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Annual Report 2019: Coordinated Action on Localising SDG16+ in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings



Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS)

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2019 Annual Report of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS): a highly fruitful year in terms of the work that we have been able to achieve. First of all, CSPPS would therefore like to sincerely thank all of our partners worldwide, and in particular, EU/DEVCO, French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose grants allowed us to be unprecedentedly effective, as well as Stichting Cordaid, for their continuous commitment and hosting of the Platform's Secretariat over the past years.

2019 has seen many highlights and changes for the Platform, and this report brings to life a number of them. Strengthening the voice and capacity of society through coordinated civil society action is at CSPPS's core and is part of the Platform's engagement in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) and related policy processes.

In 2019, members of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding have gathered their learnings, integrated these experiences and highlighted key achievements which are recorded to support the creation of this report. I am grateful for the valuable contributions received from our members and partners during many of last year's highlights: the inclusive participation of our members at the High-Level Political Forum 2019 and the Annual Meeting in Addis Ababa, to name a few. CSPPS is honoured to showcase these stories integrated within this report on the work and activities of the Platform in 2019.

2019 was the first year of the 2-year Operating Grant awarded to us by EU/DEVCO, making it a special year for CSPPS. The activities of the Civil Society Platform in 2019 were made possible through the funding support made available by the EU/DEVCO,

MEAE and Cordaid (through its Strategic Partnership with Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands).

Since 2012, coordination of CSPPS and hosting of its Secretariat has been managed by Cordaid, one of the leading NGOs in The Netherlands. Cordaid has achieved recognition of its convening role and benefitted from context exchange in relevant international fora and direct engagement with other IDPS stakeholders. In countries where the five-year Strategic Partnership (SP) between Cordaid and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands is implemented, efforts are made to ensure optimisation of linkages and synergy between strategic approaches and activities, and to ensure cross fertilisation of experiences and joint learning. Alignment and synergy will also be developed with the country-level activities of other CSPPS member organisations.

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding would like to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation for the generous support received and looks forward to continued collaboration with all CSPPS partners in context of the International Dialogue and beyond.

Remaining committed to our core mission to strengthen the voice and capacity of civil society in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes, the Platform and its membership seek to work towards crisis prevention and a truly sustainable peace and development across the globe. We feel confident to be able to do so with your continued support and partnership over the following years.

Peter van Sluijs



Coordinator of the CSPPS Secretariat and member of the CSPPS Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2019 was crucial for CSPPS, as it marked the first year of the 2-year long operational grant attentive provided by the European Commission, EU/DEVCO (A5).

Country-level support is a CSPPS priority, it enables our membership to pursue strategic activities to further develop and strengthen the voice and agency of civil society at either the national, regional and/or global level. In 2019, CSPPS was able to provide support to ten project proposals from Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Togo, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Yemen.

CSPPS is keen in liaising with civil society actors in countries not yet linked to the Platform or countries where the peacebuilding and statebuilding (PB/SB) agenda so far has received limited traction. In 2019, the Platform increased its membership capacity to Yemen, Papua New Guinea, Denmark, Libya, Cameroon, Uganda and India.

The work of the Platform related to amplifying the voice of civil society was best illustrated in 2019 by several outreach activities organised by CSPPS. These focused on raising the voice of civil society vis-à-vis the IDPS, the 2030 Agenda and related policy processes, both at the country and international level. This year, the Platform participated, co-organised and/or facilitated key sessions, round table meetings and side-event debates in events such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the SDG16+ Forum, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2019, the UNOCA retreat, the Rome SDG16 Conference, the Academic Council of the United Nations (ACUNS) Annual Conference, the Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development, the SIPRI Forum on Peace and Development and many other crucial meetings and conferences within the field of peacebuilding. These activities were often jointly organised in partnership with key

partners like UNDP, WFUNA, TAP Network, GPPAC, Saferworld and/or staged in context of the IDPS partnership.

CSPPS identified the meaningful and inclusive participation of civil society in Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) and the process leading up to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019 as strategic opportunities to support and amplify the voice of civil society in the countries in which the Platform is present and which went for review in 2019. The 'Ready for Review' project (co-funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) enabled CSPPS to ensure – on different levels depending on the political context – the meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of national and local CSOs (including through targeted outreach to involve youth- and women-led organisations) during the consultation and validation stages of the VNR process in Côte d'Ivoire, CAR, Chad, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste through nationally-held orientation and sensitisation workshops and capacity development workshops. Besides this, and in context of the partnership with TAP, the Platform co-organised workshops in Nigeria and Rwanda.

At the HLPF in July, CSPPS (co-)organised several side events (including the Voices of SDG16+ event), bringing together representatives of each country who worked on the VNR process to speak, share and contribute to the discussion around SDG16+. In the context of the VNR and HLPF in 2019, CSPPS partnered with the TAP Network, Saferworld, IPI and eleven other CSOs in the "Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action" video campaign. The campaign asked people and partners around the world to share how they are contributing to advancing SDG16+ in their own community or country. "Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action" asked

people to do this through short videos of their work in action, which were showcased on a dedicated web platform in the lead-up to the HLPF. The best videos were showcased at the UN HLPF event “Voices of SDG16+ Policy Forum: Public Event. Exploring Voices campaign, civil society role in Goal 16” on 11 July. Selected candidates from civil society were sponsored to attend the event in person.

CSPPS continued in 2019, its active participation and engagement with fragility assessment processes as they were planned and implemented in selected G7+ countries. The incorporation of New Deal principles and tools (such as fragility assessments) in 2030 Agenda-related policy processes, as well as in conflict prevention and sustaining peace agendas in general, is a valuable contribution to such processes and can subsequently inform national development planning processes.

With the new and consolidated IDPS Peace Vision and strategy document in place, the Platform has worked on the operationalisation of its thematic priorities – namely national cohesion, gender equality, and the peace-promoting private sector – which beckoned strategic reflection, positioning and planning from IDPS constituencies. CSPPS has initiated an internal discussion on this among its Platform members to identify and delineate civil society’s potential role and contribution to start implementing the 2019-2021 IDPS’ Peace Vision in 2020.

Since 2012, coordination of CSPPS and hosting of its Secretariat has been managed by Cordaid, one of the leading peacebuilding CSOs in The Netherlands. Cordaid has achieved recognition for its convening role and benefitted from context exchange in

relevant international fora and direct engagement with other IDPS stakeholders. In countries where the five-year Strategic Partnership (SP) between Cordaid and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands is implemented, efforts are made to ensure optimisation of linkages and synergy between strategic approaches and activities, as well as to ensure cross fertilisation of experiences and joint learning. Alignment and synergy will also be developed with the country-level activities of other CSPPS member organisations.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAPRD	Asian Academy for Peace, Research and Development
AU	African Union
ACUNS	Academic Council on the United Nations System
CAR	Central African Republic
CAP	Civil Alliance for Peace
CG	CSPPS Core Group
CEPSEDA	Centre for Peace, Security and Development Studies in Africa
CSDEA	Sustainable Development and Education in Africa
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
Cordaid	Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Assistance
CPDE	CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPPS	Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
CT	(CSPPS) Country Team
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEVCO	The European Commission's DG International Cooperation & Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	(CSPPS) Executive Committee
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EDD	European Development Days
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FCV	Fragility, Conflict and Violence
FNDP	Forum National sur la Dette et la Pauvreté
FPO	(CSPPS) Focal Point Organisation
GERDDES	Group for Studies and Research on Democracy and Economic and Social Development in Africa
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
g7+	Governments from fragile and conflict-affected countries
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
IDLO	International Development Law Organisation
IDPS	International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
INCAF	OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPI	International Peace Institute
MEAE	French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ND	New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODDI	Organisation pour le Développement Durable et Intégrée de la Guinée
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDF	Political Development Forum
PNG	Papua New Guinea

PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
R4R	Ready for Review
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SGM	IDPS Steering Group Meeting
SOMO	Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
SP	Strategic Partnership
TAP	Transparency, Accountability and Participation Network
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
UNOY	United Network of Young Peacebuilders
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFUNA	World Federation of United Nations Associations
WG	Working Group
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security
YWBOD	Youth Without Borders Organisation for Development

About CSPPS

WHO WE ARE

- **OUR IDENTITY:** The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a member-led international network composed of civil society actors, practitioners, experts and academics from the Global South and Global North who work together on conflict and crisis prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding in over 27 fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCAS).
- **OUR VISION:** At CSPPS, we strive for international collaboration that brings sustainable peace and inclusive development for all.

WHAT WE DO

- **OUR MISSION:** Our mission is to strengthen the voice and capacity of society to engage in and influence peacebuilding and statebuilding as a critical contribution to crisis prevention and sustainable peace and development for all.
- **OUR THEORY OF CHANGE:** By shaping and influencing global and national structures to address sources of destructive conflict and build resilience, we ensure that countries and their citizens are less likely to resort to violent conflict, because they gain alternative, peaceful means to

manage grievances and improve their lives.

▪ **OUR OBJECTIVES:**

- Strengthen and broaden civil society engagement and inclusion in peacebuilding, statebuilding and crisis prevention.
- Influence prevention, peacebuilding, statebuilding and development policies with peacebuilding values.
- Shape and infuse the International Dialogue, the SDGs and humanitarian processes with peacebuilding values.

OUR STRATEGY

- **NETWORK:** We support local and national CSOs based in fragile settings that wish to work together on a common agenda and form a national team or platform to organise themselves under the CSPPS banner to gain in coordination, coherence, efficiency, and visibility.
- **AMPLIFY:** We work to amplify the voice of civil society – via our members and through CSPPS Country Teams (CT) – by giving it the means and resources needed to build up capacity to be able to identify, participate and contribute as full-fledged actors to national strategic policymaking and implementation processes.
- **LOBBY:** We provide opportunities for our members to attend key strategic international fora and events to represent the civil society perspective of the Platform and to voice the needs and aspirations of their national constituencies and local populations.

WHY WE STAND OUT

- **A FOCUS ON CIVIL SOCIETY:** Over the last few years, peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives and programmes have increasingly given support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), thus echoing the growing importance of these groups in development cooperation, as well as recognising their role in both the domestic and international arenas. This is a trend particularly present in societies transitioning from warring to peaceful, just and inclusive societies which we fully support and of which we are a part.
- **LINKING THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH:** CSPPS is a global network of civil society organisations, as well as individual practitioners, experts and academics from both the Global South and the Global North. We strive to foster ongoing dialogue, joint learning and cross-fertilization between the two spheres on emerging trends and key policy issues.
- **PART OF THE UNIQUE IDPS STRUCTURE:** CSPPS is part of a larger architecture called the [International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding \(IDPS\)](#). What is unique about the International Dialogue in today's peacebuilding environment is its tripartite structure which gathers

around the table government representatives from fragile states, international donors and civil society. The International Dialogue provides a formalised space within which civil society can voice its concerns on crucial aspects and topical issues of the peacebuilding agenda.

- **TAKING ACTION ON SDG16+ BASED ON NEW DEAL PRINCIPLES:** CSPPS tackles the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the prism of SDG16+](#). Specifically, on grounding the SDG16+ into local context by meaningful consultations with local civil society and authorities to determine priority areas for action, and localising SDG16+ with governments: catalysing more inclusive, national development processes and programming aligned with SDG16+ targets by enabling continuous multi-stakeholder dialogues. The [New Deal principles](#) (Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals, FOCUS and TRUST)¹ guide the actions of CSPPS members on SDG16+. It is worth noting that a number of European Ministries of Foreign Affairs have made reference to the New Deal principles in their guiding national policy documents (e.g. France) or have incorporated the principles into their international development aid policy approaches (e.g. Germany and Switzerland).

¹ The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States is a landmark global policy agreement. Through the New Deal, development partners committed to supporting nationally-owned and led development plans and greater aid effectiveness in fragile situations (the TRUST principles), and G7+

governments committed to inclusive planning processes, grounded in context (the FOCUS principles). Both parties committed to pursuing the five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs): legitimate politics, justice, security, revenue and services and economic foundations.

HOW THE PLATFORM WORKS

WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS – or “the Platform”) coordinates and supports civil society participation in **the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS)**. The IDPS is an inclusive partnership that facilitates joint learning, action and mutual accountability for inclusive and effective peacebuilding between donors (INCAF), governments from fragile and conflict-affected countries (g7+), and civil society (CSPPS). The International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) is a network of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and key multilateral agencies working in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The g7+ is a voluntary association of countries that are, or have been, affected by conflict and are now transitioning to the next stage of development.

This inclusive tripartite partnership brokered the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The New Deal (ND) aims to end piecemeal solutions by promoting a comprehensive framework for coherent action to help countries transition out of fragility and conflict. At the heart of the New Deal lie the New Deal principles (PSGs, FOCUS and TRUST), which guide the actions of the three IDPS constituencies to tackle the challenges and deliver on the goals related to SDG16+.

In 2019, the IDPS mandate was translated into a revised and recalibrated strategy: the IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision. CSPPS has actively contributed to the finalisation of this IDPS Peace Vision, which articulates how the partnership and its constituencies will strengthen collective action on international, regional and local peacebuilding.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

At its core, our network hosts coalitions of CSOs within g7+ countries and beyond that

are impacted by manifestation of fragility, conflict and violence. At the country-level, these coalitions are coordinated by a **Focal Point Organisation (FPO)**. As part of CSPPS, FPOs convene local civil society coalitions into CSPPS **Country Teams (CTs)**, and thereby provide analysis, conduct advocacy work, coordinate activities (e.g. capacity building, awareness raising and media outreach) in their home countries, and help civil society actors participate in meetings with both governmental as well as donor stakeholders.

The **Core Group (CG)** is the main membership-forum within the CSPPS where engagement and leadership in peacebuilding processes are discussed and decided. The CG is made up of designated representatives from FPOs, CSPPS members and international experts.

Functioning as a subset of the membership, the elected **Executive Committee (EC)**, among other responsibilities, assists the Secretariat in day-to-day decision-making and provides guidance and advice on the Platform’s issues and priorities, as well as reviews the use of the CSPPS budget.

The **Secretariat** facilitates the functioning of the Core Group and the Executive Committee and the participation of civil society participation in IDPS events. It furthermore generates and disseminates information about our members’ activities.

Together the Core Group, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat work to amplify the voice of CS, to strengthen the network of CS working on peacebuilding, and to ensure that CSOs are included and participate as principal actors and agents of change – rather than merely as recipients or evaluators – within the IDPS and related peacebuilding policy-making arenas. Our goal is to ensure that civil society is broadly and meaningfully represented in nationally owned processes.

CSPPS IN THE WORLD IN 2019

By the end of 2019, CSPPS had established a presence in 19 out of 20 g7+ countries either in the form of Country Teams, Focal Point Organisations or contact persons. These countries are Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Yemen.

In addition, CSPPS is present in eight non-g7+ countries which present similar dimensions of fragility: Cameroon, India, Kenya, Libya, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zimbabwe.

Finally, the Platform comprises INGO members based in eight Northern countries, namely Australia (Peacifica), Belgium (SFCG), Denmark (RIKO, Conductive Space for Peace), Germany (FriEnt and World Vision Intl), the United Kingdom (Integrity Action, Conciliation Resources, Saferworld, International Alert), the United States (Alliance for Peacebuilding, CDA, International Budget Partnership, SFCG, Interpeace, Switzerland (swisspeace), and the Netherlands (Cordaid, GPPAC, Oxfam Novib, UNOY, SEMA).

The CSPPS entire membership to date has over 800 civil society organizations under its structure.

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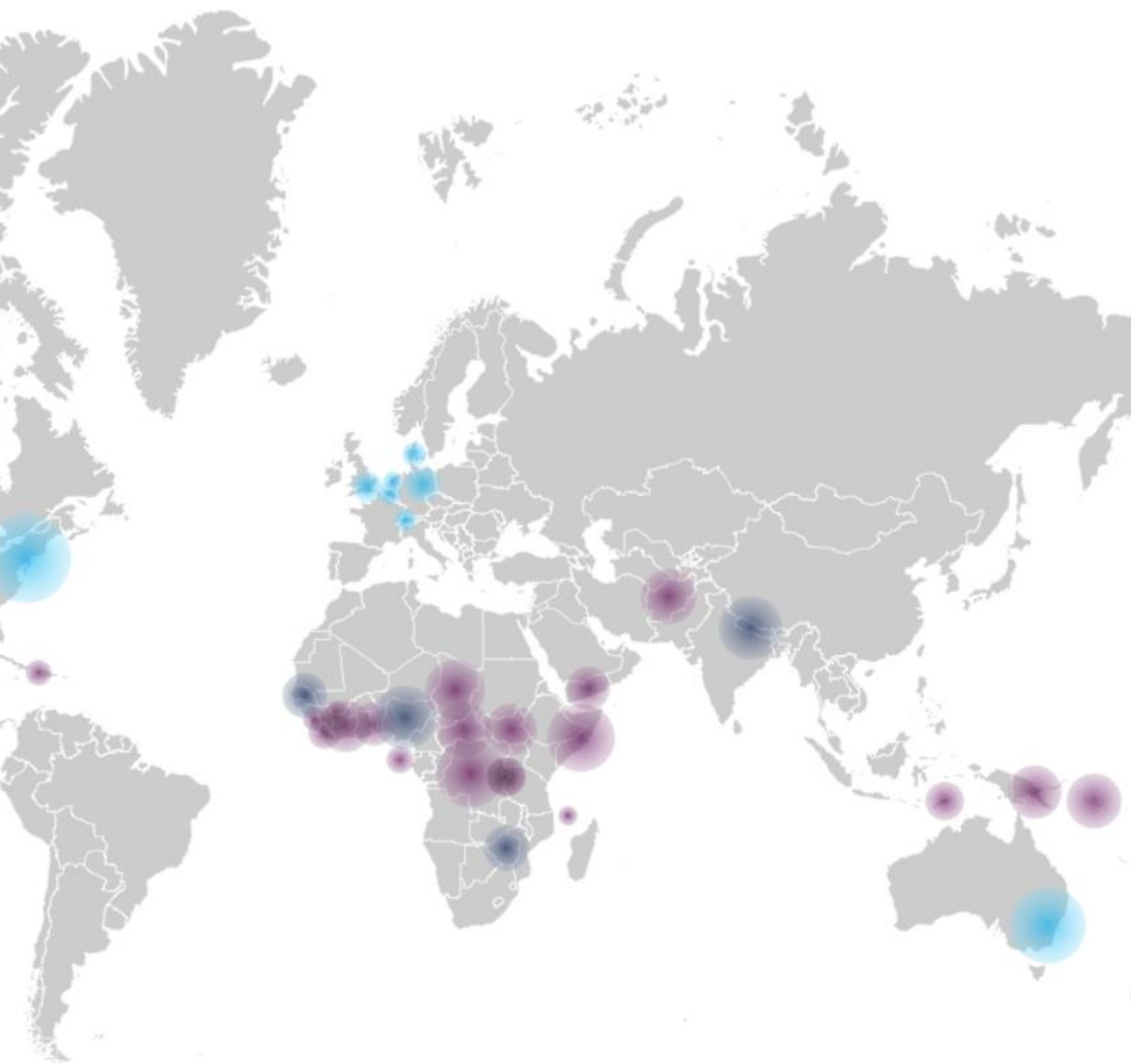
**g7+ CSO Country
Teams**

8

**Non-g7+ CSO
Country Teams
and Individual
Contacts**

20

**20 INGO members
based in 8 partner
countries**



INTRODUCTION

In 2019, CSPPS has steadily consolidated and professionalised its network. The support given by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (EU/DEVCO) has enabled it to grow, creating greater inclusiveness and scale to achieve stated goals. The 2019 Annual Report describes the first year of the implementation of the operating grant concluded by EU/DEVCO A5 and Cordaid (on behalf of CSPPS). The report details information about and analysis of the implementation of activities for 2019, and also serves as a baseline for the activities planned for the remaining period of the second year of the operating grant in 2020.

The COVID-19 crisis is generating a complex system of measures and restrictions in many of the countries where the Platform is active. COVID-19 has direct implications for our work plan and other activities that were foreseen in relation to in-country support activities. This is prompting to consider alternative options in order to pursue this line of work, and to bring the network and its members together. At the same time, this lack of clarity does generate a certain level of uncertainty regarding our ability as a Platform to support our local members to continue their work or to adjust, adapt or repurpose some of the foreseen activities. Fact is that many context measures taken are disrupting the ability to implement planned activities and/or to support local responses to the unfolding pandemic.

The European Commission's support enabled CSPPS to sustain and expand upon its work, ensuring that civil society contributes meaningfully to relevant national and international peacebuilding and statebuilding policy processes, to partner with the EU globally and with EU delegations in fragile states to drive implementation of the EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society, and to liaise and work with EU delegations to safeguard and solidify the role of civil society in conflict prevention and sustaining peace at country level.

Our activities were implemented flexibly, responding to new challenges, opportunities and ideas as they emerged, while still striving to advance our existing plans and objectives.

NETWORK

Coordination of concerted civil society action in the context of the IDPS and related policy domains

Over the course of 2019, CSPPS has striven to fulfil our Network Objective – which gets at the heart of what the Platform is about in a variety of ways - from renovating internal mechanisms to enabling Country Teams to carry out targeted projects. These disparate activities are linked in particular by our commitment to strengthen civil societies at the national and international levels in two ways. Firstly, by enhancing in-country capacity and coordination through our Focal Points and Country Teams. Secondly, by jointly advocating for an inclusive, whole-of-society approach to peacebuilding at international fora from the IDPS to the HLPF.

Among our main activities under this Strategic Objective, we have facilitated 10 projects in 10 countries aimed at building peace in accordance with IDPS/New Deal principles and SDG16+, which moreover enhance the capacities, experience, and convening power of our Country Teams. We have enabled numerous country Focal Points and their colleagues to participate in international trainings and debates, and we have served as a mechanism for the exchange of expertise and best practice among civil society activists from different countries who would otherwise operate in parallel rather than in concert.

We have moreover established a presence in a number of new countries, namely Cameroon, Papua New Guinea, Libya, and Uganda. Additionally, we have intensified our presence in Togo and in Yemen. Lastly, aspects of our internal administration to improve communication and coordination across the Platform have also been revamped.

A new CSPPS Country team was formed in Togo!



An [opportunity for local and national Togolese civil society working on peace, security and development issues](#) arose. Since Togo's

accession to the g7+ group and, thereby, to the New Deal principles, Togolese CSOs had first organised themselves a few years ago to set up a Country Team led by a Focal Point. This to ensure tripartite liaison between the Togolese government, Togolese CSOs and CSPPS.

However, this first CT experience did not yield sustained results. Weak organisational capacity and socio-political events that occurred in 2017 rendered the team non-operational. It was therefore necessary to organise a national meeting to strengthen capacities and set up a new Country Team, with the appointment of a CSPPS Focal Point, among other key positions. These were to interact with the other CSOs on the one hand and support the government in the

implementation of its flagship project, the National Development Plan (NDP), on the other. The advent of the Togolese government's NDP 2018-2022, the work of the CSO Committee on the SDGs, and the launch of the IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision together provided an opportunity for Togolese civil society working on peace, security and development issues to join forces through a single CSPPS CT. This enabled the team to gain in strength, coherence, effectiveness and to establish its legitimacy to initiate a productive working relationship with the government.

The CSPPS Secretariat and the DR Congo CSPPS Focal Point facilitated a capacity-building workshop on the linkages between Togo's NDP, the 2030 Agenda and the New Deal principles. Such workshops reflect the added value of the CSPPS, enabling Platform members to benefit from the expertise of other members. We furthermore helped to put the new CT on the radar of the government (the g7+ focal point and the Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation, f.e.), as well as local delegations of Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs), EU delegations and UN actors through a series of courtesy visits.

In 2019, reaching out to civil society in countries where CSPPS is not as of yet present to catalyse, initiate and support coalition-building trajectories was a priority!

We have striven to establish CSPPS in-country Focal Points and where possible engage a broader group of civil society actors around the agendas of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in FCAS. In relation to the 2030 Agenda, CSPPS' focus has been on using ND principles as a prism and lens through which we embark upon and influence SDG localisation activities, and ensure that inclusive and participatory consultation processes are rolled out. In order to support

the formation of a broad-based coalition of civil society actors that could potentially liaise with the Platform, CSPPS was interested in liaising with civil society actors in countries not yet linked to the Platform or with countries where the peacebuilding and statebuilding agenda has received limited traction. Since January 2019, CSPPS had been reaching out to contacts to establish linkages with civil society networks and/or organisations working on issues of peacebuilding and statebuilding.

As a result of these efforts, and following the launch of the new CSPPS website, the Platform received an encouraging number of new membership requests. In 2019, the following nine new organisations joined the Platform: The Political Development Forum (Yemen), PEACE Foundation Melanesia (Papua New Guinea), SEMA (Uganda), The Peacebuilding Project (India), Association Rayons de Soleil (Cameroon), Conducive Space for Peace (Denmark), and Tamazight Women's Movement (Libya). Through these additions to the Platform – insofar as the Secretariat retains sufficient capacity for the effective provision of support – CSPPS has been enabled to strengthen existing Country Teams and to seek the establishment of new ones in countries where our new members are our first in-country points of contact.

63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding side-event



On the margins of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in New York in March 2019, CSPPS members and the Secretariat participated in an IDPS-led side-event highlighting “[the centrality of gender equality to national cohesion and sustainable peacebuilding](#)” to further the delivery of SDG16+ at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN. It included discussions on three key thematic priorities identified in the IDPS Peace Vision: enhancing national cohesion; advancing gender equality and the Women, Peace and Security agenda; and supporting a peace-promoting private sector in fragile and conflict-affected states.

The speakers reflected on the progress, challenges and opportunities in relation to gender equality, peacebuilding and national cohesion. The discussion included contributions from civil society representatives of conflict-affected countries which are part of CSPPS.

Since 2011, CSPPS has been advocating for solutions to appropriate and focus attention for having the Women, Peace and Security issues and lenses in the context of the IDPS. The meeting has, among other things, helped sensitise the Secretariat to topical issues relating to gender equality, which is both part of SDG16+ and now an element of the IDPS Peace Vision.

CSPPS calls for the meaningful participation of women and representing institutions in the design and implementation of IDPS work plan activities and supporting efforts to strengthen all IDPS stakeholders’ capacities to integrate gender into peacebuilding and statebuilding processes further.

IDPS 2019–2021 Peace Vision



The IDPS constituencies came together at the Steering Group meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, to finalise and endorse the [IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision](#). CSPPS was represented at the meeting by four CSO representatives from Nigeria, Germany, South Africa and Guinea-Bissau, as well as by one member of the Secretariat.

Through the collective efforts of each of the IDPS constituencies to strengthen peacebuilding, statebuilding and the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas, members of the IDPS committed to making progress on the thematic priorities of the IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision in conflict-affected situations: enhancing national cohesion; advancing gender equality and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda; and supporting a peace-promoting private sector.

Subsequently in July, the IDPS Secretariat hosted a ministerial meeting at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN to officially launch the IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision during a side-event at the 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF). The Peace Vision is a jointly developed framework that builds on existing international agendas including Women, Peace and Security, Youth, Peace and Security, and Sustaining Peace, while also building on

the United Nations/World Bank's Pathways for Peace report.

The side-event successfully brought together the three IDPS constituencies as part of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process on SDG16. The Chair of the CSPPS Executive Committee, Theophilus Ekpon of Nigeria, spoke on a three-person panel at the launch event, along with a representative from the OECD as well as the CAR Minister of Economy.



“CSPPS seeks to constructively contribute to the development of common IDPS statements on key global and normative issues that benefit from a partnership-wide position”

This Peace Vision defines how the IDPS will address peacebuilding, statebuilding and conflict prevention while continuing to make progress on SDG16+ for the next two years. IDPS constituencies, including CSPPS, will work collectively to implement three different thematic priorities in conflict-affected settings. Cooperation on these priorities, and on the overall vision, will contribute to the expansion of civil society's scope of action and reaffirm the principles enshrined in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

The IDPS provides a recognised and formalised space to address these issues, giving shape and form to our contribution to the Peace Vision. To this end, as a first step, the CSPPS Secretariat set up three Working Groups in the run-up to our 2019 Annual Meeting in Addis Ababa, each consisting of several members from both local CSOs as well as INGO members of the Platform. This served to

prepare for the discussions in Addis Ababa, to give the opportunity to Northern and Southern CSPPS members to share perspectives on how they want to give shape and form to civil society's contribution to the implementation of the IDPS Peace Vision.

The Working Groups were an opportunity for our members to help shape the CSPPS position on this agenda by bringing their experience and points of view to the debate, to identify links with the CSPPS 2018-2021 Work Plan, but also to participate in the elaboration of the CSPPS Annual Meeting 2019 in December. Each Working Group had the opportunity to present its preliminary results and conclusions to the rest of the CSPPS members and partners for discussion and subsequent endorsement of follow-up plans.

The objectives behind the Working Groups were met. First, we developed a common understanding of how CSPPS foresees the implementation of the IDPS Peace Vision and on which aspects the Platform's contribution could be particularly relevant. Secondly, we identified and captured the Platform's common understandings, diverging opinions, and created preliminary recommendations on these thematic priorities to lay the groundwork to start shaping a CSPPS position on these topics for future civil society action in 2020 and beyond.

MEMBER CASE STORY



The IDPS Steering Committee Meeting – IDPS 2019–21 Peace Vision

28 June 2019, Lisbon

By Udé Faty (Voz di Paz, Guinea-Bissau)

Event Description

On 28 June 2019, the IDPS Steering Committee meeting welcomed the IDPS 2019–21 Peace Vision and committed the three IDPS constituencies (INCAF, g7+ and CSPPS) to collaborate for the realisation of its objectives. The Peace Vision provides a clear framework for delivering SDG16+ and the Sustaining Peace Agenda in conflict-affected settings. It includes ten IDPS-wide commitments to furthering the three thematic priorities in the Vision. In this meeting, each of the three IDPS constituencies put forward constituency commitments at the Steering Group meeting. Representing the Platform was Udé Faty, Guinea-Bissau focal point and member of the Executive Committee.

Testimony

The meeting had remarkable and special moments that reinforced the spirit of the tripartite synergy of the IDPS constituent institutions and showed the importance of this structure for the betterment of fragile states and countries in particular. Together, we face the challenges for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals that the world imposes for the improvement of the living conditions of communities. As part of this joint journey, the 3 constituent parts supported and committed themselves to the return of what they called the 2019–2021 IDPS Peace Vision, which was defined in December 2018.

The first significant moment was the parallel CSO sharing meeting, where I got to know and interact other members of the Platform. This prior interaction, for me, was an important lesson in organisation, planning and coordination. It is also a moment of direct and deeper exchange, where we could share each other's expectations, strategies and actions.

The IDPS meeting, was a moment of wider sharing with other institutions, reinforcing the exchanges of experience and learning, most essentially on the implementation mechanisms of 2030 Agenda based on the New Deal principles. Also, the testimony of government representatives and donors about their respective institutions, ambitions and engagement stands out, as it reveals the shared ambition as well as the need for different spheres to move together towards the achievement of common goals.

I was particularly interested in the UNDP sharing their insights on the SDGs through the New Deal principles of participation and inclusion for all. This communication was based on the meeting in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in which I was able to participate as a focal point of a country that carried out the fragility assessment and shared its experience in joint communication with a government focal point.

The actions that different IDPS members are carrying out were also shared by the respective structures, and the important engagement and commitment of the CSPPS as a whole clearly emerged. Also the need to further strengthen exchanges between institutions became apparent, as the benefits of local strengthening of institutions and the sense of more inclusive societies became apparent. However, I believe that the exchanges could be even stronger if country team members could participate in all the days of the meeting and have a moment of exchange, country by country.

The meeting, at all times, awakened in me the will to work more and more on peacebuilding, while at the same time strengthening my confidence that I can, as a member of a CSO, play an important role in aiming for the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG16+. The discussion on the three pillars of the IDPS vision - national cohesion, gender equality and the private sector - was particularly interesting, and the sharing of commitment by each structure or constituent part highlights the importance of each aspect.

However, the meeting provoked a deep reflection on the coordination between civil society and government, and how together we can strengthen this coordination in order to realise a permanent dialogue space in the country between CSOs and government with assistance from UNDP. The realisation of this dialogue would meet the sense of a more inclusive and participatory governance: a prelude to a strong state and a lasting peace.

“The meeting, at all times, awakened in me the will to work more and more on peace-building while at the same time strengthening my confidence that I can, as a member of a CSO, play an important role in reaching out to SDGs, especially SDG16+.”

Nonetheless, for that to happen effectively, the government, as the first holder of the New Deal initiative and local policies, must further raise its level of engagement in the process by creating instruments that facilitate the full participation of civil society in the governance exercise.

AMPLIFY

Build capacity to amplify the voice of civil society in fragile and conflict-affected contexts

In 2019, CSPPS's second strategic objective "Amplify" has revolved around amplifying the capacities of civil societies to influence peacebuilding processes at all levels, from local governments to international fora.

Over the course of 2019, we have sought to mainstream the aims of this objective throughout all of our activities in order to ensure that, in everything that we do with our CSO members, we provide tools, know-how and entry points to strengthen their hand in ensuring that peace is built on an inclusive basis.

Worth highlighting under this objective are moreover the 10 projects we have facilitated in 10 countries, as well as a new research report produced in partnership with a subset of our members, honing in on engagement with the private sector in pursuit of peace, a thematic priority under the IDPS Peace Vision 2019-21.

Targeted capacity-building trajectories are devised and successfully implemented

CSPPS sought to provide advice and support to select country-level efforts to effectively participate in and influence peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. In 2019, the CSPPS Secretariat launched two calls for proposals to enable our membership to pursue strategic activities to further strengthen civil society at the national, regional, international and/or global levels.

A total of 10 projects were provided with support in 8 countries: Fontaine ISOKO (Burundi), ODDI (Guinea), CSDEA (Nigeria), PEACE Foundation Melanesia (Papua New Guinea), Floraison (Togo), War Trust for Children (Sierra Leone), AAPRD (Nepal), and YWBOD (Yemen).

This support has helped civil society to organise consultations and discussions to

collect citizen perspectives on key processes in their countries, and channel these perspectives to the level of the IDPS and other relevant international policy-making fora. In addition to the specific results that each project has achieved, the very act of conducting projects among multiple CSOs – led entirely by local organisations – has helped consolidate and strengthen civil societies in the countries where CSPPS-supported projects have taken place, with long-term coordination benefits. The projects were as follows:

(A) In [Burundi](#), the project "Revitalization of the Working Group on the New Deal and Women, Peace and Security" issues was implemented. This project consisted of reinvigorating the working group on the New Deal and on the issues of Women, Peace and Security, and to strengthen Burundian CSOs with a view on advocacy and national ownership of development commitments.



A national workshop on the New Deal and the SDGs, followed by a panel on the New Deal, was attended by representatives of several ministries. This was an opportunity to present the achievements of the Burundian CT and to recall the linkages between global programmes. At the same time, the links between the NDPs and the New Deal were also highlighted. CSO members of the CT made recommendations for the follow-up of the ND and the SDGs. This project has served to enhance our Burundian FP's ability to convene pertinent domestic CSOs, thereby strengthening civil society in Burundi as a whole by focusing significant elements on a common agenda. It also aided in fostering productive relationships between CSOs and segments of the government and the media.

(B) The [Guinean](#) CSPPS Country Team held a national workshop in Mamou to build CSO capacities and capitalise on the New Deal and the SDGs for their domestic, fragile context. The realisation of the national workshop made it possible to strengthen the capacities of civil society actors and to capitalise on the achievements of the New Deal and the SDGs in the Republic of Guinea.

Moreover, as a result of the reinvigoration of the Guinean CT, a second project was supported in 2019 in follow up of the previous one, titled "Capacitating civil society activists and elected municipal executives on mediation as a means of conflict prevention, resolution and community development in the

Republic of Guinea". Given the current context characterized by a tense political climate, this project sought to be a national response of civil society in its role of monitoring, early warning, prevention and conflict resolution with structured activities in the capitals of administrative regions and sub-regions. It helped transform conflicts into potential opportunities for sustainable development and peaceful coexistence.

(C) In [Nepal](#), the CSPPS Country Team implemented a project which carried out conflict analysis to persuade civil society organisations to design peacebuilding and statebuilding programs. Supporting Nepalese peacebuilding NGOs contributed and helped the government in mitigating and/or transforming the potential conflict that was analysed to arise during the course of implementation of the new political system with the appropriate, strategic approach in Nepal. Also, the project broadened the civil society coalition in Nepal around ND/SDG implementation, facilitating concerted, and therefore more effective, action towards building sustainable peace.



Furthermore, a team of researchers completed the planned conflict analysis, having conducted key informant interviews with government officials at the federal, provincial and local levels, as well as with NGO representatives. The published report has been circulated among officials at all levels of governments, CSOs and pertinent international actors.

(D) In [Nigeria](#), the CSPPS CT ran various activities revolving around the education and mobilisation of various actors, including the government, civil society ([including youth groups](#)) and donors, to work towards the implementation of the IDPS principles and New Deal in anticipation of Nigeria's prospective membership of the G7+, and of the IDPS thereby. Another aim was to explore how the IDPS, New Deal, and UNSC Resolution 2250 can support the implementation of SDG16 in a sustainable manner, which was very timely seeing as Nigeria is undergoing its VNR in 2020.



(E) For [Yemen](#), the project “Yemenis' Peace Voice Supporting and Engaging CS Coalition in Supporting Peace” was implemented by the Civil Alliance for Peace (CAP), a newly established coalition of 11 reputed Yemeni CSOs, including CSPPS member Youth Without Borders Organisation for Development (YWBOD). The project set out to effectively and comprehensively strategize to adapt international frameworks to the local conditions in Yemen to support the peace process there. It contributed to enhancing the CAP to work strategically in terms of influencing prevention, peacebuilding, statebuilding and development policies in Yemen.

As part of the project, a series of 3 videos was produced, called “A Case for Yemen”, each with their own topics. The first was called “From protection to conflict prevention in the world's worst humanitarian crisis”, focusing on the importance of prevention, not just

reaction. The second was called “Development programs as intervention”, about development and resilience. And the final video, titled “The Triple Nexus: a better alternative than Humanitarian Response”, hones in on the interlinkages between peace, humanitarian and development-oriented action. Three weeks after the series' release, the campaign had reached close to 80,000 people and more than 5,000 people have actively engaged in the campaign. Watch the videos on the [CSPPS website](#)!

(F) National cohesion, one of the IDPS thematic priorities, was the focus of the project run by Sierra Leone War Trust for Children in [Sierra Leone](#). It focused on advancing a clear vision, strategic priorities as well as policy and practice recommendations about cohesion, and how it can both rely upon and advance the 2030 Agenda implementation and New Deal principles. The implementation significantly contributed to deepening the discussion around strengthening national cohesion in Sierra Leone especially within the current political context. Discussions centred on building inclusive political institutions, and on redefining the domestic social contract to promote inclusivity, shared prosperity, and peace thereby.



MEMBER CASE STORY



Yemenis' Peace Voice Supporting and Engaging CS Coalition in Supporting Peace

December 2019, Yemen.

By Maged Sultan (YWBOD)

Project Description

Targeting a national-CSOs coalition called the Civil Alliance for Peace (CAP), constituted of 11 reputed Yemeni civil society organisations, including YWBOD, the project ensured that the strategic peacebuilding pathway of this coalition and its performance on the ground were improved. The project developed and enabled a strategic plan for CAP, as a national CS-Coalition, to work on peacebuilding strategically, taking into considerations international framework, such as the New Deal, the International Dialogue and Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), SDGs and CSPPS's strategy. Specifically, the local and national contexts and needs in Yemen. Since then and according to its strategic objectives, CAP started fundraising and recently secured fund for a project with an objective to enhance local and national cohesion, funded by DIFID in partnership with Chemonics, Deep Roots and Yemen Polling Centre.

Testimony

As a member of CSPPS with common grounds of peacebuilding in the fragile countries, YWBOD found itself committed to support peacebuilding in Yemen. CSPPS, not only in its fund support, but also its technical and consultative support, was the most appropriate partner in project proposal design, development and implementation. CSPPS, in this project, shared knowledge, information and experience, which YWBOD invested in its effective implementation. CSPPS's support together with YWBOD's commitment were a source of motivation for YWBOD and its staff for effective implementation and impactful results.

YWBOD's membership in the CSPPS is an actual strength, as it opens up new horizons in terms of representation at the global level. With CSPPS' coordination and effective communication with international actors, YWBOD's name was present in an international event like The UN High-Political Forum in July 2019 in which, because of visa restrictions, the CSPPS' Secretariat represented YWBOD and its peacebuilding activism in Yemen. This strengthened YWBOD's presence and participation in international events.

YWBOD's CSPPS membership also strengthens its value and raises its regard among national and local actors in Yemen. Local communities, actors and other local CSOs consider YWBOD as a high profile CSO due to its membership of profound, international networks like CSPPS. They recognise the access to actors and decision-makers at the international level it provides, which enhances their positive interaction with YWBOD's activities and projects. In accessing international actors, YWBOD's CSPPS membership is always highlighted, supporting the purpose of accessing actors who acknowledge the added value of a Platform such as CSPPS. YWBOD could secure funds for peacebuilding projects from different donors like UNFPA, CARPO and others, which to me was partly thanks to our CSPPS liaison.

YWBOD's amplifying local voices to an international level can best be ensured through membership with an effective international network such as CSPPS. This became evident in our interview with the CSPPS Secretariat and its resulting article titled "Facing Two Fronts: Covid-19 amidst the Yemeni Civil War". This, with the CSPPS' contribution, managed to bring the Yemeni voice to the global level.

Effective communication, information and experience exchanges, together with the technical and financial supports, are of great value to YWBOD and helps it to sustain effective performance in Yemen. This always takes place because of the effective communication which the CSPPS Secretariat undertakes.

“YWBOD's amplifying local voices to an international level can best be ensured through membership with an effective international network such as CSPPS. This became evident in our interview with the CSPPS Secretariat and its resulting article titled "Facing Two Fronts: Covid-19 amidst the Yemeni Civil War.”



You can watch the short series of 3 videos produced by our Yemeni partner YWBOD and CAP [here](#). They highlight several prevention and development strategies which contribute to strengthening the resilience of local communities against the risk of relapse into violence.

Consolidating and strengthening civil society coalitions at the country level ensures that civil society becomes integral to national peacebuilding and development policymaking

Oxfam Novib, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and CSPPS launched in December the report “[Ready to engage? An introduction for civil society organisations and other stakeholders on the role of business in fragile and conflict-affected settings](#)”. The report was commissioned by Oxfam Novib and SOMO in collaboration with the CSPPS. It introduces reflections on the role the private sector can play in fragile and conflict-affected settings and how civil society can engage with it. This to ensure that companies are not exacerbating conflict, but rather contribute to peace and stability. As such, the report adds to the discussion on how CSPPS can support the International Dialogue in the implementation of this aspect of the Peace Vision.



As part of the CSPPS 2019 Annual Meeting in Addis Ababa, CSPPS, SOMO and Oxfam Novib formally launched the report as an element contributing to the implementation of the third IDPS thematic priority on a peace-promoting private sector. The launch event was an opportunity to present the report’s main findings, and to gather reflections on how to operationalise this thematic priority by the IDPS constituencies, CSPPS members and other pertinent stakeholders. One of the conclusions was that at the national level, civil society can work together with governments to include chapters on human rights and women's rights in agreements between fragile governments and the private sector. In this respect, actors require assistance in the development of legislation and to be effective in the dialogue with Strategic Partnerships (SPs) and traceability tools to remain in compliance with reached agreements. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for CSOs to act on the global level, e.g. to advocate for and collaborate with others on norms-setting.



Amplifying the voices of Civil Society through communications and outreach channels

In 2019, six CSPPS Country Teams from Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Chad, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and Nigeria, took part in and contributed to government-led Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes and consultations to report back on progress made towards advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. Preliminary results and lessons learned from this year's first edition of the CSPPS 'Ready for Review' project indicate that **VNR processes present a valuable opportunity for civil society from fragile settings, but that the VNR process in itself, the HLPF and the SDGs are not yet well understood among civil society actors and organisations from fragile settings.**

In its 2019 Communications and Visibility Strategy, the CSPPS Secretariat set out to improve its strategy to share, communicate and showcase project results, but also more generally to popularise CSPPS' mission, area of work, constituency composition and impact.

Moreover, we joined hands with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) to highlight stories of peacebuilders from around the globe through a novel medium. Led entirely by the interns at UNOY, GPPAC and CSPPS, we made peace personal with a podcast series. With the podcast series, we aim to bring voices from the field to the fore, and we have continued to do so in 2020.

The Peace Corner, as the podcast series is named, did and will continue to engage, challenge, and open ears to the many courageous voices making peace possible

around the world. The premise of our podcast is a personal one. Whether it be a fresh-faced intern or veteran peacebuilder, each of us carries a web of stories that often carves out the path that we pursue. We want to get to the core of this web, which connects a vast range of faces and voices.

The theme of the series was "Inclusivity". By bringing more voices and ideas to the table, we believe that we are moving one step closer towards being inclusive. With each episode (nine in total), we brought personal stories of peacebuilding to the fore. Practitioners discussed their innovative ways and visions of making peacebuilding inclusive.

We talked to different peacebuilders, working in different regions, all telling different stories. In 2019, we featured stories from Chile, Uganda, Afghanistan, Bolivia, Libya, and Ukraine, among others. The Peace Corner Podcast is available on four different publishing platforms, including [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), [Soundcloud](#), and [Stitcher](#).



LOBBY

Influence policy to consolidate civil society inclusion in dialogues at all levels

The CSPPS third strategic objective, “Lobby”, ties the two others together and reflects a principal *raison d’être* of the Platform: serving as a channel, like a crucial cross-level linkage, which connects local CSOs all the way up to the international level, banded together so as to interactively strengthen their respective voices. Over the course of 2019, we have leveraged every opportunity at our disposal to advocate for inclusive peacebuilding in line with New Deal principles and as per SDG16+.

We have engaged in a wide range of international fora and discussions, having represented the views of our membership and enabled the participation of CSO representatives from across our network. We have participated intensively in the production of the new IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision and have striven to keep all stakeholders seized by it by further developing and operationalising its key tenets.

Another principal area of activity under “Lobby” has been, and continues to be, our active encouragement of civil societies to contribute to their respective governments’ Voluntary National Reviews presented at the annual High-Level Political Forum on the 2030 Agenda. Through these and other advocacy activities, we are ensuring that an inclusive approach to achieving transnational peace and security retains, and acquires further still, the buy-in of pertinent actors the world over and at all levels.

CSPPS Country Teams engage in sustained dialogue with relevant stakeholders by proactively seeking advocacy opportunities to lobby for inclusive peacebuilding and inclusion of civil society in relevant policy processes. We do this, at the EU, UN, World Bank and in regional institutions, in collaboration with other networks

The Platform coordinates and supports civil society participation in events to the level of the IDPS as well as other relevant international policy fora. Throughout the work done by its members, which helps to sustain and expand the work of the Platform, we ensure that civil society can contribute adequately and meaningfully to relevant national and international policy processes on peacebuilding, statebuilding, conflict prevention and sustaining peace.



The Rome Declaration

In May 2019, in the context of the pre-HLPF Rome SDG16 Conference, the TAP Network and the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) hosted a pre-conference Civil Society Day. This culminated in the ["Amplified Commitments and Partnerships for Accelerated Action: Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+"](#), which serves as an important input into the outcomes from the Rome SDG16 Conference, and was presented during the plenary of the Conference itself. Additionally, civil society had a dedicated slot to present key messages from the Rome Declaration in a statement to the plenary of the Conference. In an attempt to coalesce key messages to be included in the Rome Declaration, civil society partners that facilitated the drafting process for this Declaration solicited ahead of the conference inputs from respective civil society constituencies. This served to ensure that civil society members who were not able to attend could at least contribute their key messages for inclusion in the Rome Declaration.

The Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ was one of the central points of focus of our advocacy to encourage accelerated action on SDG16 at the 2019 HLPF in July and at the SDGs Summit in September. The extensive process to draft this Declaration was guided by three co-facilitators, from Namati, CSPPS, and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

Voluntary National Reviews and CSPPS' Ready for Review Project

Every year in July, the UN organises the High-Level Political Forum at its headquarters in New York in order to review progress on the achievement of the SDGs, to discuss challenges and successes, and to develop recommendations for strengthening their implementation within given national contexts. The HLPF is an opportunity for member states to report on the progress

made in implementing the SDGs at their national and sub-national levels through government-led and inclusive reviews, which are called Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilise multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs. Each year between 2015 and 2019, a set of 6 out of the 17 SDGs were reviewed in-depth. The theme of the HLPF in 2019 was "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". For the first time since the inception of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, SDG16 went for a detailed review in July 2019 among a group of other SDGs (namely 4, 8, 10, 13 and 17). SDG16 seeks to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. The HLPF 2019 thus made for a major event in the context of CSPPS' work.

More specifically, with the support of the French ministry of foreign affairs and EuropeAid, CSPPS, through its Ready for Review Project, ensured the meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of civil society in VNR processes – with a focus on SDG16+ – in the countries that went for review, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Chad, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Nigeria.

The Platform supported the meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of local and national CSOs – and ensured that New Deal principles were applied – throughout the various consultation and SDG report-drafting stages as planned by the governments of the six targeted countries. We aim to foster inclusion and bolster capacity of civil society by engaging in a meaningful manner in the various VNR-processes as well as to contribute to the monitoring and

reporting progress on the 2030 Agenda with a particular focus on SDG16.

The support provided helped the Platform to implement its work plan and to establish contacts with French NGOs (Coordination SUD and FORUS) and relevant sections of the French ministry of foreign affairs to explore possibilities for collaboration. Within the selected countries, this enabled CSPPS to ensure, with the help of the TAP Network, and to the furthest extent possible depending on local political contexts, the inclusion, participation and meaningful contribution of national and local CSOs (including through targeted sensitisation of youth and women's organisations). This was done during the different stages of consultation and validation of the VNR process, both through orientation and awareness-raising workshops as a first step, and capacity development workshops as a second step. CSPPS has also expanded its collaboration with the TAP Network in Nigeria and Rwanda. Finally, during and after the HLPF, CSPPS organised peer-to-peer exchanges to reflect on the experiences and achievements of CSOs to the benefit of CSOs in the countries undergoing VNRs in 2020.

A key aspect of the Ready for Review project was the coordination with CSPPS focal points and local partners on capacity building workshops for local civil society actors in the eight targeted countries. CSPPS worked in partnership with several INCAF-members (French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, EU, UNDP) that provided both strategic/political support as well as resources for this. With the methodological support provided by an externally engaged consulting expert, and in coordination with its members and local and international partners, CSPPS was able to successfully conduct the planned workshops. This aided in building the capacity of local civil society, capturing and compiling their recommendations and key messages, and ensuring their inclusion and participation

in the VNR consultation processes in their respective countries.

The Secretariat created a comparative report, containing its critical analysis of the main challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for CSOs consulted in the first edition (2019) of the [Ready for Review project](#). The outcomes of these engagements both contributed to solid VNRs presented in New York in July, but also solidified further support to other processes to be embarked upon through a multi-stakeholder approach.

The TAP Network and CSPPS Secretariat agreed on a guidance note for the national VNR workshop partners about expected outcomes and reporting requirements for these workshops. In addition to in-country collaboration on VNR-processes, we have also reached an agreement with the TAP Network for CSPPS to come on board in various steps of the dissemination of the lessons learned in the various workshops processes (through a combined report and HLPF side-events).

Key lessons learned and reflections of the CSPPS Secretariat on the first edition of the [Ready for Review Project](#):

- (1) VNR consultation activities can be a starting point for initiating and improving dialogue and coordination between government and CS.
- (2) Civil society needs to realise what its added value is and highlight it.
- (3) Lack of VNR experience can be overcome by organising and preparing in advance.
- (4) Contexts vary; hence a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate.
- (5) Communication is as important as the quality of inclusion and participation.
- (6) When obtaining financial support from donors, it is essential to include their local delegations as full stakeholders in the process.
- (7) CS understands the opportunities offered by the VNR process and wants to do more.

CIVIL SOCIETY REFLECTIONS



Ready for Review Project

Eloi Kouzoundji CSPPS Focal Point in CAR | GERDDES

The major challenge for CSOs in CAR in the process of ownership of the SDGs and their implementation beyond the HLPF will undoubtedly be to strengthen their technical and financial capacity. (...) The mechanism for consolidating achievements, monitoring results and disseminating the VNR process should pay particular attention to this central challenge.

Diakalia Ouattara CSPPS Focal Point in Côte d'Ivoire | FNDP

The first of its kind in Côte d'Ivoire since the advent of the SDGs, the consultations within the framework of the VNR of 2019 have been real melting pots in which all stakeholders have come together to share and mutualise knowledge, know-how and experiences, however innovative they may be. Thanks to an original methodology deployed by CSPPS, civil society has not only been able to capture highly enriching experiences, but also to identify the challenges and perspectives for reaching the 2030 horizon.

Mouldjide Ngarygam CSPPS Focal Point in Chad | CEPSEDA

It is important to develop initiatives to strengthen links and institutions in order to ensure their sustainability. Civil society organisations propose to build dynamics that would help build the resilience capacity of populations and institutions to withstand shocks. Particular attention should be paid to youth issues, which are a time bomb if not addressed. Youth represent more than 60% of the population and thus become a structuring factor for any development action. Leaving them aside would be a risk of not achieving the SDGs, since everything is done for them.



Reporting for the Future
Final Report Ready for Review 2019



You can read and download the **Reporting for the Future report**, the Final Report Ready for Review 2019: A CSPPS project supporting the participation of Civil Society in fragile and conflict affected countries that submit a Voluntary National Review in 2019 [here](#).

Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action Campaign

CSPPS co-organised and supported a collaborative campaign, '[Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action](#)', organised with the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network, Saferworld, International Peace Institute (IPI), Conciliation Resources, Article 19, Peace Direct, GPPAC, World Vision, Pax Christi International, Life and Peace Institute, Namati and World Vision.

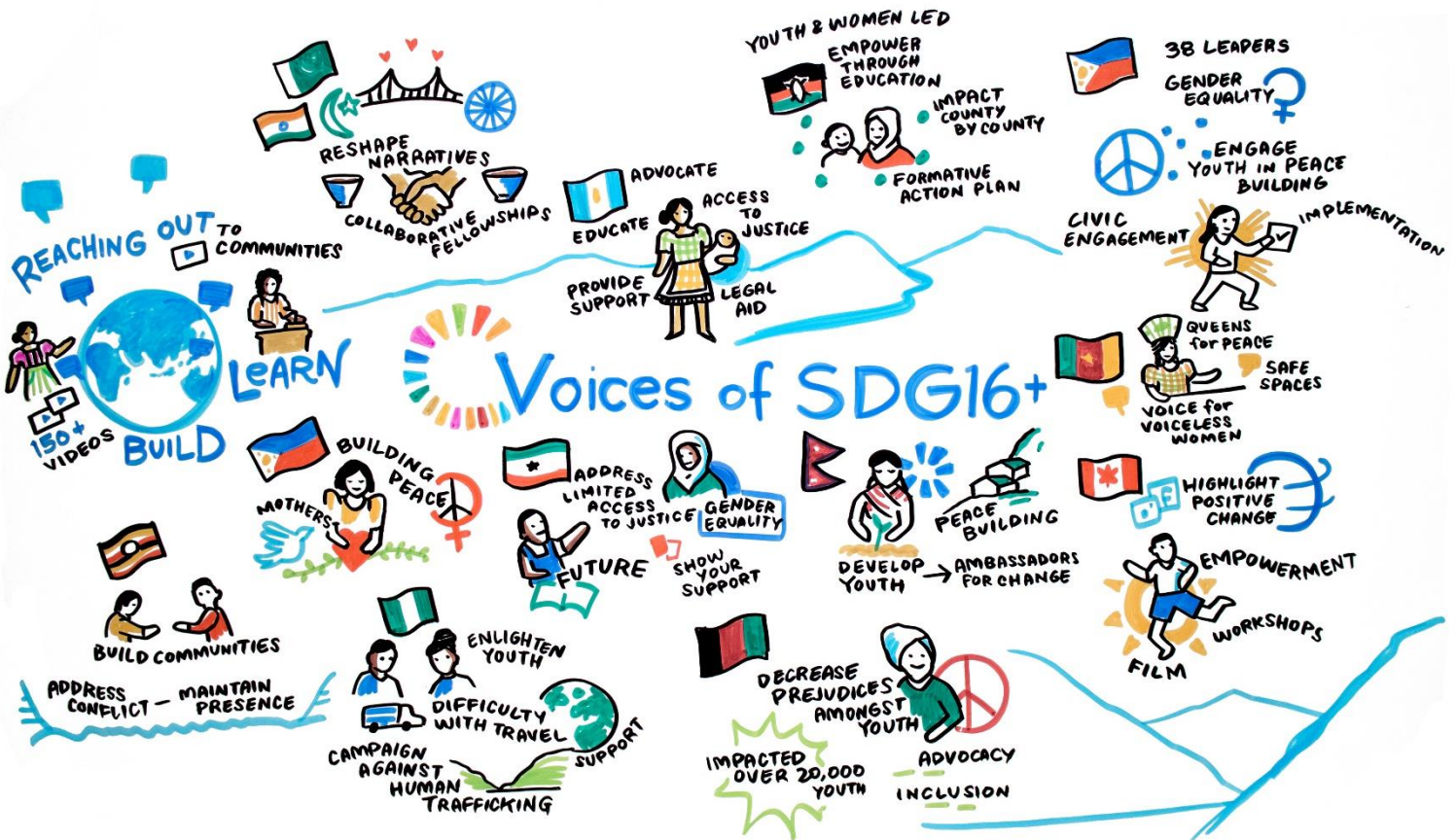
The focus of the video campaign was to showcase civil society's SDG16+ work from around the world with a social media presence (#ActOnSDG16) throughout 2019 to raise the profile of SDG16+. Considering that the HLPF 2019 provided a unique opportunity to bring global civil society together, it was an opportunity to showcase best practices and innovative initiatives supporting SDG16+ implementation, and a chance to explore opportunities for further civil society collaboration at all levels.

In the lead-up to the HLPF, individuals and civil society partners from around the world had the opportunity to submit short videos telling their "stories" of best practices and extraordinary efforts being undertaken towards SDG16+ at the national and local levels. Through this "Voices of SDG16+" video campaign, representatives from 12 organisations from Kenya, Cameroon, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Canada, Nepal, Somaliland, the Philippines, Nigeria, the UK, Yemen, and Guatemala were selected by campaign partners to attend the HLPF in

person, where they could share their work with the UN community and policymakers. The campaign intended to provide a unique and dynamic opportunity for an interactive dialogue between civil society partners working to take forward SDG16+ in their own national contexts around the world, and to showcase their stories – featuring both challenges and successes – as well as their concrete commitments to advancing SDG16+.

The campaign received over 200 submissions from CSOs globally. Among the selected videos, two of them were CSPPS members: Youth Without Borders Organisation for Development from Yemen, and Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT) from Afghanistan. Sofia Ramyar, from APT presented their stories during well-attended side-events (policy roundtable and public event) at the HLPF 2019. Unfortunately, Maged Sultan from Yemen did not get his travel visa approved to attend the HLPF.

Overall, the campaign received very positive feedback. Attendees noted that the stories showcased examples of how SDG16+ is being implemented and is positively impacting people's lives. The events were a great chance to hear local actors, rather than just global ones. In turn, these experiences from the ground were placed centre stage to the policy discussions at the HLPF. It was noted that there is a need to sustain momentum going forward, and a need for further funding as well as presence online. It may also be beneficial to incorporate the stories from this initiative into official VNR processes if it is undertaken again in future years.



The 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

On the margins of the 2019 HLPF at UNHQ in July, and as part of the collaborative campaign “Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action”, the creators of the selected 13 submissions were invited to speak at two events hosted by the Campaign on Thursday 11 July in New York. Upon their arrival on Tuesday 9 July in NYC, participants were welcomed by campaign partners. The next day, they first attended a side-event of the HLPF, hosted by the TAP Network, title, “Leaving No One Behind: Civil Society on the Front Lines of Action on SDG16+”. Hereafter, they spent the remainder of the day in planning sessions to prepare for the Voices of SDG16+ event the next day.

On 11 July 2019, the campaign hosted two events for the Voices of SDG16+ campaign. The two events showcased the stories of the campaign peace actors, who shared their innovative work on access to justice, women’s political participation, youth peacebuilding, non-violent education and inclusive decision-making.

Part one of the event was an invitation-only roundtable with the participants and experts from the SDG16+ community. This expert roundtable discussion focused on the work that these SDG16+ agents of change have done to advance SDG16+ in their communities. They had the opportunity to tell their stories of best practices and efforts being undertaken at the national and local levels. It was an opportunity for all participants to share their own experiences and exchange lessons learnt over the past few years of implementation. The event was very well attended and both participants and experts joined in dynamic dialogue around the real challenges and opportunities for implementing SDG16+.

Part two of the event was an open policy forum, which was also well-attended. The

policy forum featured an opportunity to view clips of the winning videos from the campaign and to hear two moderated panels of the campaign participants. Again, the campaign received a large amount of positive feedback about the grassroots representation it helped facilitate in this policy forum event.

The events received very positive feedback from participants, with many noting that they were of a much needed and welcomed change of pace from the official HLPF proceedings by featuring perspectives of civil society partners.

On 13 July 2019, participants attended other HLPF events, including a TAP Network national case studies event, the HLPF’s official review of SDG16, bilateral meetings and other opportunities.

Additionally, on the margins of the HLPF 2019, a CSPPS delegation of civil society delegates from Côte d’Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and an expert consultant from Cameroon – accompanied by CSPPS Secretariat members – attended and participated in SDG16-related side-events, sometimes (co-)organised by CSPPS partners. INGO members of the Platform – FriEnt, Saferworld, UNOY, GPPAC and World Vision – were also present.

The engagements around the HLPF started with a joint workshop organised by CSPPS in coordination with Namati, GPPAC, the TAP Network and Saferworld where we showcased best practices on how civil society has been driving progress on SDG16+. The side-event provided an opportunity for us to highlight the work done in the context of the Ready for Review Project and the national SDG16 workshops organised and hosted by CSPPS, TAP network and a range of our local partners. The meeting also allowed for reflections on the Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+.

There was also a side-event at the Korean Mission on Friday where a joint CSO Report on [“Empowering Civil Society for National Reporting and Action on SDG16”](#) was

launched. CSPPS contributed a chapter to this publication, where after we were also invited to speak at the side-event.

The Friday afternoon was dedicated to the Thematic Review of SDG16. A CSPPS Secretariat member, Marina de Paiva, spoke on behalf of civil society and addressed the need for accelerated action on achieving the vision of Goal 16 and on 'leaving no one behind'. Marina also referenced the Rome Civil Society Declaration in which civil society calls upon all actors to fulfil their commitments to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Over the weekend, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation ([GPEDC](#)), a stakeholder platform advancing the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors and which aims to deliver results that are long-lasting and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), held a Senior High-Level meeting. Diakalia Ouattara and Eloi Kouzoundji, CSPPS civil society delegates from Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic, respectively, together with the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), participated in a panel that addressed challenges and opportunities about effective development cooperation in fragile contexts.

During the second week, the VNR-presentations commenced and CSPPS delegates from CAR, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Chad, Cameroon, Ghana and Timor-Leste attended their respective VNR-presentations.

On Monday 15 July, the IDPS Secretariat hosted a Ministerial Meeting at the Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN where the IDPS 2019-2021 Peace Vision was officially launched. Theophilus Ekpon spoke on the panel of the event as CSPPS EC Chair and Nigeria Focal Point.

The next day, Marina from the CSPPS Secretariat had a second speaking slot during the Umbrella Event on SDG16+ and the Future We Want. Here again, she discussed the Rome Declaration and urged for accelerated action on SDG16+.

That same day, CSPPS-member FriEnt hosted the side-event "Breaking Silos: Showcasing integrated Solutions to Help Achieve SDG16, Gender and Land-related SDGs" at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN. This engaging side-event showcased how struggles can be a positive force for catalytic change – for example, when previously landless poor are taken seriously and gain access to land. FriEnt also launched their report "[Land and Conflict Prevention: How integrated solutions can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals](#)".

Sofia Ramyar, from Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT), a CSPPS partner organisation, delivered a speech on [Youth, Peace and Security at the United Nations Security Council](#).

Throughout the two weeks CSPPS also engaged in various bilateral meetings with key partners in New York (including WFUNA, UNDP, TAP Network, etc.) to discuss and agree upon next steps in collaborations and partnerships – also towards the SDG Summit, the 16+ Forum and other engagements.

The CSPPS 2019 Annual Meeting Stronger Together: Coordinated Action on Localising SDG16+

The [2019 CSPPS Annual Meeting](#) took place from 4 to 7 December in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It brought together more than 40 participants from around the world, including CSPPS members, key partners, consultants and peacebuilding experts. The meeting was organised to reflect on past activities and to agree on common strategic action points for the coming years within the framework of the IDPS Peace Vision, our work in the SDG16+ domain and other activities.

The first day of the CSPPS Annual Meeting was devoted to the CSPPS Executive Committee (EC) meeting, to reflect on EC and CSPPS Secretariat performance. The EC reviewed the Platform's Work Plan and prepared for the Core Group Meeting. Followed by its CSPPS Core Group meeting (CGM) for the following three days. The days were full of CSPPS-members from both the Global South and the Global North sharing their experiences, lessons learned, successes and challenges encountered in their day-to-day work, as for VNR experiences, the three WGs on the IDPS Peace Vision themes and more. This formed the basis to discuss and agree on priorities for CSPPS action to advance the Platform's agenda, and in particular, how to best support the operationalisation of the three IDPS thematic priorities.



A "Lobby & Advocacy" day was also part of the agenda, where the Core Group met with the delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia. Furthermore, a select group of CSPPS representatives went to the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate of the African Union (AU) office to discuss possible options for partnership with these institutions to raise the concerns of our members at that level. Additionally, the CSPPS Secretariat, on the margins of our 2019 Annual Meeting in Addis Ababa, organised a side-event in collaboration with the delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia. The meeting revolved around two central themes: civil society's contribution to implementing the IDPS Peace Vision (including the launch of a report on the private sector that we have produced along with Oxfam Novib), and our efforts to localise SDG16+.



As mentioned previously in this report, in preparation of the CSPPS Annual Meeting, the Platform established three working groups to discuss, reflect and agree upon preliminary recommendations for the positioning of CSPPS in the context of the implementation of the IDPS Peace Vision. Outcomes of the WGs were presented for further discussion with all participants. It also provided an opportunity for IDPS representatives, among them H. E. Francis Kaikai of Sierra Leone (via recorded video statement), g7+ co-chair, and Ajit Singh of the Canadian Global Affairs Office (Canada being INCAF co-chair), to introduce the Vision and their efforts relating to it. This aided in further contextualising the working groups' recommendation and agreeing on next steps.

Civil society discussed the challenges faced in their own national contexts and agreed upon the parameters and strategies to be considered in the CSPPS approach. How to acknowledge the risks involved in advocating for peacebuilding in fragile contexts was a key point, as some projects have to be stopped because they are too sensitive. For this, we need a contextual approach to address such issues on the ground. Furthermore, the shrinking of civil space was highlighted, as well as the difficulties faced by CSOs in making their voices heard at the national level, as well as the need to be context-based. In order to access governments and foster vertical trust, we need strategic, informed and educated people to provide neutral expertise. In addition, members of the Core Group provided some contextual examples of implementation of these parameters and recommendations on the ground.

The 2019 CSPPS Annual Meeting was a stimulating and successful event that brought together many valuable experiences, backgrounds and perspectives. This created many links between stakeholders for greater collaboration. Participants were all actively involved and eager to agree on positioning and strategies for the coming year. They brought their challenges, needs and voices to the table. CSPPS must now move forward and continue to translate these ideas into action with its partners.



2019 MAIN OUTREACH EVENTS

FEBRUARY

OECD/DAC meeting on Tracking support for the SDGs – the case of peace and security, OECD, Paris, 5 February.

Justice Partners Forum organised in the context of the Task Force on Justice Meeting – organised by Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, The Hague, 7 February.

Justice Week organised by Saferworld on Improving Access to Justice in Somaliland and Launch Meeting of working paper on Transitional Justice and SDG16+ at KPSRL Office, The Hague, 8 February.

MARCH

63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW): Centrality of Gender Equality to National Cohesion and Sustainable Peacebuilding, New York, 12 March.

