

Enhancing Civil Society - UN Cooperation on Prevention

Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform¹

The new Secretary General is entering the UN at a time in which crucial decisions need to be made in prevention. The landmark dual resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 marked this bold shift within the UN and brought international attention to “sustaining peace”. This new concept, building on the AGE review, the HIPPO report and the Global Study on UNSCR 1325, and combined with the peace mandate of the 2030 Agenda, has the potential to fundamentally reorient the UN’s efforts to seek sustainable peace. The resolutions ask the UN to adopt an integrated approach that involves the entire UN system, demanding a continuous engagement with and inclusion of local stakeholders, as well as coordination and coherence across the pillars to realize the prevention agenda.

The Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform is a new initiative that aims to support the UN’s prevention agenda through strengthening cooperation, coordination, and information sharing between civil society organizations (CSOs) and the UN at all levels. The group seeks to identify concrete, practical steps to enhance the UN and CSOs’ collective capacity to carry out preventive work through sharing best practices, identifying areas of potential collaboration, and supporting UN efforts to bridge early warning and early action. The Platform believes that the UN’s work on prevention would benefit from a systematic engagement with civil society and that the inclusion of diverse civil society expertise is crucial to achieving sustainable peace.

Based on an extensive mapping of UN practises on prevention across the system and three thematic discussions bringing together civil society and UN actors, the Platform calls for the following recommendations:

- **Create and fund Civil Society Advisory Boards** on prevention and sustaining peace at the country level to act as a consultative body for the UN’s in-country presence through regular dialogue on policy, planning, programming and implementation of relevant UN activities. These boards could take inspiration from UN Women’s Civil Society Advisory Groups or the UN Peacebuilding Fund’s Joint Steering Committees.
- **Improve information sharing between civil society actors and the Secretariat** by ensuring regular and systematic civil society inputs to existing UN inter-agency coordinating mechanisms such as the Regional Quarterly Review, the Task Team on Conflict Prevention and the Senior Action Group or their potential successors that cover countries, regions, peacekeeping and special political missions.
- **Support civil society in providing parallel Regional Quarterly Reviews (RQRs)** to be used at UN HQ and country level for early warning and to ensure that diverse and locally derived information feeds into holistic analyses of potential and ongoing conflicts.
- **Expand and institutionalize the Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) program** by deploying PDAs to all UN country teams with relevant need on a regular long-term basis. PDAs should be embedded in the on-going governance and development work with a focus on regular and meaningful civil society engagement.

Sustaining Peace requires transforming social compacts, restoring trust, and strengthening accountability between communities and their governments. The UN can support these processes by demonstrating inclusion in its own activities at HQ and in-country and by encouraging national and local actors to take a longer-term, comprehensive, and sustainable approach to building peace in their own countries. The Civil Society-UN Platform stands ready to cooperate on these and all other steps to prevent conflict and create sustainable peace.

¹ The Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform facilitates dialogue among a wide range of civil society actors in New York and in countries, and is coordinated by the Quaker UN Office (QUNO) and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs.