



## **Supporting Local Infrastructures for Peace Post COVID-19: The Role of an Integrated Peacebuilding-Development Approach** *A dialogue for the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia*

*Draft Concept Note*

**16 February 2021**

12:00-14:00 UTC+1 | 13:00-15:00 UTC+2 | 14:00-16:00 UTC+3 | 17:00 – 19:00 UTC+6

### **Context**

The dual resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace adopted in April 2016 by the United Nations (UN) Security Council and General Assembly (S/RES/2282; A/RES/70/262) marked a fundamental shift in the UN's understanding of peacebuilding as a critical element of preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict.

Meeting the complex challenges of today's world, such as COVID-19, is the great peacebuilding and development challenge which is in the hands of people within communities. They are often the first responders and bear the immediate impact of social, economic, political, and security consequences of crisis.

When peace is driven and led locally by the people and institutions within impacted communities, this process is commonly referred to as local peacebuilding. At the local level, the impact of crises is both the most visible and manageable. In times of crises, local peacebuilders and community leaders experience the immediate impacts. Due to their direct access to and knowledge of local contexts, they are best placed to react and adapt their approaches to the fast-changing environment which emerges as a result of crisis. Existing infrastructures for peace (I4Ps) at the local, national, and regional level should be dedicated to support their preventive and response action.

In Europe and Central Asia, some examples of local action include advancing peace education in partnership with national governments and through educational institutions, strengthening mediation capacities and building platforms for dialogue, preventing violent extremism and building social cohesion, advancing inclusive and representative participation of women and youth across all peace efforts, among others.

With the spread of COVID-19, locally-informed action has become even more important. In the context of fragile national and regional peace and reconciliation processes, pervasive corruption, limitations of the rule of law systems, weak economies, high levels of youth unemployment and the lack of information sharing between governments and people, local



peacebuilders work to advocate for adjusting the response to the pandemic going beyond the general approaches, promote peace education, organize information channels to tackle the spread of misinformation, and support community efforts to raise awareness and tackle violence in communities and homes.

This context demonstrates that, in adjusting and responding to the reality of peacebuilding in a climate of increasingly complex crisis, responses and programming need to be more nuanced and context-specific. COVID-19 challenge the conventional the concept of peace and highlights the importance of understanding peace from the perspective of the people, particularly of local communities. Deploying holistic (integrated peacebuilding-development) and inclusive approaches, multi-stakeholder partnerships could be built to attune to the varied needs of local communities.

It is against the foregoing background of the COVID-19 pandemic that a virtual dialogue will be organised by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to interrogate the challenges and opportunities of operationalising local peacebuilding initiatives post-COVID-19 pandemic in Europe and Central Asia. The pandemic presents a clear opportunity for identifying how infrastructures for peace can better support local peacebuilding action.

The dialogue will be held with a view to identifying policy gaps that need to be addressed to ensure that infrastructures for peace are capable of supporting local peacebuilding responses early and further supporting and advancing development gains and collating actionable recommendations for more consolidated action through regional, national and local action.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The overarching aim of the virtual dialogue is to unpack effective ways to advance capacities of infrastructures for peace post-COVID-19 to support local peacebuilding action.

Specifically, the dialogue will be organised to:

- Take stock of existing infrastructures for peace in Europe and Central Asia and reflect on the ways these infrastructures support local peacebuilding action;
- Facilitate a joint learning to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic on the operationalisation of infrastructures for peace;
- Collate actionable policy recommendations on the ways local peacebuilding action can be better supported post COVID-19.



## **Methodology**

The virtual dialogue will take place on 16 February 2021 | 12:00-14:00 UTC+1 | 13:00-15:00 UTC+2 | 14:00-16:00 UTC+3 | 17:00 – 19:00 UTC+6.

The online dialogue will not be recorded – the Chatham House rule will be applied. To support an off the record space for participants, the meeting invitation will require participants to use a password to access the Zoom discussion. All necessary information to join the virtual conversation will be shared at least two days before the meeting is convened.

The consultation will bring together local officials, experts from relevant regional organisations, the United Nations (UN), development/peace and security partners, local peacebuilders, including women and youth organisations, and other key actors engaged in peacebuilding and development.

The dialogue will be conducted in English (parallel interpretation in Russian will be available) and will last for approximately 2 hours with 4 breakout groups (one for each region: Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia).

Data collected from the sessions will contribute to a series of discussions organised by GPPAC and UNDP in all parts of the world and result in a policy document that will outline actionable recommendations for joint action.



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The Role of an Integrated Peacebuilding-Development Approach**  
*A dialogue for  
the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia*

*Agenda*

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12:00-14:00 UTC+1 | 13:00-15:00 UTC+2 | 14:00-16:00 UTC+3 | 17:00 – 19:00 UTC+6  
*Via Zoom Online Platform*

We encourage all participants to reflect on the questions below in advance and participate during the moderated discussion by using the “raise hand” option on Zoom and share via chat forum relevant resources to enrich the discussion.

*Moderated by: Ngozi Finette Unuigbo, Peacebuilding-Development Consultant, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)*

\*\*\*Please note that the time slots for each session are provided in UTC+3

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**14:00 - 14:30 Welcoming remarks**

*Remarks will be offered by: Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, and Victoria Carreras Lloveras, Interim Executive Director, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)*

This session will introduce the regional peacebuilding priorities of UNDP and GPPAC and provide an overview of infrastructures for peace that work to support these priorities. The session will also set the stage for the core theme of the dialogue – peacebuilding-development approaches to strengthening local peacebuilding post COVID-19.

*The welcoming remarks will address the following questions:*

- What are the key peacebuilding priorities in Europe and Central Asia? At what level are these priorities implemented?
- What are the key infrastructures for peace present in Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia to respond to COVID-19 and build peaceful and inclusive societies?



**12:25 – 13:25**

### **Unpacking the Action: Understanding the Opportunities and Needs for Local Infrastructures for Peace**

Four breakout sessions will provide a deeper understanding of local peacebuilding approaches in each region (Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Central Asia) and the ways such infrastructures could be better supported through targeted regional, national, and local action.

*The discussion will address the following questions:*

- What makes local peacebuilding effective? Who are the stakeholders engaged in the process? How do these stakeholders work together?
- What are the political, operational and other challenges that need to be addressed? What capacities are required?
- What roles can different stakeholders play to better support local peacebuilding? What capacities are needed both in the policy and implementation stages?

**13:25 – 13:50**

### **Local Peacebuilding and Infrastructures for Peace in Context: Lessons Learned and Next Steps Post COVID-19**

The facilitators of each breakout group will report back the key recommendations that came from the discussion for the participants to reflect on. Together, participants will consider how these recommendations can become operational and implemented at the regional, national, and local levels.

*The discussion will address the following questions:*

- What are some of the ways that infrastructures for peace could be strengthened to support local peacebuilding? What other partnerships are needed?
- What are the practical steps that civil society, UNDP and other stakeholders undertake to operationalise these recommendations?

**13:50 - 14:00**

### **Closing remarks**

Jonathan Zigrand, Regional Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Specialist, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub.

Victoria Carreras Lloveras, *Interim Executive Director, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)*