Annual Forum of EU Focal Points for HRs, Democracy and Civil Society, Brussels, 25-29 March.

APRIL

Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2019, Marrakech, 16-18 April.

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals to Promote Peacebuilding, Head of Agencies meeting UNOCA, Sao Tome & Principe, 24-25 April.

MAY

SDG Global Festival of Action, Bonn, 2-4 May.

2019 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development, Stockholm, 14-16 May.

Rome Expert meeting on SDG16+ organised by IDLO, UNDESA and the Italian government to provide inputs on the formal review of SDG16 in the HLPF2019, Rome, 26 May.

JUNE

European Development Days 2019, Brussels, 17-19 June.

2019 Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), Stellenbosch, 19-21 June.

g7+ Justice Ministerial Meeting, The Hague, 19 June.

5th g7+ Ministerial meeting, Lisbon, 26-27 June.

IDPS Steering Group Meeting, Lisbon, 28 June.

JULY

High-Level Political Forum 2019, UNHQ, New York, 9-18 July.

AUGUST

Third UN Conference on SDGs Implementation in Lake Chad Basin region, UNHQ, New York, 5-6 August.

Training on Integrating Gender in Peace and Statebuilding, Kampala, 19-22 August.

SEPTEMBER

SDG Summit, UNHQ, New York, 24-25 September.

OCTOBER

SDG16+ strategizing global community workshop together with primary SDG16 leads from member states and civil society, London, 3-4 October.

EPLO Conference on Lake Chad Basin, Brussels, 10 October.

KPSRL Annual Conference - CSPPS, GPPAC and Dutch MFA session: "After four years of SDG16+ implementation: How can we accelerate its local impact on justice, inclusion and peace?" The Hague, 10 October.

4th Yemen Exchange Conference, Beirut, 21-26 October.

Localising the 2030 Agenda Forum: Building on What Works, The Gambia, 28 October – 1 November.

NOVEMBER

16+ Forum Annual Showcase event, Dili, 11-14 November.

DECEMBER

CSPPS Executive Committee and Core Group Annual Meeting, Addis Ababa, 4-7 December.

Overview of CSPPS project support 2019

Country	Organisation	Subject
Burundi	Fontaine ISOKO + 4 members of the Burundi Country Team	Project to strengthen Burundian organisations committed to the follow-up of the New Deal in the process of achieving the SDGs and peace and security
Guinea	ODDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Capacitation of Civil Society activists and elected representatives of the Communal Executives on Mediation as a means of Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Vector of Community Development - National workshop for CSO capacity building and capitalisation of New Deal and SDG challenges in a context of fragility, Momou (Republic of Guinea)
Nepal	AAPRD	Proposal to carry out country conflict analysis to persuade civil society organisations to design peacebuilding and statebuilding programs for the Nepalese Country Team
Nigeria	CSDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing IDPS/New Deal, UNSCR 2250 and SDGs in Nigeria - Launch of the Reports on the Role of Young People In Preventing Violent Extremism in the Lake Chad Basin, and the Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security
Papua New Guinea	PEACE Foundation Melanesia	PEACE Foundation Melanesia Capacity Enhancement for Effective Implementation of CSPPS Objectives
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone War Trust for children	Strategy workshop on Forging National Cohesion
Togo	Floraison	Project to set up a CSPPS country team and follow-up on the New Deal in connection with the National Development Plan (NDP) for the achievement of the SDGs in Togo
Yemen	YWBOD	Yemenis' Peace Voice (YPV). Supporting and Engaging CS-Coalition in Supporting Peace in Yemen

Communications and Outreach Strategy for 2020

An updated communication and outreach strategy was embarked upon in 2019 in order to increase CSPPS' visibility outside of the Platform, in order to promote the work of its membership as well as the impact on peacebuilding and conflict prevention to external stakeholders. The strategy intended to clarify and popularise the CSPPS' mission, mandate, work, impact, network composition and outreach to INGOs, donors and civil society actors based in fragile settings. The CSPPS website functions as the central point of news dissemination on project results, resources, activities and other relevant information. Additionally, CSPPS makes use of a range of social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), a podcast and a newsletter to communicate our activities in a variety of forms.



LOCALISING SDG16+

Video Animation localisation of the 2030 Agenda, the VNR and HLPF processes

With the aim to illustrate local civil society's work in 2019 and the localisation of the 2030 Agenda, including in the context of VNR consultations, the animation tries to depict how some of the CSPPS country members and teams that took part in and contributed to government-led VNR consultations and processes could contribute to localising the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. [Watch the animation here.](#)

The animation explains (1) what VNR consultations are, illustrates why VNR consultations and processes are relevant for local civil society, (2) what interest local civil society organisations working on SDG16+ have in participating and contributing to national VNR consultations spearheaded by their government, and (3) what opportunities and challenges they might face and how, by addressing the latter challenges, they can (a) establish a strong working relationship with national government institutions, external donors and international partners, (b) actively contribute to reporting back on and bringing forward recommendations to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within their country, and (c) showcase the work of civil society and infuse this government-led consultation process with civil society's perspective.



The European Commission's DG International Cooperation & Development (DEVCO)

The operating grant CSPPS signed with DEVCO at the end of 2018 is a positive product of the fruitful relationship CSPPS enjoys with the EU focal point within the International Dialogue. Indeed, through steady engagement with the DEVCO Fragility Unit (B2), CSPPS was able to sensitise the EU on the key role the Platform plays – and seeks to play in the future – within the IDPS. The DEVCO Fragility Unit subsequently came to realise the potential of the Platform in amplifying the voice of civil society within the IDPS in addition to the relevance of CSPPS's mandate to the EU's development aid policy.



2-year Operating Grant
(Jan 2019 – Dec 2020)



€ 2 million

Following regular exchanges between CSPPS and DEVCO's Fragility Unit, discussions later opened up to and included DEVCO's Civil Society Unit (A5). Efforts to better coordinate activities and link mandates between CSPPS, DEVCO's Fragility and Civil Society Units materialised in a three-step approach : (1) holding a CSPPS-oriented session on the Central African Republic and the EU Bêkou Trust Fund at the EDD, Brussels; (2) establishing a partnership between the EU and CSPPS country representatives; and (3) work with DEVCO's Civil Society Unit on opportunities to support CSPPS' work. This eventually led to the development and signing of a two-year operating grant between DEVCO and CSPPS, supporting the latter in implementing its 2019-2020 work plan.

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK 2020... And then came COVID-19

The continued support provided by the EU/DEVCO operating grant will enable CSPPS to sustain and expand upon the activities as reported on in this Annual Report... Normally, such a first sentence would be followed up by an elaboration on new ideas, plans and strategic opportunities that were identified as appropriate and timely follow up to be given to civil society efforts that would ensure the meaningful contribution of CSPPS to relevant national and international policy processes on peacebuilding, statebuilding, conflict prevention and sustaining peace... But then came COVID-19...

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged at the beginning of the year, has inevitably affected the work of CSPPS, its members and that of our counterparts.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been in close contact with our Platform members to learn about their individual circumstances, activities, challenges and accomplishments. We have conducted two surveys, one in late March and another in late May, and have held in-depth interviews that are chronicled in our series of articles on local action against COVID-19 in context of our long-term vision on peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Following our first survey, we issued a statement calling for a whole-of-society and conflict-sensitive approach to combatting the pandemic and its aftermath. This message has been integral to our advocacy, including to that of the tripartite [International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding](#), of which we are the civil society constituency.

At the Platform level, we have re-calibrated our initial strategic outlook and adjusted our earlier drafted activity plan for the year. Our first and foremost duty is to see how to best maintain our ongoing activities, while at the same time support our members in the management of the unfolding crisis.

Our staff naturally had to cope with some constraints; we therefore reviewed our working policies in order to ensure health and personal safety would always prevail. Also our external relations have been placed in a critical position by these upheavals. Various challenges had to be addressed, such as technical and technological difficulties in reaching our interlocutors, or the different restrictions that our members had to comply with.

These numerous imperatives have therefore implied a gross uncertainty regarding the implementation of our activities as envisioned prior to the pandemic. In this context, we feel it is also important that we do not forget to pay attention to the further needs of our members, which are not necessarily related to this pandemic and which may suffer from a loss of consideration or even a reallocation of funds.

However, as CSPPS' objective is precisely to provide assistance to our members in crisis situations, we stand ready to tackle these challenges with them, in the best possible way. We have been able to build a certain resilience in our working methods. We have noticed that virtualisation, especially when applied to event organisation, has proved to be beneficial in that it has facilitated a broader and more democratised attendance - we can take the successful Voices of SDG16+ event as an example.

The pandemic has not only been an issue to work with, but also to work on. As COVID-19 has generated new concerns, specifically related to civil society and its relation to state authorities and peacebuilding, we have been in close contact with our entire membership.

We have worked on [several reports focusing on different dimensions of the crisis and connected these to specific country contexts](#) (e.g. [Cameroon](#), [Libya](#), [Liberia](#), [Yemen](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Somalia](#) as well as [Syria](#)).

Finally, we have recently compiled data and disclosed a comprehensive report about the impact of the pandemic on our members on '[Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace – What Local Peacebuilders say about COVID-19, Civic Space, Fragility and Drivers of Conflict](#)'. We have also been able, in conjunction with [the IDPS, to deliver statements and recommendations](#) on this matter to make sure that national responses to the pandemic are not only respectful of the well-being of civil society, but also include it, and are sensitive to situations of fragility and conflict. As we progress into the second half of a historical year, we hope to count on your continued support of our work and look forward to report on our further achievements, despite COVID-19, in the next Annual Report.

Thank you for making our work possible.

CONTACT INFORMATION



**CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM**
FOR PEACEBUILDING
AND STATEBUILDING

Cordaid, as part of its commitment to addressing fragility, hosts the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS). The Secretariat is managed and coordinated by Peter van Sluijs, Senior Strategist at Cordaid.

Please find attached relevant contact information for the Secretariat and please do not hesitate to contact us with any question you might have.

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