level concerns to challenge the emerging global information commons, which, without common and consistent regulation, could very well become a tragedy of the commons.[56]

CONSIDERING SECURITY IMPLICATIONS AND DIFFERING PRIORITIES

A fundamental challenge framing the security dimensions of AI and cyber-technology is their potential for dual (both civilian and military) use. Whether or not these technologies proliferate like smartphones and medicines or concentrate like weapons of mass destruction will have profound implications for the securitization and militarization of AI. To garner insights on practical approaches to collective global regulation, it is helpful to first consider states' regulatory incentive structures and differing regional priorities to contextualize why a free-market approach will fail to coordinate effective global action in risk mitigation.

There is precedent, albeit not entirely successful, for regulating interstate contacts in cyberspace. From 2004-2021 the UN convened six Groups of Governmental Experts who agreed by consensus that existing international law including the UN Charter should apply to state conduct in cyberspace, and also articulated eleven non-binding norms for responsible state behavior in the use of information and communications technologies.[57] The UN General Assembly third committee negotiated resolution 74/247 to open an ad hoc working group toward a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, the concluding sessions for which will take place in early 2024.[58]

The UN's International Telecommunications Union further regulates the distribution of frequencies and sets technological standards, along with the non-profit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).[59] The African Union and the Council of Europe, for example, have developed the Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection and Budapest Convention, respectively.[60] However, these regimes' fragmentation and adherence by only select groups of states underscore the need for greater cooperation in the global governance of cyberspace, taking into account the diverse priorities of different regions and peoples.

A 2023 UN Institute for Disarmament Research mapping of 193 states found that only the United States and the UK had adopted defense-specific AI principles.[61] Meanwhile, France, Australia, and Canada have developed frameworks to aid in defense governance, but they have yet to adopt specific principles.[62] Additionally, capacity for lethal autonomous weapon systems development is dominated by wealthy countries:[63] The United States, China, Russia, South Korea, and the European Union are viewed as frontrunners in the global AI arms race.[64]

In the military sphere, AI, and the Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) it enables, are attractive to militaries aiming to improve operational intelligence, speed, and lethality.[65] For this reason, they also pose significant risks to human rights and to existing regimes governing the conduct of warfare. Autonomous systems may behave unpredictably or make fatal errors that humans cannot quickly intervene to stop, and they often display algorithmic racial bias.[66] Additionally, the rapid pace of AI systems accelerates the pace of potential conflict escalation. Without protocols for transparency and de-escalation, accidents or miscalculations involving autonomous systems could too easily spiral into full-blown crisis situations. Rival centers of military power are racing to adopt LAWS across their military capabilities with, at present, little regard for their humanitarian or escalatory implications (lest a perceived rival achieve operational advantages).[67]

Regions and countries that are underrepresented in the global discourse on AI and cyber-governance are largely focused on region-specific security challenges. Conventional peace and security agendas, and

the often interrelated lack of capacity to be a first mover in economic sector transitions, have caused many regions and countries to deprioritize emerging risks in cyber-technology. Discrepancies among regional security priorities raise concerns over the entrenchment of global power asymmetries leveraging AI and other cyber-technologies in the security space.[68] Additionally, while general lines of negotiation for traditional security and cyber-security agendas are prevalent across regions, regional bodies have yet to consider common entry points for AI-related security risks.[69] As highlighted in July 2023 during the Security Council's first debate on AI, global regulation must incorporate shared principles relevant to both the Global North and South.[70]

CONCERNING EQUITY AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

As of 2023, 63 percent of the world's population (or approximately five billion people) is estimated to utilize the internet.[71] Digital access is largely tied to government investments in information technology infrastructure, including fiber optic cables, satellite communication, and the internet of things—but also intersectional biases, such as gender and education.[23] Participation in global digital growth has the capacity to reduce poverty, increase institutional prosperity, and enable state-citizen engagement.[72] However, a key challenge in cyber-governance concerns the digital divide, a socioeconomic access gap between those that have access to modern information and communication technologies and those that do not.[73] There is a stark contrast between global reliance on technology and disproportionate state-level digital inaccessibility, with only 36 percent of the population online in the 46 countries worldwide labeled as "least developed."[74]

Additionally, inequality in access is growing alongside technological innovation.[75] As of 2022, over three-quarters of AI professionals were situated in North America, Europe, and East Asia,[76] highlighting Great Power dominance in this field. AI is largely created to serve the priorities and values of the state in which it is developed,[77] meaning that untailored application to poorer countries with weaker governance systems and insufficient guardrails could risk further exacerbating long-standing socioeconomic differences.

The diffusion of AI and cyber-governance decision-making power to the private sector can further perpetuate inequality.[78] In addition to skewed development and application of AI and related cybertech, the wealth generated by these innovations is often concentrated in relatively few companies and individuals, typically those with high education levels and specialized training.

An emergent challenge concerns the environmental impact of AI. Increasing computational power demands requisite computer hardware and more energy consumption, leading to the disproportionate mining of rare-earth minerals in the Global South.[79]

Progress in this space will require a conscious effort not to deepen such economic or climate-related vulnerabilities in low-income states, caused by increasing their dependence on high-income states or their multinational enterprises.[80] A critical challenge today is to approach AI and broader cybertech global governance systems with principles that, at their core, foster power-sharing and enlarge people's choices (human development) for the many rather than power-concentrating for only the benefit of a few.

Revisiting Core Principles

The UNESCO Recommendations on Ethics in AI have been adopted by all 193 UN Member States, building on the OECD Principles on AI.[81] However, with the pace of change in the landscape of both development and regulation, principles thus far contributing toward governing cyber-technology and artificial intelligence have yet to encompass the whole and evolving picture. Moreover, with a cacophony of uneven standards, little progress has been made in mapping the current landscape of regulations, principles, and guidelines to consolidate a core set of common and foundational principles to guide international AI governance systems.

> *"the report proposes three guiding principles—Safety, Sustainability, and Inclusion (SSI)—that should underlie any comprehensive AI and emerging cyber-technology governance scheme..."*

MAPPING THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

In mapping out several existing frameworks and guidelines (table 2.1) to identify common threads, the report proposes three guiding principles—*Safety, Sustainability, and Inclusion (SSI)*—that should underlie any comprehensive AI and emerging cyber-technology governance scheme, and it explores their potential policy ramifications too.

SAFETY

Current AI development carries significant present harms and future risks. We can broadly group these into the categories of safety-engineering risks and security risks (including those from fully automated self-interacting systems).

Safety-engineering is a well-studied field devoted to designing products to prevent accidents. Traditional engineering challenges include ensuring that systems are *used* safely. In AI, this involves ensuring that chatbots do not produce biased or inaccurate answers, and that image-generators preserve privacy, respect copyright, and do not, when integrated into physical systems, accidentally hurt people.[82] These issues must be addressed.[83] However, similar potential problems with other technology have been dealt with before (such as ensuring the safe operation of airplanes), and existing risk-limiting tools (legal liability, licensing, etc.) may be adapted to address these concerns.

Security risks in AI constitute both traditional security problems in cyber-technology—where an adversarial environment/entity is trying to misuse the system—and the "new" set of risks posed by the AI system itself.[84] There are a handful of entities today that are working on building autonomous, self-interacting, general systems, where failures can be societal-scale, up to and including global catastrophic risks and extinction. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted in a recent Security Council address, generative AI is one such technology with potential for "enormous good and evil at scale."[85] Mitigating such risks must be an inalienable foundation of any system-level regulation.

Table 2.1: Illustrative Example of Current Principles and Guidelines Underpinning (Proposed and in Force) AI Regulatory Frameworks

Entity	Principles/Guidelines underlying existing approaches to AI governance
OECD AI Principles	Inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being; Human-centered values and fairness; Transparency and explainability; robustness, security and safety; and Accountability.
UN's Proposed New Agenda for Peace	Trust; Universality; and Solidarity.
UK's AI Framework	Safety, security and robustness; Appropriate transparency and explainability; Fairness; Accountability and governance; and Contestability and redress.
EU's AI Regulation	Lawful; Ethical; and Robust.
SUM Values	Support, Underwrite, and Motivate: respect the dignity of individuals; connect with each other sincerely, openly, and inclusively; care for the well-being of all; and protect the priorities of social values, justice, and public interest.
FAST track principles	Fairness, Accountability, Sustainability, and Transparency.
Process-based governance framework (PBG)	Concretizes SUM and FAST to construct transparent processes of design and implementation that ensure the justifiability of AI and its products.
UNESCO Recommendations for AI Ethics	Human rights and human dignity; Living in peaceful, just, and interconnected societies; Ensuring diversity and inclusiveness; and Environment and ecosystem flourishing.
Japan's AI Framework	Human-centric; Education/literacy; Privacy protection; Ensuring security; Fair competition; Fairness, accountability, and transparency; and Innovation.
67th Commission on the Status of Women outcomes	Gender-responsive and inclusive approaches; Respect for human rights; Meaningful participation; and Social protection and safety.
Australian e-Safety Commission	Human, societal, and environmental well-being; Human-centered values; Fairness; Privacy protection and security; Transparency and explainability; Contestability; Accountability; and Safety by design, including service provider responsibility and user autonomy.

Sources: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, "OECD AI Principles," 2019; Leslie, *Understanding Artificial Intelligence ethics and safety: A guide for the responsible design and implementation of AI systems in the public sector*, 2019; UNESCO, *Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, 2021; Habuka, *Japan's Approach to AI Regulation and Its Impact on the 2023 G7 Presidency*, 2023; United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, CSW67 Agreed Conclusions, 2023; Australia Department of Industry, Science and Resources, *Australia's AI Ethics Principles*, Accessed August 23, 2023.

SUSTAINABILITY

Regulating AI and cyber-technology for a fixed moment in time will quickly become irrelevant. The exponential acceleration of both AI development and deployment continues to exceed expectations. At the frontier, according to current trends, there is a six-to-twenty-times increase in the capabilities of models every year.[86] While there are important objections from experts who are more skeptical of the speed of AI progress, the *safety* principle outlined above means that effective regulation must respond to all plausible scenarios.

An effective governance regime will need to be proactive, nimble, and adaptable. In other words, the regulation itself must be sustainable. This requires foresight, anticipatory action, and agility that comes from effectively coordinated action.

Simultaneously, there is a severe risk that the largest players, such as the United States and China, may turn away from a global rules-based order, acting unilaterally or engaging in "forum shopping," or "arms races," rather than meaningful compromise.[87] This gives the principle of sustainability further application, in that the regulatory pacts created at the global and regional levels must strive to sustain themselves against a race to the bottom on safety or geopolitical divisions.

INCLUSION

Manual Gonçlaves, the deputy foreign minister of Mozambique, noted that AI technology could help eradicate disease, combat climate change, and customize mediation efforts.[88] There is clearly positive potential for AI on a global stage. By default, the development of AI and other new cyber-technologies involves highly privatized benefits and highly socialized risks—the risks from AI are shared by default, while effort is required to ensure that the rewards are also distributed (especially when the political economy of AI means rewards are otherwise biased towards existing concentrations of wealth). In this regard, the report identifies a set of factors to underpin meaningful inclusion that constitute representation, consultation, prioritization, transparency, and avoiding a tragedy of the commons (box 2.1).

Box 2.1: Elements Underpinning the Principle of Inclusion in AI (and Cyber-) Governance

Representation: the digital divide has plagued international technological development. The multilateral system, and any international AI governance system, must capitalize on its strengths to serve as a forum where all voices, regardless of size or power, can be heard.

Consultation: there are few legitimate, universal entities that can meaningfully represent all of humanity. Leaving insight and oversight to a handful of private Western companies and governments is inadequate, especially given AI's global significance.[89]

Prioritization: concretely, this means that any international AI governance policy must include benefit-sharing and shared risk-mitigation by design, not as an afterthought. This is also underscored by the aforementioned *safety* and *sustainability* principles.

__Transparency:__ this has been a tricky subject when conflated with intellectual property rights and the cost of R&D. Here, we refer to transparency over what products are AI-generated, potential algorithmic biases, and where and how AI is being used, especially by states. Companies must also report, in a transparent manner, the objectives, risks, safety protocols, and guardrails implemented for their products.

__Avoiding a Tragedy of the Commons:__ overfishing in the oceans is a famous tragedy of the commons—if everyone acts in their own self-interest (catches the most fish for themselves) the entire common is depleted and everyone loses access. The individual rationale of racing to the top (maximizing personal gain) is at odds with the collective rational choice of sustaining total gain over time. An unbridled race to the top in AI is similarly fraught: If each company or country adopts an individual rationale of maximum gain and decreasing regulatory checks on the increasing pace and power of the technology, humanity at large may face unrecoverable loss from among many things, rampant dis- and mis- information, privacy loss, and global insecurity and loss of autonomy.

Source: Original Box, Stimson Center.

Global and Regional Governance Innovations for Delivering Results

With the core principles of SSI in mind, and given the earlier detailed challenges in the spheres of regulation, security, and digital divides, this report outlines three proposals for global and regional governance innovation, grounded in potential roles for the United Nations and other multilateral (including regional) organizations. Through a global regulatory framework for emerging technology, a treaty on lethal autonomous weapons, and effective and equitable implementation of a Global Digital Compact, the report considers how the world's governance system can better prepare for the uncertainty and risks of new technologies without squandering their potential to serve as SDG and wider development accelerators.

INNOVATION #1: GLOBAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING CYBER-TECHNOLOGY

Figure 2.3 provides illustrative examples of different approaches taken by countries and regions to operationalize regulation on the development and use of AI and other emerging cyber-technologies. While these whole-of-system domestic and regional approaches should be drawn upon, two critical hurdles to improving regulation of emerging technologies include: i) the lack of transnational baselines for AI regulation; and ii) the information deficits among regulators that perpetuate inequalities between the public and private sector and between the Global North and South.

**Figure 2.3: Examples of Current Governance Frameworks
to Support AI and Emerging Cybertech Governance**

JAPAN	"Social Principles of Human-Centric AI" and "AI Governance in Japan"— promotes human rights, transparency, safety, accountability, inclusion, and sustainability. Supports AI/cyber innovation with evolving regulations. Recommends controlled environments to test AI systems, reviews, frameworks, and encourages competition.
CHINA	In August 2022, the Cyberspace Administration of China released its algorithm registry, a newly built government repository which requires security assessments for algorithms, plus includes provisions against mis/disinformation and targeting elderly people with scams, including by issuing large fines to companies for breaches.
AUSTRALIA/ UK	Australia's eSafety Commissioner's "Tech trends position statement on generative AI" and the UK's "White Paper" both detail strategic priorities for inclusion, digital transparency, deployment of AI, assessing impacts of algorithms, and increasing collaboration between agencies. The UK focuses on not stifling innovation, whereas as Australia places safety at the forefront. Both encourage application of existing regulations on data and copyright.
AFRICAN UNION	Africa's "Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-2030" and "Africa Agenda 2063" strengthen data, stimulate innovation, and facilitate the interoperability of systems. Additionally, the African Union's Data Policy Framework incorporates cooperation, inclusiveness, accountability, trust, and safety.
EUROPEAN UNION	The EU's 2030 Digital Decade Policy Programme strategic framework showcases inclusivity and sustainable development with ethically-centric cyber-governance frameworks for Member States. The EU "AI Act" classifies applications and risks of different AI systems, and the "General Data Protection Regulation" considers data rights and regulations from collection, processing, and use.

Sources: Original Figure, Stimson Center; data: Cabinet Secretariat, Japan, "Social Principles of Human-Centric AI," 2023; Ema, "AI Governance in 2019: A Year in Review in Japan," 2020; Habuka, "The Path to trustworthy AI. G7 Outcomes and Implications for Global AI Governance," 2023; Sheehan and Du, "What China's Algorithm Registry Reveals about AI Governance," 2022; Australian eSafety Commissioner, "Digital Platform Regulators Forum puts generative AI on Agenda," 2023; Donelan, "A Pro-innovation approach to AI regulation," 2023; African Union, "Agenda 2063: 'The Africa we want'," 2023; Abou-zeid and Bayinga, *AU Data Policy Framework*, 2022; African Union, *The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)*, 2023; European Commission, "Europe's Digital Decade: digital targets for 2030," Accessed July 1, 2023; Australia eSafety, *Generative AI Position Statement*, Accessed August 24, 2023.

An AI and cybertech regulatory framework must perform three critical functions:

▷ *First,* it must promote agreement on a **core set of principles** with which to approach emerging innovation in both artificial intelligence and cyber-technology.

▷ *Second,* it must establish and administer **safeguards with a focus on human rights,** addressing common market failures in the AI and other cyber-technologies sector (the "alignment problem" described above). Monitoring and reporting across these safeguards, including through audits, must be built into the governance framework.

▷ *Third, and finally*, the framework must support the **positive use of these technologies for development in a just and equitable manner** to achieve the multilateral system's agreed policy goals, such as the SDGs, Paris Climate Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Plan, and more. In this way, it must reflect the priorities of both the Global North and South and work toward local capacity development to expand the positive application of artificial intelligence and other cybertech.

To support the functionality, technical adaptability, and implementation of this regulatory framework, an International Artificial Intelligence Agency (IA2) is recommended, modeled on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and supported by an Intergovernmental Cyber and AI Panel (ICAIP) (note: the ICAIP should, in turn, be modeled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). The following offers further details on this framework and its supporting bodies.

Critical Functions of a Global Framework

A set of core baseline principles (such as the SSI principles proposed above) agreed to at the global level can achieve two things. First, given the divergence in states' regulatory approaches and the likelihood that this will only grow as more actors become involved,[90] leveraging the UN's convening power to get ahead of this regulatory dissonance with established standards will help in promoting approaches to AI and cybertech innovation and regulation that, at a minimum, are aligned with basic global values.

Second, with the rapid pace of innovation in this space, it is unclear which risks may emerge from the development of newer and more intelligent technology. In the same way that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights or the Beijing Platform for Action provide fundamental principles to approach emerging challenges to human rights or gender equality, respectively, a global baseline of principles on AI and cyber-technology will serve as a governance compass when facing potential new and emerging risks in this sphere. Here, the three core principles of SSI, mapped out earlier from best practices, can begin to lay the foundations for an AI and wider cybertech regulatory framework.

The current incentive systems in AI and cyber-governance induce a race to market dominance, which, in the absence of safeguards, can generate negative externalities ("market failures") for human rights, community safety, and countries' development pathways. Safeguards currently entering into force include watermarking AI generated content,[91] building evaluation and monitoring programs—such as "Open AI Evals"—into AI foundational systems to support monitoring and reporting on safety,[92] and requiring risk testing and reporting before the release of any new AI and cybertech models.[93] However, while regulating

risk is important, the current approach places the onus on the private sector, and this is, by no means, sufficient from a human rights perspective. Any global regulatory framework must, therefore, emphasize human rights and the SSI principles across the entire system lifecycle from data collection, design, development, testing, and deployment, to the use of the resulting models, especially when used by the state itself (box 2.2). Upstream and downstream regulation of AI and wider cyber-technology models should support a whole-of-system approach that diffuses risk through a responsibility chain.[94]

Box 2.2: Human-Rights Based Approach to a Global Regulatory Framework on AI and related Cybertech: Major Characteristics

▷ Diagnose the disproportionate effects of bias in AI on women, minority groups, marginalized people, and vulnerable countries.
▷ Introduce transparency guarantees, independent oversight, and access to effective remedies in order to assess human rights risks and impacts of AI systems before, during, and after their use. In other words, AI that is not operated in compliance with international human rights law should be banned or suspended until adequate safeguards are put in place.
▷ Review regulations on data protection, competition law, copyright and intellectual property rights, and sectoral regulations—including for health, technology and financial markets— within the context of potential emerging threats from AI and other cyber-technologies.
▷ Generate the buy-in necessary for an effective global regulatory framework through networked and inclusive multistakeholder approaches, while acknowledging that self- and voluntary-regulation of the AI industry is an insufficient guarantee for human values-centered approaches.
▷ Employ just transition approaches to ensure that those working in different sectors of the economy are not disproportionately affected by AI's growth.

Source: Original Box, Stimson Center. Additional source: UN OHCHR, *Artificial intelligence must be grounded in human rights, says High Commissioner*, 2023.

The United Nations plays an important normative role in developing and maintaining both the intrinsic equity and instrumental effectiveness of a global framework. Intrinsically, the framework must be negotiated with meaningful involvement from the Global South, which may not currently prioritize AI, but in the near future will have an incentive to contribute to the regulatory debate.[95] With AI, humanity cannot afford to repeat the mistake, made in the past, of concentrating key decision-making power in a limited number of actors and then spending decades trying to lessen its grip through reform processes controlled by this same small group, whose members are vested in the status quo. Look no further than the global financial architecture or the UN Security Council reform efforts, for example. Instrumentally, the new global framework must help developing countries leverage AI and related cyber-technologies effectively to achieve the SDGs. Equally important, in recognizing the concentration of wealth generated by AI in populations that are more well-off and well-educated, the global framework should apply effectively the principles and practices of a just transition to the expansion of AI and other emerging cyber-technologies across diverse economic sectors.

International Artificial Intelligence Agency

In June 2023, UN Secretary-General António Guterres suggested modeling a new UN Office of AI on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which holds regulatory powers.[96] This report proposes the creation of an International Artificial Intelligence Agency (IA2) modeled on the IAEA to provide it with the agility, capacity, and coordination authority that a small office may not possess. The agency would serve to: i) improve visibility, advocacy, and resource mobilization for global AI regulatory efforts; ii) provide thought leadership on General Assembly and Security Council AI and cyber-technology-related initiatives and agreements; iii) monitor, evaluate, and report on AI industry safeguards in compliance with an emerging international regulatory framework; iv) enhance coordination across Member States and regional bodies to leverage AI's positive development applications; and v) coordinate transnationally across initiatives and frameworks on AI governance to support knowledge-sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

It is worth noting here where the capacity of an IA2 would diverge from the IAEA. The IAEA oversees and monitors physical products with radiation signatures and facilities into which monitors, sensors, and cameras can be placed to enable offsite tracking. Even if this monitoring capacity is blocked, it is usually known that this blocking has happened.[97] Additionally, the IAEA mandate clearly falls into both safe use and non-proliferation, the latter of which for AI entails much more gray area and debate. Moreover, the IA2 would be tasked with regulating technology without a clear physical marker, and for instance, knowing whether AI is developed without SSI principles and outside of a global regulatory framework is that much more difficult to track. Additionally, the International Artificial Intelligence Agency requires especially strong knowledge management capacity to both liaise effectively with relevant stakeholders, as well as develop the global regulatory framework as technology evolves. Finally, the newly proposed agency must tackle the "black-box problem" of AI making decisions on input data that humans do not entirely understand, only to see the output in the end.

In other words, the IA2 would need to operate at a high enough level to maintain credibility and normative legitimacy, while also reaching down far enough to monitor the checks and balances placed on AI and its often opaque operations. This vast, and simultaneously deep, functionality requires a body tasked solely with providing technical support to inform such functions.

Intergovernmental Cyber and AI Panel

Critically, both a potential International Artificial Intelligence Agency and the global public sector suffer from knowledge asymmetry when approaching AI and other emerging cyber-technologies. Therefore, building off the groundwork laid out by the partnership on AI,[98] this report proposes an ancillary body, the Intergovernmental Cyber AI Panel, to serve the international system in the same way the IPCC serves the regulatory discourse and action on climate change. Given the esoteric nature of the AI and broader cyber-technology sector, the ICAIP would comprise leading research scientists, including those who have warned against the risks of AI,[99] as well as innovators in the industry (including private actors and owners of information infrastructure). It would be charged with producing comprehensive reports and other knowledge products to increase awareness on the latest AI and other emerging cybertech developments, while responding rapidly to technical questions posed by government policymakers and practitioners. With the UN Secretary-General soon convening a High-Level Advisory Board on AI, a recommended outcome of this board could include the technical set-up of the proposed ICAIP.[100]

INNOVATION #2: A NEW TREATY ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPON SYSTEMS

The UN Secretary-General's July 2023 policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace, informing negotiations in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future, addresses a specific military application of AI, calling on negotiators to move toward a fully binding treaty, by 2026, on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS).[101] In response, countries outlined their positions in noncommittal terms.[102] This is consistent with the limited progress observed in recent years in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS—convened by the states parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)—which adopted, on May 19, 2023, a weak outcome report panned by civil society groups as "hollow."[103] The report makes promising steps toward normative principles, but notably contains no intent for pursuing binding measures, instead ceding to regressive states' demands for a simple, non-binding political declaration. Although states that have previously objected to binding treaties on weapon systems—notably the United States, Russia, and China—are unlikely to embrace a LAWS convention in its entirety up front, there are many broad points of convergence on the technical, legal, and ethical implications of LAWS.

Sounding the Alarm

Civil society groups sounded the alarm on lethal autonomous weapon systems for several years and provided helpful analyses, sorting through the definitional and legal maze around LAWS as the policy community began to focus on specific measures. Human Rights Watch has released successive reports outlining the remaining roadblocks, while also highlighting the successes and limits of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and CCW.[104] The International Committee of the Red Cross has called out recent CCW dialogue sessions for their unwillingness to address prohibitions on some of the most concerning weapons—those which both select and engage targets with no human intervention or oversight, including in the nuclear domain.[105] Although the February 2023 Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM 2023) did not converge on concrete principles, the United States did release statements outlining concerns that ungoverned integration of AI in the military domain could lead to serious humanitarian consequences.[106] What is clear is the need to inculcate within UN Member States accountability and concern for the potentially most dangerous technological developments in warfare since the advent of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, laudable efforts from the GGE and civil society have not yet resulted in the momentum needed to establish a binding multilateral regime.

Toward Binding Measures: Practical Technical Paradigms

As states' working papers submitted to the CCW have acknowledged, LAWS are not an isolated or easily-definable concept.[107] While finer technical points and their relation to international law should fall within the domain of technical experts and the proposed Intergovernmental Cyber and AI Panel, it is useful to have working definitions on the levels of AI autonomy relevant to the operational conduct of warfare (table 2.2).

Table 2.2: The Spectrum of Autonomy: Different Types of Autonomous Weapon Systems

Name	Description
Human-in-the-loop	Pro-active human input is required to select and engage targets.
Human-on-the-loop	Machine is able to select and engage targets, but human input available at all stages to interrupt or veto machine targeting and engagement decisions.
Human-out-of-the-loop	Machine is able to select and engage targets without human intervention.

Source: Original Table, Stimson Center; concepts from Docherty, "Losing Humanity: The Case against Killer Robots," 2012.

These categories make the scope of a legally-binding treaty on LAWS easier to envision and describe, though no-less difficult to adopt in such a competitive global security environment.

A Starting Baseline: Prohibiting "Nuclear Killer Robots"

At a minimum, *human-out-of-the-loop* nuclear weapons should be ruled out for any state: the risk of escalation caused by a malfunctioning or overly eager algorithm mistakenly targeting another state's military (let alone civilian) assets is easy to imagine.[108] Human control and military-to-military (human-to-human) communication are in the interest of all actors, and deferring these decisions to AI could result in uncontrolled escalation. States should join together to establish, enforce, and monitor strict prohibitions on nuclear *human-out-of-the-loop* systems, as a minimum treaty objective. If *human-out-of-the-loop* nuclear capabilities are allowed to proliferate without guardrails, the conduct of warfare may rapidly escape human control and move even further from the principles of humanitarian law intended to protect non-combatants and prevent the worst possible outcomes during times of conflict.

Prohibiting nuclear weapons control by *human-out-of-loop* systems should be understood as a minimum baseline; the risks of escalation and atrocities, including those outlined above, remain worrying for all weapons, conventional or nuclear. For this reason, nuclear weapons as a starting point can portend further domain and capability-specific restrictions for the employment of LAWS. With arms control regimes fragmenting, advocates for controls on LAWS should appreciate that no regime in the international system can function without trust.[109] Trust engendered by a successful regime of prohibitions on LAWS used to govern nuclear weapon systems, however, can form the basis for future agreements.

Require Digital Advocates: Technology and International Humanitarian Law

Thankfully, as it relates to existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL), CCW parties as diverse as Pakistan, Palestine, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Austria all signed on to working papers affirming principles of IHL in relation to LAWS at the most recent meeting of the CCW.[110] A legally binding treaty, ratified by states' domestic legal mechanisms, could promote the integration of IHL principles in the

development phase of LAWS.

However, states must go further to concretize their commitment to normative principles in this new dimension of warfighting. Pursuant to this report's principle of ensuring safety as outlined above, and to existing IHL principles on the conduct of warfare, this report introduces a new operational concept that all states should adopt vis-à-vis their lethal autonomous weapon systems: *the digital advocate*, enforced by legal treaty mechanisms.[111]

Regardless of the domain of warfare—nuclear, conventional, cyber, or any other—weapon systems governed by AI must include, within their programming, directions to adhere to IHL principles. This means that if command and control systems are degraded (preventing human interruption of LAWS), a weapon programmed to still execute its function would contain within it a digital advocate able to force the system to act in accordance with normative principles. With treaty-enforceable information sharing underwritten by a multilateral regime, two adversarial governments could still maintain the trust needed to govern their autonomous systems in compliance with IHL. When human communication with a LAWS is maintained, a digital advocate could also alert human operators if an instruction is likely to contravene those governing normative principles, offering a chance to improve accordance with normative principles and IHL in the conduct of machine-engaged warfare.

Digital advocates would also address a key barrier to the regulation of LAWS: transparency. States may be unwilling to surrender the source code governing their autonomous weapons, but they may be more open to releasing the code governing their digital advocate, fostering greater trust and norm proliferation between countries.

Prospects and Challenges

Integrating existing IHL into the development of LAWS and a prohibition on fully autonomous nuclear weapons are likely to prove more palatable politically than efforts to outright prohibit autonomous weapons. The vast majority of states have already ratified IHL in regard to warfare; applying it to newer weapon systems is both politically and operationally feasible.[112] Negotiations on the international peace and security chapter of the Pact for the Future—an anticipated outcome of the Summit of the Future— should carefully build upon ongoing CCW-related negotiations to drive pressure on the largest states to implement distinct prohibitions on autonomous nuclear weapons and to implement digital advocates into all software governing LAWS.

The aforementioned Convention on Cluster Munitions (as with the earlier Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines) offers both hope and despair for the prospects of a legally binding LAWS treaty. In the fifteen years since its creation, marked progress is observed: millions of tons of cluster munitions and sub-munitions were verifiably destroyed; large weapons exporters are now parties to the treaty; and, as a result, the convention's norms are impacting, albeit incompletely, the conduct of war today. Concurrently, states have begun to admit publicly the scale of the challenge posed by LAWS in a recent Security Council meeting.[113]

Though a comprehensive and binding prohibition regime remains out of reach, over thirty countries have called for such an approach, with several UN Member States, largely in the Global North, continuing to suggest non-binding measures.[114] Nevertheless, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' work

is a vital starting point, and just with the debate on cluster munitions, acknowledgment of a problem-set is the first step toward concrete action. In short, norm proliferation works, not perfectly—nor instantaneously—but it does build pressure on larger states to amend policies and actions that are firmly rejected by a majority of the international community. The same spirit of diplomatic and normative pressure must be brought to bear on the subject of lethal autonomous weapon systems.

INNOVATION #3: HARNESS THE GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT AS AN INTEGRATED SDG (iSDG) ON TECHNOLOGY

As a framework outlining consensual principles on all matters related to the development of an equitable digital future, the Global Digital Compact (GDC) could serve to connect and "turbocharge" Sustainable Development Goals implementation.[115] As an inclusive yet non-binding pact, a GDC would contribute to a rules-based order for all existing and emerging dimensions of digital life, while reinforcing intergovernmental strategies, such as those outlined in Secretary-General Guterres' Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.[116] This section outlines how an effectively implemented and equitable GDC could be conceptualized as an integrated Sustainable Development Goal (or "iSDG") on technology, helping to bridge the digital divide and harness the power of technology for development, including in support of all seventeen SDGs.

This report does not propose reinventing the wheel by simply greasing and connecting all the wheels we already have to turn them faster and together. The UN High Commissioner on Human Rights' remarks at a "deep-dive" contributing to the UN Secretary-General's policy brief on the Global Digital Compact mentions that placing human rights at the center of digital innovation and governance will prime our capacity to achieve the SDGs.[117] Unlike global regulatory frameworks focused on guardrails and legislative best practices, a GDC would underscore the social contract that guides collective action and shared responsibility in bridging the digital divide, encouraging greater investment to expand digital access while enhancing technology's value as a global public good.[118] To this end, we propose framing the Global Digital Compact as an integrated Sustainable Development Goal on Technology (that strengthens linkages between the seventeen SDGs, rather than adding an eighteenth Goal).

Such framing would involve introducing clear targets and indicators, which would largely draw on relevant targets and indicators developed for other SDGs that speak to bridging the digital divide (see figure 2.4 and underline annex 1 for an elaboration of possible targets). Coordination across existing targets and filling in gaps where targets were not identified in 2015, such as the positive use of AI (see above), will help the GDC serve as an accelerator to the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This approach is reinforced in the mid-point review conducted by the Global Sustainable Development Report, which outlines transformation pathways for national, regional, and global governance systems (figure 2.5).[119] Scientists point out that global technological innovation and dissemination have undeniable positive spillover effects that can accelerate countries out of system breakdown.[120] However, avoiding "backlash" requires conscious collective action to create shared utility—hence the rationale of a Global Digital Compact that maps into national action plans and is incorporated in voluntary national review reporting.

Critically, the GDC must break the biases that digital architectures have had against broadening their traditional socio-economic hierarchies of gender, sexuality, race, and geography.[121] A more holistic and intersectional overhaul is made possible by turning the attention of evolving frameworks to the decolonized

usage of digital resources and AI, and gender-responsive cyber security policies, norms, and standards.[122]

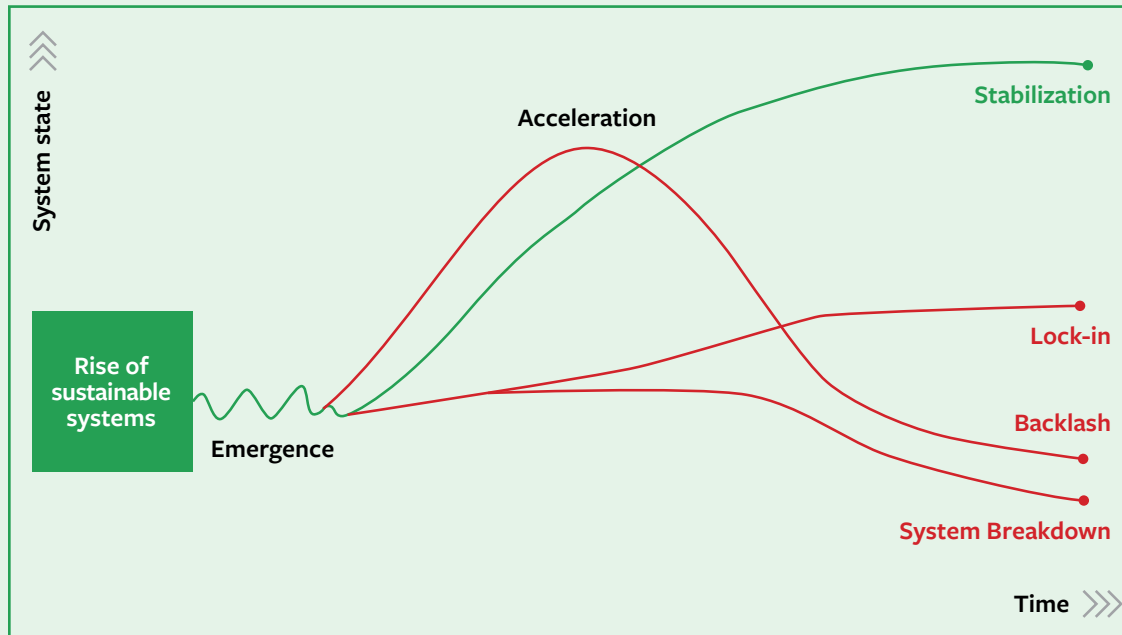## Figure 2.4: Mapping of SDG Targets Explicitly Referencing Technology or its Governance

1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY
Target(s): 1.4	Target(s): 2.3, 2.a	Target(s): 3.b, 3.d	Target(s): 4.4, 4.b	Target(s): 5.b
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
Target(s): 6.a	Target(s): 7.a, 7.b	Target(s): 8.2, 8.3	Target(s): 9.5, 9.a, 9.b, 9.c	Target(s): 12.a
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND
No explicit target	Target(s): 11.c	No explicit target	Target(s): 14.a	No explicit target
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS			
Target(s): 16.10	Target(s): 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.16			

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center; data: United Nations, "The 17 Goals."

A decolonial lens widens the image of "inclusion," from merely tackling public bias to mitigating the long-term, structural challenges faced by historically excluded communities within the global digital space. The "Charter of Feminist Demands from the Global South" packages these consultations at a critical juncture ahead of the Summit of the Future.[123] Some key recommendations include a binding global governance framework guaranteeing gender inclusivity as a constructive norm for Member States; veering away from extractive data models and toward harmonized public digital infrastructure; digital labor protection; recognizing aggregate data as a global knowledge commons; and expanding the share of

usage and gains with women and other disempowered communities.[124]

Figure 2.5: Successful and Unsuccessful Transformation Pathways

System state

Acceleration

Stabilization

Rise of
sustainable
systems

Emergence

Lock-in

Backlash

System Breakdown

Time

Source: UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report*, Accessed 24 August, 2023; original model from Loorbach et al, "Sustainability Transitions Research: Transforming Science and Practice for Societal Change," 606.

* * *

Current negotiations in the run-up to the Summit of the Future in September 2024 suggest digital cooperation will have a dedicated chapter, alongside the related topics of science, technology, and innovation, in the Pact for the Future.[125] This provides a critical opportunity to put forward the recommendations outlined above. While competing preferences may exist on different kinds of national and regional regulation, a conscious and concerted global effort must take place now, before finding ourselves making the same mistakes we have made with the climate crisis—*literally nearing the boiling point!*[126]

AI and cybertech could either represent a strong multiplier of inequities or the tool we leverage to close the gap on longstanding development divides. Landing on the right side of the multiplier effect requires reforms and innovative ideas that ensure durability in the face of technological evolution, keeping a finger on the pulse of change. Such holistic overtures must distinguish the responsibilities of the diverse set of actors in cyberspace—multistakeholder involvement is inseparable from successful progress and joint accountability.[127] The twenty-first century continues to evolve in complex and interconnected ways. Harnessing the power of multilateral—regional and global—governance is imperative in seizing opportunities and mitigating the threats and harms toward our common good. It is as essential in the digital space as it is in helping countries and their citizens avert the outbreak and recurrence of violent conflict—another pressing global concern to which this report now turns.

III. Peacebuilding Innovations for Global and Regional Problem-Solving

> *"At the United Nations, we are condemned, or privileged, to attempt to answer a fundamental question: what would it take to ensure that in this emerging new era, fragmented and fractious as it is, Member States can find avenues for cooperation towards shared interests and to maintain peace?"*
>
> —Rosemary Dicarlo, Under-Secretary-General.[128]

With more violent conflicts active now than at any time since the end of the Second World War, the need to build just and sustainable peace has never been more urgent, both as a moral and practical imperative.[129] After examining recent trends, this section offers five core principles for conducting effective peacebuilding. Drawing upon three brief case studies on South Sudan, Mali, and Afghanistan, it offers four sets of institutional innovations for improving global and regional organizations' efforts to better prepare for, prevent, and respond to the outbreak of violent conflict in fragile states and regions, including by building on the UN Secretary-General's recently introduced New Agenda for Peace.

Major Challenges, Threats, and Opportunities

International efforts to build and sustain peace currently face multiple challenges on a scale not witnessed in decades. Against the backdrop of 2022 standing among the deadliest years since the Rwandan Genocide (see figure 3.1),[130] the *Global Governance Survey 2023* found "dangerous," "divided," and "worsening" as the three most common descriptions of the world—with war being the most voted contributor to these sentiments by citizens polled in the BRICS and G7 countries.[131] Addressing "fragility" remains the need of the hour, with 1.9 billion people living in fragile states, making up 24 percent of the world's population and 74 percent of the world's poorest.[132]

Conflict has diversified and become more asymmetrical.[133] The rapid deployment of artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, mis- and disinformation, and increasing crimes against marginalized communities have dramatically complicated the task of mitigating violence, including through such tools as peacemaking, peacekeeping, and international human rights law. UN peacekeeping missions have a longstanding, stubborn, and well-documented problem with sexual abuse by their personnel of the civilians they are meant to protect: in Somalia, Haiti, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other places.[134]

Meanwhile, the military coup in Myanmar underscores the importance of turning the notion of "positive peace" into real action. "Illiberal peacebuilding" through excessive reliance on the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's military) has led to a massive displacement of the country's Karen population,[135] highlighting the need to elevate peacebuilding that is seen as (among other core principles) just, inclusive, and accountable. Other major challenges to preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace, elaborated below, include: i) the lack of transparency and accountability in peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict; ii) specific obstacles facing women and youth as peacebuilders; and iii) the need to reduce private military contractor transgressions.

Figure 3.1: Fatalities in One-sided Violence by Type of Actor (1989-2022)
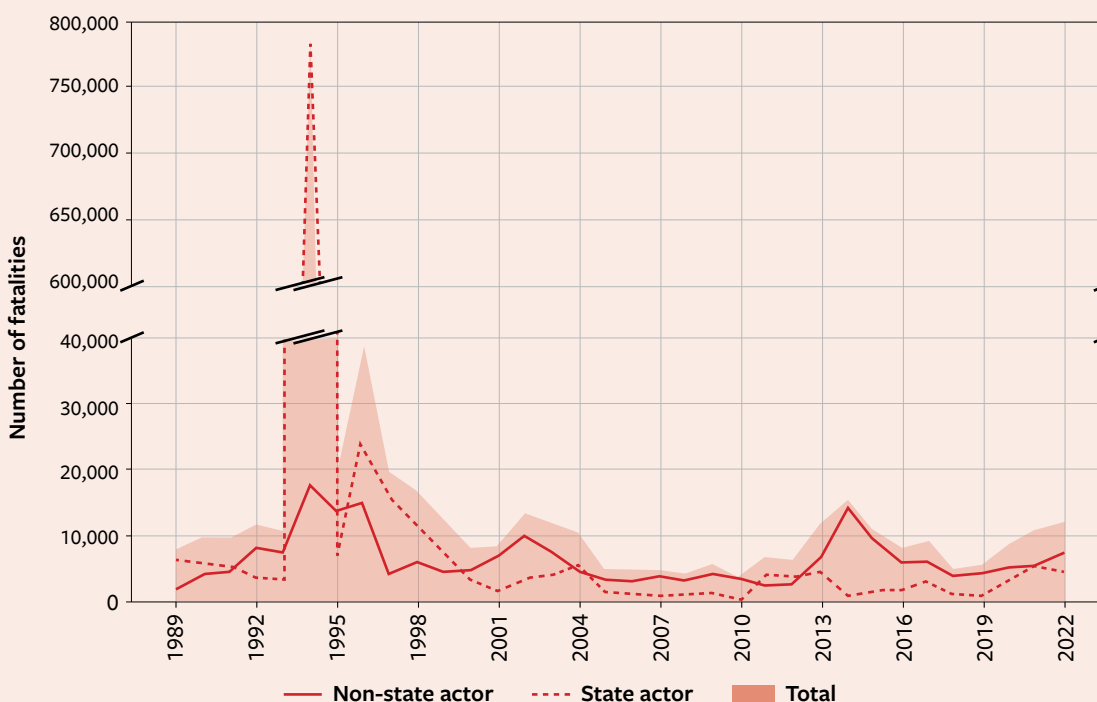
Source: Davies, Pettersson and Öberg, "Organized violence 1989-2022 and the return of conflicts between states," (June, 2022), 593-610.

> *"With more violent conflicts active now than at any time since the end of the Second World War, the need to build just and sustainable peace has never been more urgent..."*

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY MISSING IN "POST-CONFLICT" PEACEBUILDING

Firstly, four leading factors contribute to the challenge of accountability in multidimensional peace operations (an integral aspect of post-conflict peacebuilding): i) Excessive bureaucratization of missions undermining personal accountability; ii) Decentralized decision-making fragmenting civilian and military cogs of a peacekeeping mission; iii) A lack of enforceability of punitive actions in peacekeeping failures; and iv) Internalization of monitoring tools as a result of their perceived political sensitivity inhibits transparency.[136] A weak peacekeeping architecture challenges and undermines the precision of peacebuilding programs.

Secondly, counter-terrorism (which, while unique in many ways, also intersects closely with conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding activities) has largely become an unaccountable, "profoundly permissive, enabling legal and political environment."[137] The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism has noted that counterterrorism frameworks are largely utilized as cover by states for activities inconsistent with international law (e.g., misuse of counterterrorism measures in ways that may undermine international human rights and humanitarian law)—incentivized by the resource mobilization this arena both invites and makes possible.[138] Both the General Assembly and UN Office of Counterterrorism Office still lack a singular, shared definition of a "terrorist."[139]

Meanwhile, organized environmental crime is identified as the third largest crime sector globally, generating between U.S. $110-$281 billion annually.[140] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute data points to an overlap between human trafficking routes and illegal fishing, as well as shared routes for drug smuggling and illegal mining.[141] Such interlinkages between malevolent non-state violent actors endanger pathways to peace by entrenching illicit, sometimes violent activities within valuable resource networks worldwide.

Weak inclusion of local actors also undermines transparency and accountability in peacebuilding. The case of Sierra Leone exemplifies the limitations of favoring urban civil society actors in development programming at the expense of local, community-level civil society groups.[142] Highly institutionalized forms of engaging local civil society actors left little time to plan for UN-supported efforts. Moreover, the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reluctance to genuinely incorporate local narratives and acknowledge adverse power relations within UN-backed structures hindered peacebuilding.[143]

The New Agenda for Peace can help the Peacebuilding Commission and its Peacebuilding Fund garner momentum in delivering on the Peacebuilding Architecture's repeated promises—that is, to hold it accountable—to increase financing for local level peacebuilding cooperation, which has, heretofore, received limited resources.[144] Beyond the Peacebuilding Architecture too, local organizations have been left in the lurch due to inaccessible application procedures, inflexible funding cycles, and a lack of devolved decision-making power.[145] In South Sudan, lack of support for local peacebuilding initiatives eroded conditions for preventing conflict recurrence (see box 3.1).[146]

Box 3.1: Challenges and Progress toward Building Just and Sustainable Peace in South Sudan

The Republic of South Sudan gained independence in 2011 after five decades of war with Sudan. However, peacebuilding efforts have continued to face challenges. The international community has aided South Sudan's peace process through diplomacy, peacekeeping, and development assistance, but together with the South Sudanese, it has yet to build a just and lasting peace.

Strengths of international involvement include brokering the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which allowed for South Sudan's secession referendum in 2011. International organizations sent effective capacity support to bolster the vote's legitimacy, and subsequently, the UN established its mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), also in 2011, to support statebuilding and provide civilian protection. Over U.S. $9.5 billion in donor funds flowed into South Sudan for reconstruction and capacity-building between 2011 and 2018. The East African Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) also played an important role in supporting the nascent country's peacebuilding efforts.

However, two key weaknesses fatally undermined peacebuilding efforts. First, a failure to adequately involve local, community-level actors, while relying on national-level elites, eroded steps to address the underlying sources of multidimensional conflict (with UNMISS favoring long-standing national-level politicians rather than local actors when allocating external support). Second, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs for ex-combatants were ineffective. Insufficient funding, along with the near-total exclusion of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SPLA) from the DDR implementation structures, perpetuated insecurity and hindered efforts to demobilize and fully reintegrate ex-combatants back into their communities.

While international efforts enabled South Sudan's independence, resolving complex local and national conflicts requires greater engagement with local actors and context-specific strategies, including in the areas of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. Achieving just and sustainable peace depends on skillfully facilitating more inclusive, locally-owned processes.

Sources: Ottaway, Marina, *Sudan's Referendum—The Birth of a New Nation?,* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 5, 2011, Accessed August 8, 2023; See *Report of the EU Observer Mission to Southern Sudan Referendum*; Yayboke, Erol, *Accessing South Sudan: Humanitarian Aid in a Time of Crisis*. Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 27, 2018, Accessed August 8, 2023; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Republic of South Sudan 2018,* Financial Tracking Service; da Costa, Diana and Karlsrud, John, "Contextualising Liberal Peacebuilding for Local Circumstances," Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, Vol. 7 No. 2 (August 2012), 53-66; Lamb, Guy and Theo Stainer, "The Conundrum of DDR Coordination: The Case of South Sudan," Stability: International Journal of Security & Development, 7:9 (April 27, 2018), 10-11.

WOMEN AND YOUTH: KEYS TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE

The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders has highlighted the meager political participation of women across the globe—just 1.9 percent of seats in parliaments are held by women.[147] Deep-rooted and systemic discrimination still prevails—and lacks a home in the larger peacebuilding narrative that encompasses a growing space for the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas. An example from Manipur, India involving ethnic cleansing against minorities demonstrates the convergence of challenges confronted in this report. The weaponization of misinformation resulted in mass rapes against women from targeted minorities.[148] Moreover, data on women's participation in conflict resolution, between 1992 and 2019, shows that on average only thirteen percent of negotiators were women, six percent of signatories in major peace processes were women, and seven out of ten peace processes did not include any women mediators.[149]

The structural absence of inclusion removes marginalized communities as key stakeholders and can exacerbate structural violence against them. At a macro level, it impedes access to human rights and social justice recourse in fragile and conflict-affected settings.[150] Lack of resources for local-level youth platforms, insufficient protection of young peoples' human rights, and youth exclusion from national and regional decision-making are also identified as major obstacles that encumber the YPS agenda worldwide.[151]

CURBING ABUSE BY PRIVATE MILITARY ACTORS

The global private military contractor (PMC) sector is projected to grow as large as U.S. $457 billion by 2030,[152] boasting a collage of services including intelligence, security analysis, threat management, military training, and logistics and mission support. Their clientele has diversified—from national armies and development agencies to private corporations, the UN system, and humanitarian organizations. The UN Secretary-General's briefing on the growing use of PMCs noted a vacuum of regulatory frameworks for: i) state responsibility in hiring PMCs; ii) PMCs' role in the intensification and prolongation of hostilities; and iii) the opacity around PMCs' roles in conflicts—matched by states' reluctance to assume legal responsibility for their roles.[153] International frameworks such as the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (1989) have very low state buy-in, and they are being supplanted by voluntary, private sector-led initiatives, such as the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers.

The UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace misses the opportunity to highlight the growing threat of PMCs supplanting peacekeeping missions, as in the case of Mali (see box 3.2). A multidimensional and private era of peacebuilding may be on the horizon with the Central African Republic and Sudan inching closer to PMCs as distinct alternatives to the Blue Helmets.[154] This potential changeover risks diminishing the human rights-centered practice-based normative framework of traditional UN peacekeeping, replacing it with a proxy-based system that often operates out of economic and geostrategic interests, appears more permissive of large-scale atrocities, and reduces the "body-bag" factor for nations looking to achieve military outcomes while minimizing uniformed losses from within their own military ranks. The departure of peacekeeping missions threatens to entrench security vacuums likely to be filled by PMCs. The shortcomings of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs also pose the risk of turncoat fighters from local militias joining PMCs in host nations.

Box 3.2: PMCs in Mali

The imminent departure this year of the UN's peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has raised questions of a security vacuum, which Mali's military government is anticipated to fill quickly with the help of the Wagner Group. The private military contractor's arrival was preceded by a purported misinformation campaign aimed at strengthening anti-French sentiment in the country, with the help of the "Foundation for National Values Protection" (FZNC). The FZNC's propaganda enhanced Wagner's and Russia's image in Mali as a preferable alternative to French and Western "neo-colonialism." The Mali junta's conviction remains that the Wagner group is essential to "coup-proof" their regime and maintain security, but Wagner has posed several challenges:

▷ *Human rights abuses*: Mali's armed forces, along with Wagner units, have participated in summary executions, forced disappearances, mass rape and sexual violence, and torture, among other war crimes.

▷ *Return to violence*: The Wagner Group inserted itself into Mali's long-standing fight against Islamist insurgents, which has reignited combat with local affiliates of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, signaling a return to violent engagement. Civilian casualties in the first quarter of 2022 surpassed the total casualties from 2021.

▷ *Contestation over resources*: As with diamonds in the Central African Republic, the Wagner Group has expanded Russian mineral investments within Mali, targeting gold mines that are often controlled by non-state armed groups.

▷ *Limited accountability*: Russia has utilized its position in the Security Council to block investigations into the Wagner Group's activities in Mali. The Malian junta repeatedly denied MINUSMA access to areas of concern.

Mali represents a clarion call for global governance to broaden and reinforce the guardrails for how private military contractors engage fragile and conflict-affected countries. At a minimum, steps are needed to concretize a common definition of PMCs, in order to facilitate further policy-making to mitigate against abusive practices. Finally, Mali demonstrates why the exclusion of human rights from peacebuilding initiatives is not only morally objectionable, but will result in a failure to build just and sustainable peace.

Sources: Thompson, Jared, Catrina Doxsee, and Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., "Tracking the Arrival of Russia's Wagner Group in Mali," Centre for Strategic and International Studies, February 02, 2022; Human Rights Watch, *Mali: New Atrocities by Malian Army, Apparent Wagner Fighters,* July 24, 2023; Associated Press (Geneva), "Experts Seek Investigation of Wagner Group, Mali Forces," January 31, 2023; The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Debunking the Malian Junta's Claims," *Infographic,* April 12, 2022; Parens, Raphael, "The Wagner Group's Playbook in Africa: Mali," *Foreign Policy Research Institute,* March 18, 2022; Doxsee, Catrina, Jared Thompson, "Massacres, Executions, and Falsified Graves: The Wagner Group's Mounting Humanitarian Cost in Mali," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies,* May 11, 2022.

Revisiting Core Principles

The global pursuit of lasting, just, and inclusive peace in conflict-affected countries and regions continues to encounter significant obstacles, as detailed above. Existing frameworks and mechanisms designed to address these challenges have proven inadequate, primarily owing to their inability to adapt to the evolving and context-specific nature of contemporary violent conflict.[155] To tackle this fundamental issue and promote the effective pursuit of peacebuilding (box 3.3), it is imperative to revisit existing approaches and the principles that guide them.[156] The following set of core principles are essential to building better peacebuilding approaches with sustainability and adaptability at their core (figure 3.2).
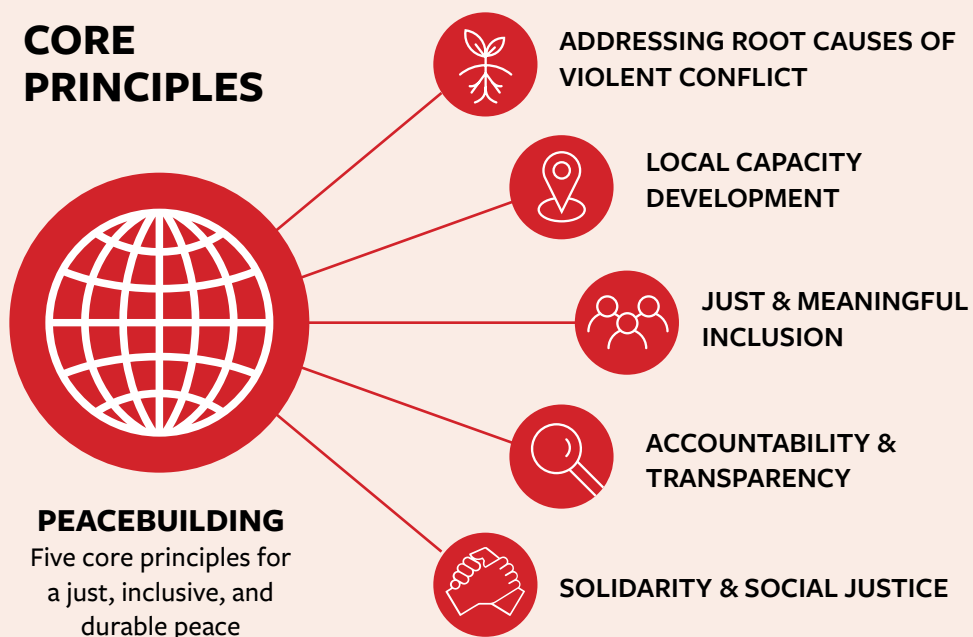

Box 3.3: Definitions of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding refers to efforts to avoid the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict, giving special attention to developing and rebuilding national and local capacities for the management and resolution of protracted armed conflict to achieve durable, positive peace. Declaring peacebuilding's ultimate goal as creating "structures for the institutionalization of peace," the United Nations adopts a similar definition as this report's, underscoring the importance of "efforts to assist countries and regions in their transitions from war to peace and to reduce a country's risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities for conflict management, and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development." Whether preventive or post-conflict, peacebuilding efforts aim to, according to the scholar Cedric de Coning, "[influence] the behaviour of social systems that have been affected by violent conflict."

Sources: United Nations, Secretary-General, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: position paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations*, 1995; United Nations, "Peace and Security," 2023; de Coning, "Adaptive peacebuilding," (February, 2018) 301-317, 305.

Grounded in official frameworks, agreements, and ongoing debates among scholars, policy-makers, civil society organizations, and multilateral institutions (see annex 2), these principles are a foundation for better operationalizing peacebuilding. Moreover, practical implementation of these principles can strengthen the legitimacy of peacebuilding projects and rebuild trust—not only in the projects themselves, but also in the broader belief in the efficacy of peacebuilding to establish just and lasting peace—with their emphasis on inclusion, sustainability, and adaptability.[157] To achieve this, major peacebuilding organizations, governments, and other relevant stakeholders should privilege, in particular, the following five principles:

Figure 3.2: Five Core Principles for Durable Peacebuilding

CORE PRINCIPLES

PEACEBUILDING
Five core principles for a just, inclusive, and durable peace

ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

LOCAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

JUST & MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

SOLIDARITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center.

ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

The increasing complexity of conflict resolution, especially in dealing with protracted conflicts and preventing their recurrence, makes addressing root causes a key consideration for effective peacebuilding.[158] Evaluating the root causes of violent conflict is especially critical where earlier peacebuilding efforts have proven unsuccessful. Through contextual analysis and engagement in comprehensive and inclusive consultations with local communities, peacebuilders can go beyond the surface-level symptoms of a conflict and delve into its underlying causes. In doing so, it is essential to recognize that both internal and external factors (social, economic, political, environmental, or religious, for example) may contribute to a violent conflict's inception and perpetuation.[159] By identifying these underlying causes, peacebuilding efforts can develop context-specific measures and implement tailor-made solutions that pave the way for just and durable peace.

LOCAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Local capacity development (LCD) refers to efforts to transform and enhance existing local capacities so that local populations, institutions, and organizations can more effectively address critical issues, including conflict prevention and resolution.[160] LCD extends beyond individual training or mentoring

and instead emphasizes a strategic, comprehensive approach to transform systems that have an impact on peacebuilding outcomes.[161] This may be achieved through careful, critical, and locally-led evaluations of local capacities to recognize "capacity deficit" areas.[162] To sustain peace, conflict-affected countries require strong domestic institutional foundations, including inclusive educational institutions, participatory decision-making, and sufficiently supportive legislative frameworks.[163] Furthermore, local capacity development requires a locally-led approach rooted in community knowledge and experiences.[164] Previous attempts focused on transferring foreign—in particular, Global North—knowledge and practices have proven limited in overall reach, amplifying the need for greater localization in peacebuilding.[165] External actors should, therefore, mainly play a supportive role in LCD initiatives.[166] As a core principle of effective peacebuilding, LCD draws attention to the difficulty of implementing local ownership goals, particularly within violent and protracted conflicts, and thus emphasizes the significance of capacity enhancement at the local level as an important steps in this direction.[167]

JUST AND MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

Just and meaningful inclusion emphasizes the significance of promoting justice through fair representation and the active participation of marginalized groups, including youth, women, and indigenous voices.[168] This requires going beyond token inclusion and promoting pluralistic approaches that provide secure platforms for meaningful engagement.[169] By creating inclusive and participatory structures of governance at all levels, individuals and their communities can actively contribute to decision-making. Through genuine participation that fosters a sense of ownership and agency in shaping their own future, marginalized communities (including women and youth) can hold powerful institutions and leadership authorities accountable, ensuring that their interests and individual rights are recognized and upheld.[170] By working to better include these diverse voices, peacebuilding efforts can benefit from a broader set of perspectives, experiences, and knowledge, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions for specific, evolving contexts.[171] This, in turn, contributes to the durability and adaptability of peacebuilding, minimizing the risk of relapsing into conflict.[172]

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Accountability and transparency are closely intertwined principles that play a crucial role in peacebuilding. Accountability involves monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding initiatives and ensuring compliance with global, national, and locally-led objectives, while transparency facilitates openness and inclusivity in decision-making.[173] It is important to distinguish between *global* and *national-local* accountability, as externally-led initiatives are primarily "upwardly accountable" towards their principals, making it more challenging to hold global actors accountable in host countries.[174] By localizing the conception of accountability and transparency, peacebuilding outcomes can be improved. This may require, for instance, establishing empowered local bodies and processes that adhere to enforceable, national (as well as international) laws and regulations. It also involves a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, sufficient resources, and continuous performance monitoring to ensure accountability and transparency in design and delivery for both local and external actors. However, achieving this can be difficult, especially in countries lacking inclusive institutions. Step-by-step, peacebuilding should steadily introduce accountability measures— formal at the national level, and accessible and informal at the local level.

SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Solidarity and social justice are indispensable principles of peacebuilding, encompassing both support for those affected by conflict and an explicit focus on differentiated needs and vulnerabilities, as well as substantive cooperation among those involved in the creation, delivery, and maintenance of peace.[175] Moreover, they together recognize the importance of establishing fair and inclusive systems of governance that address injustices and ensure equal access to resources and opportunities, thus further enabling positive peacebuilding efforts and contributing to more sustainable outcomes.[176] Solidarity and social justice are interconnected and mutually reinforcing principles. Calls for social justice often embody calls for solidarity, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and equitable approaches to peacebuilding.[177] Together, they encompass mutual learning, shared burdens, and a recognition that successful peacebuilding relies on contributions from all stakeholders.[178] In addressing systemic inequalities, they also contribute to the empowerment of marginalized groups and promote their meaningful participation in decision-making.

Global and Regional Governance Innovations for Delivering Results

Global and regional governance innovations to achieve effective peacebuilding—for the direct benefit of peoples and countries worldwide—typically take the form of institutional, legal, policy, normative, and operational changes in the international system. Drawing upon the five peacebuilding principles above, three brief cases on South Sudan's peace process (box 3.1), PMCs in Mali (box 3.2), and the struggle to empower women and youth in Afghanistan (box 3.4), and additional empirical evidence, this concluding sub-section details four sets of global and regional governance innovations aimed at developing strong national and local capacities to prevent the outbreak and recurrence of violent conflict and achieve durable, positive peace.

INNOVATION #1: BUILDING DURABLE PEACE AFTER AN AGREEMENT IS SIGNED

Building sustainable and just peace after the signing of a peace agreement faces multiple challenges, including complicated steps to engage diverse stakeholders affected by a violent conflict, the need for specialized and community-oriented attention to former combatants and other potential spoilers, and the imperative of managing and eventually resolving a conflict's underlying causes. Underscoring the prospective constructive peacebuilding roles of global and regional organizations, two crucial measures for fostering lasting peace rooted in principles of justice are: i) Enhancing inclusive governance at the local level, and ii) Rethinking disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs.

Enhance Inclusive Governance at the Local Level

After a peace agreement is signed, ensuring effective inclusion at sub-national levels and in local communities to shape post-conflict governance structures becomes paramount.[179] An extensive data-set of 124 civil wars and peacebuilding outcomes since 1944 depicts a positive correlation between peace operations and democratization efforts—beyond a focus on community-level participatory governance only—after a civil war, which in turn helps to prevent the recurrence of violence.[180] The authors of this

seminal study, Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, further argue: "International peacebuilding can be a major component of strategies to satisfy people's 'basic needs' and create institutions that can support the peace, resolving at least partially the credibility problems associated with peace implementation."[181]

Local knowledge and experience are essential in designing peacebuilding strategies that effectively address conflict drivers and support the implementation of peace agreements. Although international peacebuilders frequently stress the need for local-level ownership, full realization of this objective is often undermined in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions due to a lack of local institutional capacity to build and sustain peace.[182] The policy and academic literature is replete with examples of the limitations (and outright failures) of international efforts to create or enhance such capacity.[183] But when international organizations successfully help to integrate local communities within more inclusive national governance frameworks based on principles of justice and solidarity, they can facilitate the harmonization of national priorities with localized needs and substantially enhance peacebuilding capacity.[184]

To increase the prospects for successful international peacebuilding through the empowerment of local actors within their national governance system, three recommended approaches for the UN and regional organizations engaged in peacebuilding are:

▷ *Adopt innovative, locally sensitive models of governance* (e.g., reconcile tensions between competing groups by sharing relevant success stories, utilizing aid and other forms of external leverage, and most of all, encouraging consensus-building over confrontational, zero-sum politics);

▷ *Support new institutions—including a legislature, independent judiciary, the media, and civil society bodies— to check the power of the executive, whether at community, sub-national, or national levels* (e.g., equitably share international and domestic political, financial, and technical resources);

▷ *Strike a balance between near-term international political and security imperatives and developing local capacity over the long-term* (e.g., by adopting conflict-reducing economic policies, rather than investing the lion's share of political attention and external resources in counter-terrorism operations).[185]

Along similar lines, the New Agenda for Peace calls for "national prevention strategies to address the different drivers and enablers of violence and conflict in societies and strengthen national infrastructures for peace." Such strategies must include adequately resourced, and locally-led, community conflict prevention and peacebuilding frameworks to further ensure the effective inclusion of local communities in building positive peace after an agreement between hostile parties is signed.[186]

Rethink Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs

Another vital element of building durable peace after the signature of a peace agreement involves skillfully disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating former combatants. As a peacebuilding tool, DDR has been continuously adapted to address the changing nature of conflicts and is increasingly conducted in contexts with ongoing violence where mercenaries, foreign fighters, and terrorists are present.[187]

Given the gap between prohibitive laws criminalizing engagement with "terrorists" and the imperative to provide "off-ramping" support measures for defecting fighters and affiliates that mitigate the risk

associated with recidivism, a new set of preconditions must accompany the harmonization of international humanitarian, human rights, counterterrorism, and domestic civil laws for effective DDR. Moreover, regional instability may attract demobilized fighters to other conflicts, and cash transition payments may inadvertently reinforce fighter "recycling" or recidivism by providing what amounts to a form of unemployment insurance to fighters between engagements, especially where regular employment is scarce. To reduce recycling and counter violent extremism, DDR programs should focus on social reintegration of ex-fighters as much as on immediate income support, and use biometric data to build databases of individuals who process through DDR programs anywhere in the region.[188]

INNOVATION #2: ADVANCING THE NEXT GENERATION WOMEN & YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDAS

Advancing the next generation of the women (UNSC Resolution 1325) and youth (UNSC Resolution 2250), peace, and security agendas is critical to promoting peace with justice over the long-term for both present and future generations.[189] As detailed throughout this section (including box 3.4 below on Afghanistan), young men and women—and indeed, women across all age groups—are making meaningful contributions to conflict management and resolution in their communities, nationally, and globally. From the Asia-Pacific to Europe, Africa, and beyond, major constituencies are bringing the issues faced by women and young girls in post-conflict settings to the forefront, protecting their rights and advocating for their just and meaningful inclusion in ongoing peace processes.[190] In addition, women's participation in peace processes increases the possibility of an agreement lasting two years by 20 percent and more than fifteen years by 35 percent.[191]

Over the past two decades, the frameworks for sustainable, just, and inclusive peacebuilding have evolved significantly. For instance, the UN Secretary-General's recently introduced New Agenda for Peace (spotlighted in Innovation #4, below) strongly emphasizes the need for women and youth empowerment, while identifying the inequalities and discriminatory practices that preclude the inclusion of women and youth inclusion, in peacebuilding.[192] Moreover, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas have seen significant progress over the past few years. According to the Women International League for Peace and Freedom, eighty-two UN Member States have adopted WPS National Action Plans.[193] Meanwhile, the first YPS National Action Plan (inspired by WPS) was developed in 2021 by Finland, paving the way for other countries to follow suit.[194]

Despite the progress and recognition of the WPS and YPS agendas, there remain some gaps between the ambitions expressed in UN Security Council Resolutions and elsewhere, and the actual political will and financial support afforded to these agendas.[195] For instance, in a recent study that examined financing for peacebuilding for the period of 2015-2020 across several UN funds, only 12 percent of a reported U.S. $876.8 million was allocated to support projects focused on youth empowerment and participation.[196] Similarly, for WPS, the share of bilateral aid supporting women-led organizations and initiatives in conflict-affected areas remains as low as 0.4 percent despite the new funding commitments.[197] To help flesh out further the important ideas found in the New Agenda for Peace, while charting a new generation of innovative approaches for taking forward the Women, Peace, and Security and Youth, Peace, and Security agendas, we offer the following recommendations:

Dismantle Gendered Power Structures

Women are often perceived as victims of conflict and young men as threats to peacebuilding, working against progress in both the WPS and YPS agendas. The influence of these stereotypes has negatively impacted the WPS and YPS agendas as both have seen an increasing focus on counterterrorism and countering violent extremism.[198] For instance, in Afghanistan (box 3.4) traditional norms and structures, discriminatory practices, and vulnerability to violence have prevented the effective engagement of women and youth in peacebuilding. Consequently, advancing these agendas requires acknowledgment of intersecting identities that challenge conventional stereotypes and move away from elite structures and biases.

> *"Women are often perceived as victims of conflict and young men as threats to peacebuilding, working against progress in both the WPS and YPS agendas."*

The New Agenda for Peace emphasizes the need to dismantle patriarchal norms and structures that are a threat to society's stability, instilling greater responsibility in the role of collective society for progressing the WPS agenda, including through YPS-related educational activities.[199] This also entails identifying areas of reinforcement between the Women, Peace, and Security and Youth, Peace, and Security agendas to accelerate action across multiple stakeholders, from global and regional organizations and governments to civil society.[200]

Critically, the UN must first dismantle its own power structures that reinforce patriarchal systems in the peace and security space. This requires disaggregated data across the peacebuilding architecture's different levels that includes (but is not limited to) the number of women engaged in peacebuilding, reported cases of violence against women, and ranking and salaries—each reflected in the proposed Peacebuilding Audit (see Innovation #3 below). Diagnostics conducted using this data will both support assessments of where we stand with WPS and YPS implementation, and identify pressure points and acceleration levers to dismantle harmful power systems. Good examples to draw upon are the Youth2030 framework and its annual progress reports—which include UN agency level key performance indicators and UN Country Team scores to evaluate progress and hold the system accountable to itself.[201]

Address Gaps in the Implementation of the WPS and YPS Agendas

Though progress is underway in the development of WPS and YPS National Action Plans, scant data are available on their implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and financing, including in tracking, for instance, gender-based violence and gender inequality in areas affected by conflict.[202] The UN system, as well as regional bodies such as SAARC, ASEAN, the GCC, and the AU, should adopt robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that assess the impact of global, regional, and national policies and initiatives on women and youth and pursue course corrections, when necessary. In short, the WPS and NPS National Action Plans may fail to progress unless supported by effective and comprehensive evaluation and accountability mechanisms, as well as sufficient financing, capable leaders, and technical know-how (all supported by the wide availability of credible data).[203]

Box 3.4: Empowering Afghan Women and Youth in Pursuit of Peace with Justice

Afghanistan has been embroiled in violent conflict for over four decades. Afghan women and youth, in particular, have faced serious challenges, including gender discrimination, patriarchal mindsets, limited participation in decision-making, and vulnerability to violence and exploitation. A lack of accountability for women and young girls' abuses has further hindered peace and reconciliation efforts across Afghanistan.

Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, progress achieved for women and youth over the preceding two decades has been systematically rolled back, including in access to education, employment, and economic opportunities. According to UNESCO, 80 percent of young women and girls in Afghanistan are currently out of school, and 30 percent have never entered primary level schooling.

