



Resilient Social Contracts and Sustaining Peace

Tuesday, 15 May 2017, 1:00pm – 2:45pm
International Peace Institute, 777 United Nations Plaza, 12th Floor
New York, New York

CONCEPT NOTE AND DRAFT AGENDA

Background

The identical General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions (70/262 and 2282 respectively), adopted on 27 April 2016, offer sustaining peace as the overarching framework for revitalizing the work of UN's peacebuilding architecture. According to these resolutions, sustaining peace is understood as a goal and process to build a common vision of a society, where conflict prevention plays a central role and where UN engagement in post conflict societies is expected to flow through its three work streams in an integrated manner. The resolutions and the Secretary-General's report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, released on 18 January 2018, highlight both the importance of nationally owned agendas, rooted in the needs of all segments of society. In late April, Member States, senior United Nations representatives and civil society from around the world met to strengthen their commitments to this agenda, at the High Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, initiated by Office of the President of the General Assembly (PGA). The closing statement by the PGA reflecting on the week highlighted the need for sustaining peace to tackle conflict at its roots, pointing to top priority focus areas: prevention, national ownership, coherence and inclusion.

Advancing these goals requires ongoing attention to evidence across countries about what works – in building inclusive, nationally owned visions, with accompanying institutions and social cohesion – for uprooting conflict and achieving and sustaining peace. Specifically, we need to better understand the relationship between states and societies, and what drives inclusive and resilient social contracts within different contexts.

Purpose of this meeting

In line with this, IPI will hold a meeting looking at the role of the social contract in achieving the goal of sustaining peace. Specifically, the conversation will explore what drives social contracts



that are inclusive and resilient, how they manifest and adapt in different contexts, transcending what are often unsustainable, ephemeral elite bargains, into more inclusive ones, with durable arrangements for achieving and sustaining peace.

During this event, overall findings from the research project “[Forging Resilient National Social Contracts](#)” led by Professor Erin McCandless, will be presented. Specific case studies will also be featured: South Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tunisia. These case studies will explore ‘social contracting’ within contexts of conflict and fragility – specifically the mechanisms and institutional arrangements through which agreements are forged and relationships built, horizontally and vertically, in ways that support conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Policy recommendations will be shared and discussed.

This event will engage with current policy findings and debates, and highlight how the UN can better understand the role of social contract, and utilize this framing in its work, to support national actors in attaining and sustaining peace. It is hoped that by focusing on concrete examples and cases studies, this conversation will help Member States and other national key stakeholders develop a shared and deeper understanding of what sustaining peace means in practice as they attempt to implement the above joint resolutions and deliver on their commitment to make prevention the core function of the United Nations.

Target Audience

Participants at the event will include, Permanent Representatives and experts of UN member states officials and experts, UN and government officials, media representatives, and heads of civil society organizations, as well as academics as well as international relations experts.

This will be an informal event that will be facilitated by Dr. Youssef Mahmoud, IPI’s Senior Advisor. Speakers will include researchers of case studies from South Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tunisia, as well as a representative of the UN.

This event will be in partnership with UNDP, FES, the New School, and the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, and its Forging Resilient Social Contracts project.

Agenda

Welcoming Remarks:



- Patrick Keuleers, Director, Governance and Peacebuilding, UNDP BPPS
- Bettina Luise Rürup, Executive Director, FES New York
- Takeshi Akahori, Minister, Political Coordinator, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Opening Remarks

- Fabrizio Hochschild, Assistant Secretary General for Strategic Coordination

Moderator:

- Dr. Youssef Mahmoud, Senior Advisor at the International Peace Institute

Panel:

- Erin McCandless, Associate Professor, Wits School of Governance, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa; Research and Project Director, Forging Resilient Social Contracts
- Luka Kuol, Professor of Practice, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, DC, and Associate Professor, University of Juba [South Sudan case]
- Jasmin Ramovic, Lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manchester [Bosnia and Herzegovina case]