In 2015, Afghanistan launched its first Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plan. In support of its implementation, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom works in Afghanistan to advocate for women rights, engagement, and empowerment in building peace and security; to provide capacity building and training workshops for civil society leaders and women activists (e.g., Imams Initiative Training Programme); and to support disarmament and gender equality.

Around the same time, Afghans for Progressive Thinking, a youth-led organization with members across Afghanistan, began to localize the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda (ushered in through UN Security Council Resolution 2250 in 2015) in several Afghan provinces. In particular, the WPS and YPS agendas in Afghanistan have focused on the promotion of gender equality, fostering women and youth empowerment and participation in peacebuilding, and the protection of women's and youth rights.

Despite the failures and continued challenges faced in Afghanistan, especially in the past two years, there are several lessons that can guide future efforts to empower Afghan women and youth in peacebuilding. First, the full spectrum of women's and youth rights should be discussed actively in any multilateral or bilateral discussions with the Taliban, placing a strong emphasis on the personal security of women and youth and increasing their access to employment opportunities.

Second, UN Member States have the power to exert influence over the Taliban—when its actions run counter to the WPS and YPS agendas—by putting in place economic, political, and diplomatic sanctions, as well as targeting aid (for instance, to increase access to women's healthcare). Finally, advancing the WPS agenda in Afghanistan requires the international community to recruit and lend support to international and local (Afghan) women mediators (*note: the current and most recent UN Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan are women*), to defend Afghan women who face challenges when advocating for women, peace, and security, and to send international delegations to Kabul headed by women to work toward the still much-needed renewal of the Afghan peace process.

Sources: Sahar, Arif, and Christian Kaunert, "Higher Education as a Catalyst of Peacebuilding in Violence and Conflict-Affected Contexts: The Case of Afghanistan," Peacebuilding, vol. 9, no. 1, Jan. 2021, 57-78; Athayi, Abdullah and Neelab Hakim, *The dynamic of youth activism in Afghanistan: A journey between hope and desperation,* June 2022 7-8, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union, Brussels; Azad, Sohrab, "Peacebuilding between State and Non-State Actors: A Comparative Case Study of Afghanistan and Colombia," *Proceedings of the National Conference On Undergraduate Research, Kenesaw State University.* April 11-13, 2019, 447.; Belquis, Ahmadi and Matthew Parkes, "After a Year of Taliban Rule, Advances for Afghan Women and Youth Have All but Evaporated," United States Institute of Peace, August 25, 2022; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "Take Urgent Action to Protect the Rights of Afghan Women and Girls and Restore Peace," August 20, 2021; UNESCO, "Let girls and women in Afghanistan learn!" January 18, 2023; United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, *Afghanistan's National Action Plan on UNSCR1325- Women, Peace and Security*; Afghani, Jamila, *Statement to the UN Security Council,* Working Group on Women Peace and Security, July 26, 2019; Ozcelik, Asli, Yulia Nesterova, Graeme Young and Alex Maxwell, *Youth-led peace: The role of youth in peace processes,* 10 (May 2021), University of Glasgow; United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, *Foreword,* August 27, 2020; Akbari, Farkhondeh, and Jacqui True, *WPS in Afghanistan: Betrayal and Renewal,* Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition, July 04, 2022; United Nations Women, *Priorities and recommendations of Afghan women inside Afghanistan,* October 2022.

INNOVATION #3: STRENGTHENING THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION, INCLUDING THROUGH NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Just as important as timely intervention in imminent or ongoing crises is the need to sustain peace and prevent conflict recurrence in fragile post-conflict countries. Since their creation by the UN General Assembly and Security Council in December 2005, further to a recommendation in September 2005 by leaders participating in the UN60 World Summit, the Peacebuilding Commission, Support Office, and Fund have improved international peacebuilding coordination, resource mobilization, and knowledge-sharing, particularly in post-UN peacekeeping settings.[204]

However, as an advisory subsidiary body of the General Assembly and Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission does not have independent authority or decision-making power and is, thus, unable to capably coordinate international peacebuilding efforts.[205] The 2020 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review further noted limited progress on securing adequate and sustained financing for peacebuilding activities. The Peacebuilding Fund only received U.S. $178 million in 2021, or less than 3 percent of what was budgeted for UN peacekeeping in the same fiscal year.[206] Moreover, despite the Peacebuilding Support Office entering into a new partnership with the African Union, or the Security Council recently considering wider UN cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, the Peacebuilding Commission has yet to fully capitalize on the momentum to meaningfully engage regional and sub-regional organizations.[207] In response to these gaps, two recommended PBC innovations are:

Upgrade the Peacebuilding Commission to an Empowered Council

A more authoritative UN Peacebuilding Council ("new PBC")—though with a similar sized membership and geographic balance as the current Peacebuilding Commission—could complement and assist in the Security Council's enormous task of maintaining global peace and security.[208] With an expanded mandate, the Peacebuilding Council would have enhanced powers and responsibilities to lead on conflict prevention (including through a new Peacebuilding Audit tool) and peacebuilding policy development, coordination, and resource mobilization on critical second- and third-order conflicts, freeing up the Security Council to concentrate on first-order conflicts that most threaten international peace and security.

The new PBC would focus on countries and regions in non-peacekeeping and post-conflict environments where it can monitor and coordinate actions to prevent conflict recurrence. This proposed upgrade would follow the precedent of the UN Commission on Human Rights' transformation, in 2006, into the UN Human Rights Council. In addition, a reinvigorated focus on prevention calls for adequate, predictable, and sustained funding of the Peacebuilding Fund, including from assessed dues, thereby strengthening the world body's core mission of preventing and sustaining peace.[209] An empowered Peacebuilding Council could also lend political support and help to scale-up the application of national prevention strategies—and associated locally-led community conflict prevention and peacebuilding frameworks—in fragile and conflict-affected countries worldwide (see Innovation #1, above).

Introduce UN–Regional Strategic Peacebuilding Frameworks

To fully capitalize on the momentum to meaningfully engage regional and sub-regional organizations, the upgraded Peacebuilding Council should build upon recent partnership-building initiatives, such as UN-regional organization memorandums of understanding, in forging new UN-Regional Strategic Peacebuilding Frameworks. Learning from a variety of national-level integrated peacebuilding strategies, compacts, country assistance frameworks, and standards implementation plans, the essential focus of this new peacebuilding instrument should be to harness the capabilities, ideas, and networks of the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations toward building national and local capacities for the effective management and resolution of protracted armed conflicts in select priority countries and regions within a continental setting.[210]

In collaboration with such regional and sub-regional bodies as the AU, ASEAN, SAARC, the OAS, ECOWAS, and the GCC, recommended characteristics of a UN-Regional Strategic Peacebuilding Framework are: i) Skillful facilitation of participatory regional-national-local consultations that fully engage diverse government and civil society representatives in preparing tailor-made approaches to conflict prevention and peacebuilding; ii) Use of concrete, measurable, and time-bound benchmarks and indicators for sequencing priority commitments and tracking the potential risks of conflict reversion (i.e., early warning), as well as progress toward sustainable peace; and iii) Ensuring that all cross-cutting peacebuilding commitments are backed-up with adequate financial and technical/capacity development resources. These new frameworks could also benefit from the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board for Effective Multilateralism's proposed "regional resilience councils" to undertake prevention and peacebuilding activities aimed at more effectively addressing the root causes of violent conflict.[211]

INNOVATION #4: FILLING TWO IMPORTANT GAPS IN THE NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE

Extending beyond a post-Cold War period "forward-looking vision of international peace and security" pitched only at the head of state and diplomatic level (as some commentators had earlier feared),[212] the New Agenda for Peace moves the needle on a number of critical policy issues, including:

▷ Improving our understanding about the changing nature of armed conflict, including with respect to technology, biological threats, and climate change, and within an environment of heightened geopolitical divisions.

▷ Recognition of the universality of peacebuilding, prevention, and sustaining peace.

▷ Reminding the international community that further work is needed to take forward the Women, Peace & Security and Youth, Peace & Security agendas (while, admittedly, lacking concrete proposals).

▷ Reinforcing the strong interplay between advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and the maintenance of international peace and security.

▷ Underscoring the need for renewed attention toward reducing "strategic risks" involving nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Secretary-General António Guterres's policy presentation of the New Agenda for Peace in July 2023 was also intended to elicit feedback from Member States and other stakeholders, to inform a future iteration of the "policy brief."[213] This updated instrument will need to complement discussions later this year and next in the anticipated "International Peace and Security Chapter" of the Pact for the Future.[214] In this spirit, two key areas requiring further attention in the New Agenda for Peace are:

Update and Renew the "4P's" Conflict Management Toolbox in light of the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict

A hallmark of the original (1992) An Agenda for Peace was the clarity with which then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined and boldly spoke to the practical application of four key UN conflict management tools: *preventive diplomacy*, *peacemaking*, *peacekeeping*, and *post-conflict peacebuilding* (the "4Ps").[215] The New Agenda for Peace's careful analysis and articulation of the changing nature of armed conflict suggests that these critical concepts must also continue to evolve if the UN conflict prevention and management toolkit is to keep pace with contemporary and over-the-horizon threats and challenges to peace.

For *preventive diplomacy*, this could entail an updated definition that embraces Secretary-General Guterres' oft-repeated reference to preventive action's utility vis-a-vis all three of the UN's major pillars of activity, namely, peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights—thus allaying concerns about resource diversion from the SDGs.[216] For *peacemaking*, this could involve a reconceptualization of the UN's role that combines more assertive steps to insert its Special Envoys into mediating politically fraught civil wars and inter-state disputes (e.g., the present Sudan and Russia-Ukraine crises, respectively), alongside

more low-key approaches, whereby the UN (including through its Special Political Missions and Peace & Development Advisers) teams up with or plays a secondary support role to regional and sub-regional organization mediators.

For *peacekeeping*, deep reflection is now warranted on the removal of host nation consent by the Government of Mali toward its country's UN peacekeeping mission, alongside the rise of private military contractors (as detailed in box 3.2), while entertaining the need for more hybrid and partnership-oriented peacekeeping operations between the United Nations and regional/sub-regional organizations.[217] Finally, for *post-conflict peacebuilding*, a clearer high-level commitment from the UN Secretariat and Member States to invest in local capacities for improved conflict management and resolution has become a practical necessity, including through direct financial assistance from a new International Fund for Peacebuilding and the training of local leaders through a New UN Civilian Response Capability.[218]

Offer Greater Details (and Ambition) to Collective Security Architecture Reform Proposals

Under the sub-heading "Action 12: Build a Stronger Collective Security Machinery," the New Agenda for Peace speaks briefly to ideas for improving the Peacebuilding Commission, General Assembly, and Security Council—but given present gaps in international governance, there is room for going further. While the new peace agenda does encourage stronger ties between the Peacebuilding Commission and regional organizations, it shies away from the kinds of PBC upgrades advocated in the preceding section, or by the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.[219]

The New Agenda for Peace also misses an opportunity to build on the UN General Assembly's Resolution 76/262 of April 26, 2022, which calls for the President of the General Assembly to convene the Assembly "within 10 working days of the casting of a veto" in the Security Council and to hold a debate on the subject of the veto.[220] Specifically, the Secretary-General could lend his support to more frequent use of the Uniting for Peace resolution when the UNSC fails to act in critical matters of international peace and security. To avoid appearing to usurp the Security Council's primacy, invocation of United for Peace should require a two-part process initiated by a procedural vote of a qualified majority of the UNSC determining that a veto was used in "bad faith," followed by a two-thirds majority vote in the UNGA, as is required for important questions.[221]

In December 2004 (feeding into the September 2005 UN60 World Summit), then Secretary-General Kofi Annan's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change offered two models for improving representation in the Security Council (including six new permanent seats and three new two-year term non-permanent seats in "Model A").[222] Meanwhile, arguing that "[w]ithout meaningful reform, the Security Council risks irrelevance...," Secretary-General Guterres' High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism proposes that next year's Summit of the Future should announce a Security Council-reform-focused Charter Review conference.[223]

The New Agenda for Peace's next iteration can advance these earlier debates—and prepare for when conditions are sufficiently ripe for Charter amendment—by presenting more concrete guidance on making the Council more just and representative. At a minimum, the Secretary-General should consider recommending that the number of non-permanent seats on the Council be expanded by six—while allowing for the immediate re-election of non-permanent members, who are currently not allowed to

serve consecutive terms, through a simple amendment of UN Charter Article 23(2) (i.e., removing the sentence: "A retiring member shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.").[224] Allowing for immediate re-election would bring more regional expertise to UNSC decision-making and create incentives for elected Member States to act fairly and take responsibility in the Council.

<center>***</center>

While the present period is historically distinct from the more optimistic "post-Cold War rebirth of the United Nations" in the early 1990s when An Agenda for Peace was introduced, the acute peacebuilding challenges outlined above make the UN and its regional partners' task of assertive leadership and building coalitions for positive change—rather than providing mainly a platform for states to voice their concerns—more vital than ever.[225] Article 99 of the Charter, which allows for the Secretary-General to bring to the Security Council's attention any issue deemed to threaten international peace and security, represents only one instrument, among many, for advancing the peacebuilding principles advocated in this section.[226]

Admittedly, many powerful state and non-state detractors persist, fueled by Great Power tensions and further compounded by distrust on pivotal issues between broad cross-sections of the Global South and Global North, as well as toward the UN Secretariat and civil society. Nevertheless, a generational opportunity has arisen with at least the potential to overcome some of these divides, with the back-to-back convening of the September 2023 SDG Summit and September 2024 Summit of the Future—a subject to which we now turn.

IV. The Future is Now: Advancing the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future Action Agendas

> **"We are halfway to 2030 and yet nowhere near to achieving the SDGs. The bad news is we've lost seven years. The good news is we still have seven years, and victory is within our reach."**
>
> —Lachezara Stoeva, UN Economic and Social Council President.[227]

Marking the half-way point to the deadline set for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDG Summit will occur, from September 18-19, 2023, in New York. Its centerpiece Political Declaration, to be adopted by world leaders from all 193 UN Member States, provides high-level guidance on "transformative and accelerated actions" for all countries delivering on the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals before the close of the present decade.[228]

Meanwhile, the Summit of the Future, planned for September 22-23, 2024, in New York aims to reaffirm the Charter of the United Nations, reinvigorate multilateralism, boost implementation of existing commitments, agree on concrete solutions to challenges, and restore trust among Member States.[229] The intertwined nature of the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future has the potential to yield multiple, mutually reinforcing dividends, beginning with the SOTF preparatory ministerial meeting to immediately follow the SDG Summit on September 21, 2023.

This concluding section explores the multiple, potential "win-win" links between the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future; in many distinct ways, their respective success depends on the identification and pursuit of the deep and varied connections between them. It further examines concrete entry points for advancing the SDG and SOTF action agendas through the AI/cyber-governance and peacebuilding innovations introduced earlier in this report. The section concludes with some practical suggestions on seizing the moment and revitalizing global and regional problem-solving, drawing inspiration from the pivotal international cooperation principles of diplomacy, dialogue, and diversity.

> **"The intertwined nature of the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future has the potential to yield multiple, mutually reinforcing dividends..."**

Mutually Reinforcing the 2023 SDG Summit and 2024 Summit of the Future

As elaborated in section one, only 15 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals' targets are on track to be reached this critical decade, with over 500 million people likely still to live in extreme poverty by 2030 (see figure 1.1). Buttressed by a High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development to immediately follow the 2023 SDG Summit, the summit's Political Declaration places a premium on advancing the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development through, for instance, a combination of "development cooperation, SDG investments, reforming the international financial architecture … enhancing macroeconomic policy coordination, [and] exploring measures of progress on sustainable development that complement or go beyond gross domestic product…"[230]

Whereas the SDG Summit arrives at a relatively brief high-level political statement that acknowledges global governance systems gaps in need of urgent attention to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda, the preparatory process for next year's Summit of the Future is designed to realize—through well-conceived, politically acceptable, and adequately resourced reform proposals—the actual systemic changes in global governance needed to fill these gaps. The SOTF's main outcome document, "A Pact for the Future," alongside associated instruments (e.g., a Declaration on Future Generations, Global Digital Compact, and New Agenda for Peace), is set to build a durable, high-level political consensus around detailed global governance innovations. They seek to take forward the 2030 Agenda, 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, and wider UN agenda, including in the areas of economic governance and debt relief, science and technology, peace and security, human rights, and the special needs of youth and future generations.[231] As illustrated in this report's sections two and three, they may take the form of institutional, legal, policy, operational, and normative changes in the conduct of global and regional cooperation.

By ensuring at least three tangible, mutually reinforcing outcomes from the two summits—namely, conceptual clarity, high-level political support, and sustained financial and technical assistance—a powerful narrative and communications strategy that further amplifies their mutual, "win-win" benefits can take hold:

CONCEPTUAL CLARITY

For both the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future to succeed, they require a shared, holistic analytical lens and a whole-of-system approach to governing. Employing multiple negotiating tracks across the UN's three pillars of peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights, a primary aim of the Summit of the Future is to modernize the international machinery needed to support Member States and their partners in civil society and the private sector in meeting their twelve UN75 Declaration commitments, adopted in September 2020 by world leaders.[232]

The SDG Summit will help governments define their policy priorities (the what), while the SOTF targets attention and resources toward strengthening multilateral capacities to achieve them (the how).[233] Such innovations in global governance can have tangible multiplier effects in such critical areas as tackling the causes of political and criminal violence (major barriers to overall SDG implementation but also the focus of Goal #16), mitigating the chief factors accelerating climate change (Goal #13), and accelerating the end of extreme poverty (Goal #1)—furthering sustainable development and

safeguarding basic human rights, including women's rights. The SOTF is also poised to reinforce international standards conducive for SDGs implementation, including "Beyond GDP," long-termism, and the rights of future generations.[234]

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL SUPPORT

Numerous UN Ambassadors participating in the initial Summit of the Future preparatory discussions in February 2023 in New York acknowledged that the SDG Summit merited the highest political attention on the UN's 2023 calendar.[235] With Indonesia having presided over the G20 nations last year, India this year, Brazil next year, and South Africa in 2025, we can expect this influential group of developing countries to back progress toward mobilizing technology, finance, trade, and debt-relief for meeting both poor and rich countries' 2030 Agenda targets. The G20 is also well-placed—as an influential, high-level political forum—for the treatment of politically contentious global financial architecture reforms at the Summit of the Future as integral to implementing the SDGs.[236]

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Additionally, Member States participating in the Summit of the Future can direct much-needed financial and technical support—often through global and regional organizations—to delivering the 2030 Agenda, thereby buttressing the UN Economic and Social Council's Forum on Financing for Development (FFD) and the Addis Agenda (which developing countries regularly fret have both come up short in financing the SDGs and other development priorities). For example, next year's summit is widely anticipated to embrace calls for strengthened coordination on global economic governance to respond to cross-border economic shocks, reduce inequality, and promote development that is environmentally sustainable. Bringing together the Secretary-General, World Bank and IMF leaders, the G20 and, ideally, the 174 UN Member States not directly represented in this leading forum through a new Biennial Summit on the World Economy could lend support for, among other critical issues, the proposed high-level FFD Conference in 2025.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has recognized the value of bringing the G20 closer to the UN's priorities in his repeated calls for the group to agree on a $500 billion annual stimulus for sustainable development through a combination of concessional and non-concessional finance.[237] The Summit of the Future is also well-positioned to review and lend support to efforts to upgrade how the UN system's programs, funds, agencies, and multilateral development banks design and execute technical assistance programs, especially in the most vulnerable countries.

Beyond these three general areas of mutual complementarity, on the two sets of specific themes covered in-depth in this report (AI/Cyber-Governance and Peacebuilding), several more opportunities to strengthen, in jointly supportive ways, the action agendas for the SDG Summit and SOTF can be identified. Both new technologies and instruments for sustaining a just peace in fragile countries and regions were underscored by multiple Member States participating in the President of the General Assemblies thematic consultations, in February and March 2021, on the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report recommendations and looking toward these summits.[238]

Entry Points for Advancing Essential Innovations, at the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future, on AI/Cyber-Governance and Peacebuilding

Achieving each of the seventeen SDGs and developing the requisite institutions for this purpose is not only critical across all SDGs individually, but also because each of the individual SDGs affects the others. Ultimately, they are all interconnected, and making progress on, for example, more just institutions has a positive multiplier effect on alleviating poverty and gender equity, building global resilience as a whole.[239] However, broad-based development agendas also tend to be the first to weaken in the face of crisis. This is a fundamental concern articulated in the UN Secretary-General's portrayal of two diametrically opposed pathways for the international community in his *Our Common Agenda* report: one toward a "global breakthrough" versus another toward a "global breakdown."[240]

Breaking out of these stunted development patterns requires entry points for global capacity development to accelerate virtuous cycles of progress on multiple agendas—an "SDG Push Scenario."[241] It also requires that incentive structures conducive to generating the necessary political will are developed through the Summit of the Future (figure 4.1).[242] This report's global governance innovations can serve as entry points for such an SDG Push Scenario that, simultaneously, capitalizes on momentum behind both the 2030 Agenda and the Summit of the Future.

Figure 4.1: Illustration of Entry Points for an SDG Push toward "Breakthrough"

Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center.

AI & CYBER　**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CYBER-GOVERNANCE INNOVATIONS**
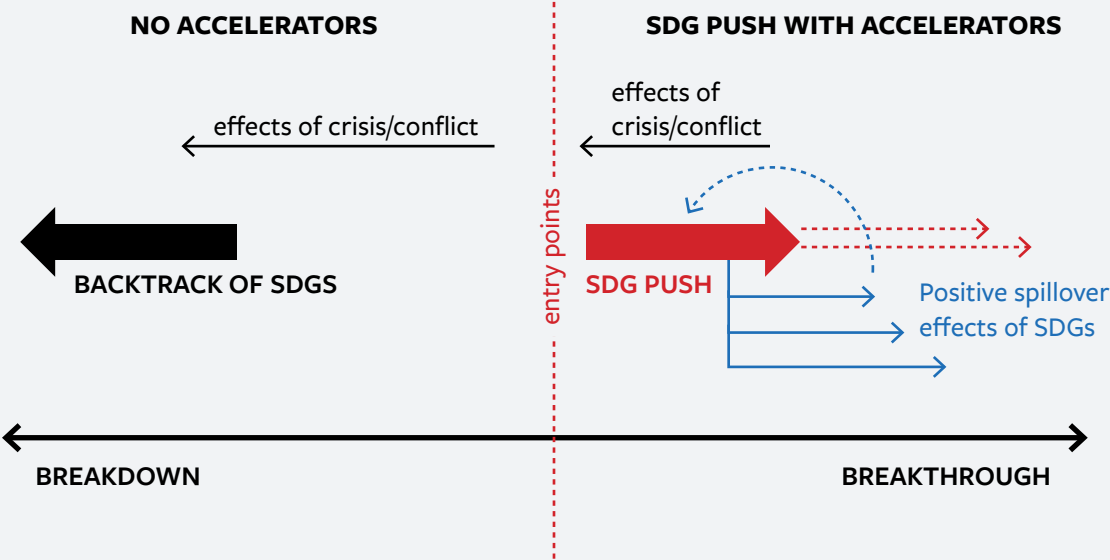
Science and technology offer both levers for progress on the SDGs and in preparation for the Summit of the Future.[243] Here, we note how this report's section two recommendations on furthering the sustainable, safe, and inclusive (SSI) use of AI and cybertech relate to specific SDGs and their related targets and, in turn, the emerging agenda of the Summit of the Future.

Global Regulatory Framework on Artificial Intelligence and other Emerging Cyber-Technologies:
Sustainable development by definition is development without harming future generations.[244] A global regulatory framework for AI and other emerging cybertech relates to SDG target 17.14 to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development; target 17.6 to enhance North-North, South-South, and triangular cooperation in accessing science and technology; and target 9.2 on inclusive and sustainable industry growth, including through a proposed International Artificial Intelligence Agency and baseline SSI principles for cooperation that employ just transitions frameworks. The recommended global regulatory framework also channels the call for multistakeholder and networked approaches from the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* to target 9.c—on increasing access to information and communication technologies—through a suggested Intergovernmental Cyber and AI Panel.[245]

A New Treaty on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems:
Section two's *digital advocate* proposal seeks to construct technical paradigms to make the oncoming age of autonomous warfare safer, more accountable, and more transparent. These measures, properly implemented alongside a legally binding treaty on LAWS, will reduce deaths by armed conflict (target 16.1), and speak also to SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7 by contributing to both effective and accountable, as well as responsive and participatory, institutions—reinforcing other measures in digital and peacebuilding governance to accelerate peace and sustainable development. The proposal further attempts to provide a substantive core to Secretary-General Guterres' recommendations in his New Agenda for Peace for a legally binding instrument on lethal autonomous weapons.[246]

The Global Digital Compact as an integrated Sustainable Development Goal (iSDG):
Harnessing the SOTF's proposed Global Digital Compact, as an integrated goal for sustainable development, tackling issues such as violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology, and countering online mis- and disinformation, can have a net positive effect on all SDGs, but especially SDG 5 on gender equality. Its framing as a tool for narrowing the digital divide also speaks to target 16.8— to broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in institutions of global governance. Using the Global Digital Compact as an integrated SDG to coordinate action across multiple tech-related SDGs will also help connect various SOTF negotiating clusters to the concrete and measurable targets and (easy to monitor and evaluate) indicators of the SDGs.

PEACEBUILDING　**PEACEBUILDING INNOVATIONS**

A fundamental driver of peace is development, while peace and security are essential for development and the safeguarding of basic human rights. The Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace recognizes that, in a world of increasing vulnerability and uncertainty, our development capacity is at risk and the tools required to meet the SDGs are changing.[247] Section three of this report considered, in particular, three entry points for upgrading development capacity through peacebuilding:

Advancing the Next Generation Women & Youth, Peace, and Security Agendas:
The New Agenda for Peace discusses "dismantling the patriarchy,"[248] but its recommendations for doing so fall short—"add gender and youth and stir"—adding little that would diminish, let alone dismantle, a patriarchy that has survived years of nominal consensus on the YPS and WPS agendas. Section three's proposals push the envelope on YPS and WPS, and they relate to SDG targets such as target 5.1 on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. This target speaks to several layers of the peacebuilding architecture, from the heights of UNHQ to troops on the ground and women and girls in conflict-ridden communities.

Additionally, the political economy approach to the New Agenda for Peace paves the way for target 5.5—to ensure women's full and effective participation and leadership in all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life—to bolster YPS and WPS in a way that meaningfully "dismantles" the patriarchy, including by breaking down gender stereotypes and harmful social norms. But YPS and WPS are entire movements in themselves, and thus, close attention should be paid to how their push for national action plans is: i) reflected in countries' voluntary national reviews after the SDG Summit; and ii) championed in both the international peace and security and youth and future generations chapters of the SOTF's Pact for the Future outcome document.[249]

Transforming the Peacebuilding Commission into an Empowered Council for Sustaining Peace:
Broadly relevant to SDG 16 on promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, this recommendation would also generate net-positive effects for SDGs 1 (ending poverty), 5 (gender equality), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 13 (climate action), and 17 (partnerships for the goals); for example, target 1.5 to build resilience of the poor in vulnerable situations, and target 13.1 to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards. Additionally, a stronger and more independent Peacebuilding Council would serve to resist system breakdown in fragile and conflict-affected countries, helping them break out of stunted development patterns and build capacity to deliver on the broader 2030 Agenda.[250]

Offering Greater Details (and Ambition) to Collective Security Architecture Reform Proposals:
Previous Doha Forum-Stimson Center reports have explored the intentionally fragmented nature of global security arrangements and the difficulty in any attempt at a one-size-fits-all approach to fixing them.[251] Section three shows how Action #12 in the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, aimed at strengthening global and regional collective security machinery, can be taken forward by reinforcing accountability for peace and security at a systemic level vis-à-vis issues as disparate, yet fundamental, as runaway climate change (SDG 13), poverty (SDG 1), and access to water and sanitation (SDG 6). But it also speaks to specific targets: SDG target 16.6 to develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, and target 17.9 to enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Across all of these goals and tracks are common operational approaches and new insights that can push us away from a global breakdown scenario. In other words, we ought to be less concerned about which upcoming summits and corresponding action agendas to prioritize, and focus more on the operational accelerators (specific strategies, partnerships, and institutional or other innovative entry points) that help the international community achieve its collective "global breakthrough" scenario.

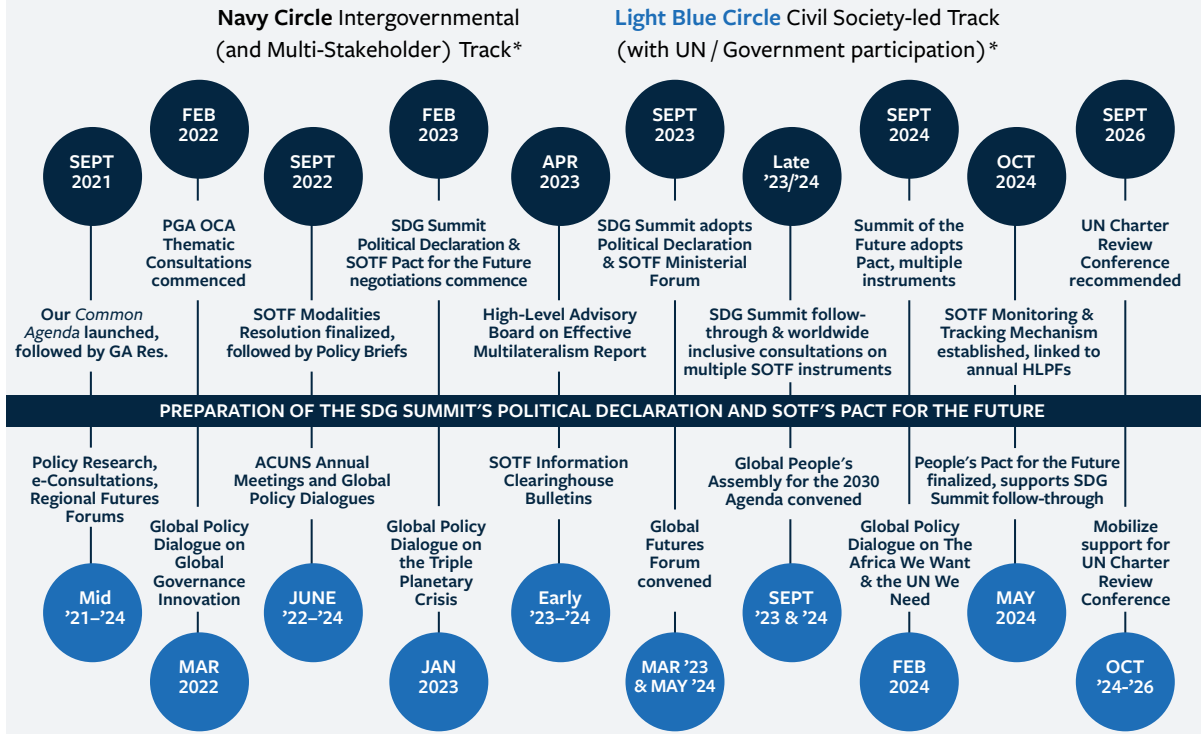## The Way Forward: Diplomacy, Dialogue, and Diversity

Under the banner of "Diplomacy, Dialogue, and Diversity" (principles conceptualized in section one), Doha Forum has promoted for more than two decades a spirited and open interchange of ideas to innovate and improve international policy-making that drives action-oriented networks. Informed by this *Future of International Cooperation 2023* report, this year's Doha Forum (December 10-11, 2023) will further explore ways to expand the Overton window and rise to meet the generational opportunities provided by the back-to-back, closely intertwined SDG Summit in September and next year's Summit of the Future. In doing so, Doha Forum seeks to encourage creative thinking and empirically-grounded debate on revitalizing global and regional problem-solving, drawing inspiration from the pivotal international cooperation principles of diplomacy, dialogue, and diversity in support of diverse coalitions of global, results-oriented state and non-state actors.

> *"...Doha Forum seeks to encourage creative thinking and empirically-grounded debate on revitalizing global and regional problem-solving..."*

In this regard, figure 4.2 offers some concluding guidance for governments (top row, including representatives from international organizations) to consider—these next twelve critical months—alongside suggestions for civil society (bottom row, including representatives from religious organizations, the media, and business community) to maximize SDG Summit follow-through and the attendant preparations for the September 2024 Summit of the Future. Though admittedly difficult to fully implement under present geopolitical conditions, it is important to recognize that similar international political concerns were voiced in 2004-05 (against the backdrop of the Iraq War), when national champions of multilateral governance teamed up with civil society partners to back significant global governance reforms. Notable innovations included the creation of the Peacebuilding Architecture and upgrade of the Human Rights Commission into an empowered Council with new tools for safeguarding human rights.[252] For these and other milestone achievements from the 2005 UN60 World Summit, two keys to success were enlightened global leadership combined with a determined, multistakeholder effort—typically culminating in detailed, follow-on UN General Assembly resolutions—to carry forward commitments reached in the summit's Outcome Document.[253]

The world stands at a pivotal juncture, reeling from overlapping crises while bracing for emerging shocks, including potential mass displacement from sea-level rise, recurring health crises, and the outbreak of deadly armed conflict. With courage and imagination, global, regional, national, and sub-national leaders can yet pull humanity back from the brink and toward a more just and sustainable path of solidarity, peace, and shared prosperity. This report aims to support Doha Forum participants and informed citizens worldwide in charting that course. We have no time to lose in revitalizing global and regional problem-solving through principled and future-focused international cooperation.

**Figure 4.2: Roadmap to the 2024 Summit of the Future &
SDG Summit Follow-through (recommended)**

Navy Circle Intergovernmental
(and Multi-Stakeholder) Track*

Light Blue Circle Civil Society-led Track
(with UN / Government participation)*

SEPT 2021

FEB 2022

SEPT 2022

FEB 2023

APR 2023

SEPT 2023

Late '23/'24

SEPT 2024

OCT 2024

SEPT 2026

PGA OCA Thematic Consultations commenced

SDG Summit Political Declaration & SOTF Pact for the Future negotiations commence

SDG Summit adopts Political Declaration & SOTF Ministerial Forum

Summit of the Future adopts Pact, multiple instruments

UN Charter Review Conference recommended

Our *Common Agenda* launched, followed by GA Res.

SOTF Modalities Resolution finalized, followed by Policy Briefs

High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism Report

SDG Summit follow-through & worldwide inclusive consultations on multiple SOTF instruments

SOTF Monitoring & Tracking Mechanism established, linked to annual HLPFs

PREPARATION OF THE SDG SUMMIT'S POLITICAL DECLARATION AND SOTF'S PACT FOR THE FUTURE

Policy Research, e-Consultations, Regional Futures Forums

ACUNS Annual Meetings and Global Policy Dialogues

SOTF Information Clearinghouse Bulletins

Global People's Assembly for the 2030 Agenda convened

People's Pact for the Future finalized, supports SDG Summit follow-through

Global Policy Dialogue on Global Governance Innovation

Global Policy Dialogue on the Triple Planetary Crisis

Global Futures Forum convened

Global Policy Dialogue on The Africa We Want & the UN We Need

Mobilize support for UN Charter Review Conference

Mid '21–'24

MAR 2022

JUNE '22–'24

JAN 2023

Early '23–'24

MAR '23 & MAY '24

SEPT '23 & '24

FEB 2024

MAY 2024

OCT '24–'26

* Only select recommended activities listed. Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center.

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IV. The Future is Now: Advancing the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future Action Agendas

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Annex 1: Detailed Mapping of SDG Targets Explicitly Referencing Technology or its Governance

1 NO POVERTY	**1.4:** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
2 ZERO HUNGER	**2.3:** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment **2.a:** Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	**3.b:** Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries **3.d:** Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	**4.4:** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship **4.b:** By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
5 GENDER EQUALITY	**5.b:** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	**6.a:** By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	**7.a:** By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology **7.b:** By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	**8.2:** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services **8.3:** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	**9.5:** Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending **9.a:** Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States **9.b:** Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities **9.c:** Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	No explicit target
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	**11.c:** Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	**12.a:** Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production
13 CLIMATE ACTION	No explicit target
14 LIFE BELOW WATER	**14.a:** Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries
15 LIFE ON LAND	No explicit target
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	**16.10:** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	**17. 6:** Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism **17.7:** Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed **17.8:** Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology **17.16:** Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

Annex 2: Official Documents Informing Peacebuilding Principles

Core Principles	Official and Unofficial Documents where Elaborated
Addressing Root Causes	United Nations. *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace - Report of the Secretary General*. July 30, 2020. (page 2, 10) United Nations. *Our Common Agenda–Report of the Secretary General*. September 10, 2021. (page 59, 60) United Nations. General Assembly. *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations*. A/RES/75/1. September 21, 2020. (page 4) United Nations. Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*. July 20, 2023. (page 9: solidarity acts as a "blueprint" for addressing root causes of conflict)
Local Capacity Development	Principles for Peace. *The Peacemaking Covenant*. 2023. (Discusses the importance of utilizing local knowledge and experience in peacebuilding processes (page 5, 14). Also highlights subsidiarity (page 33)) United Nations. *Our Common Agenda–Report of the Secretary General*. September 10, 2021. (page 40 - on building capacity for local youth networks) United Nations. High-Level Advisory Board. *A Breakthrough for People and Planet*. April 16, 2023. (page 17 on localization, page 43)
Just & Meaningful Inclusion	Principles for Peace. *The Peacemaking Covenant*. 2023. (page 5, 14, 27) United Nations. *Our Common Agenda–Report of the Secretary General*. September 10, 2021. (page 30, 40. Page 68 on inclusive multilateralism - thinking beyond States as participants) United Nations. Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security*. S/RES/1325. October 31, 2000. United Nations. Security Council. *Youth, Peace and Security*. S/RES/2250. December 9, 2015. United Nations. General Assembly. *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations*. A/RES/75/1. September 21, 2020. (page 4) United Nations. Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*. July 20, 2023. (page 13)
Accountability and Transparency	United Nations. High-Level Advisory Board. *A Breakthrough for People and Planet*. April 16, 2023. (page 14, 16) United Nations. *Our Common Agenda–Report of the Secretary General*. September 10, 2021. (page 25) United Nations. General Assembly. *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations*. A/RES/75/1. September 21, 2020. (page 3, 4) Principles for Peace. *The Peacemaking Covenant*. 2023. (page 22-27) United Nations. Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*. July 20, 2023. (page 9: on building trust by enhancing transparency)
Solidarity and Social Justice	Principles for Peace. *The Peacemaking Covenant*. 2023. (page 12) United Nations. *Our Common Agenda–Report of the Secretary General*. September 10, 2021. (page 3, 12, 17, 24. Page 14 includes a definition of solidarity) United Nations. *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace - Report of the Secretary General*. July 30, 2020. (page 3) United Nations. Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*. July 20, 2023. (page 9-10)

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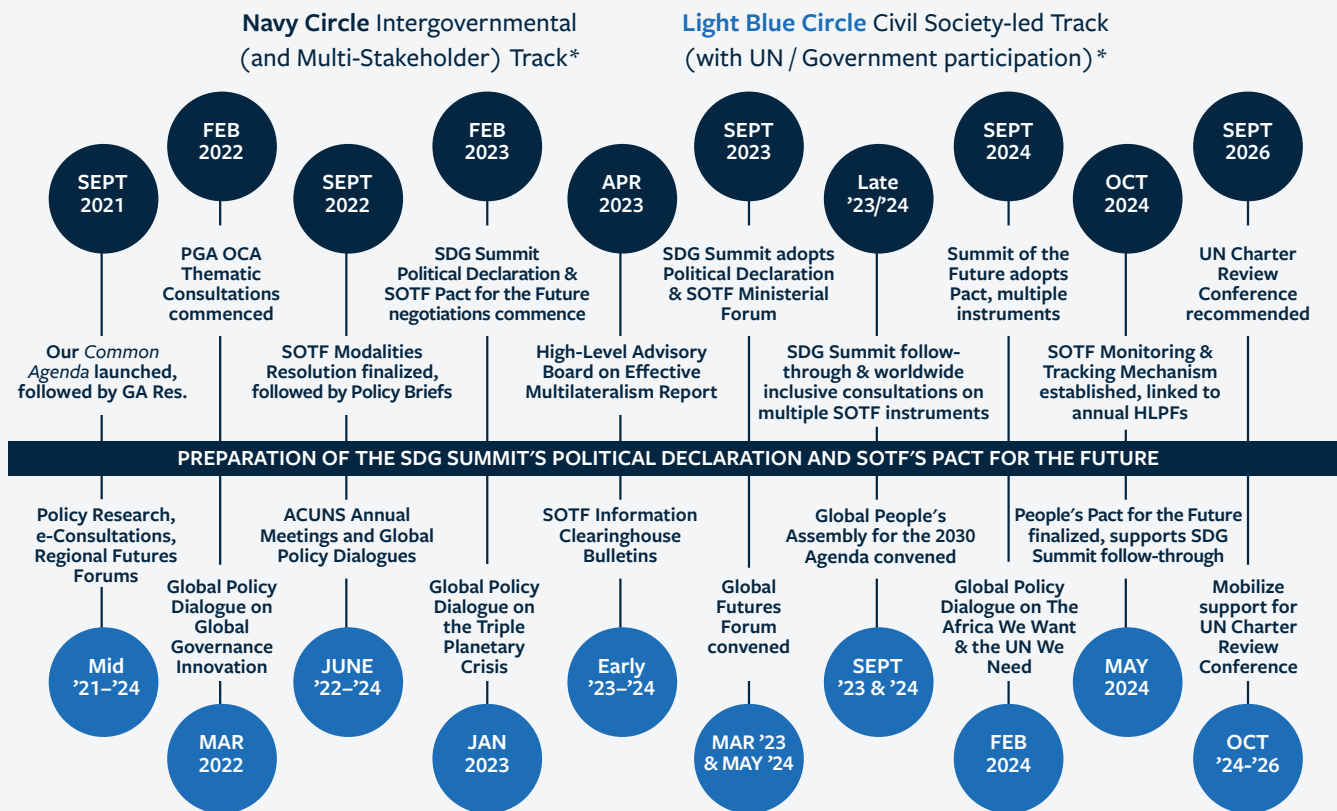
Future of International Cooperation Report '23
Building Shared Futures: Innovating Governance for Global and Regional Problem-Solving

"By rethinking international cooperation...we can build a shared future that better fulfills the needs and aspirations of present and future generations."

—Foreword to FIC'23, Lolwah Al-Khater, Brian Finlay, and Sultan Barakat.

Although profound crises confront the world, humanity has also never had such an abundance of knowledge, resources, or technological means to effectively tackle international problems through collective action. Against this backdrop, the *Future of International Cooperation Report 2023* (FIC'23) seeks to facilitate deeper collaboration between governments, civil society, religious leaders, the media, the business community, and international organizations to help present and future generations realize their full potential. It focuses on what the institutions and practice of global and regional cooperation need to keep pace with disruptive trends in cyber-technology and the destructive challenges of persistent conflict. It shows how carefully designed and responsible initiatives in cyber-governance, including the regulation of artificial intelligence, and in reinvigorated peacebuilding can benefit peoples and nations and influence the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit this September and the Summit of the Future in September 2024. Humanity has no time to lose in revitalizing global and regional problem-solving in these and other critical issues through principled and future-focused international cooperation.

Figure 4.2: Roadmap to the 2024 Summit of the Future & SDG Summit Follow-through (recommended)

* Only select recommended activities listed. Source: Original Figure, Stimson Center.