

# EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY IN A VOLATILE WORLD



## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM FOR  
PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING



CIVIL SOCIETY  
**PLATFORM**  
FOR PEACEBUILDING  
AND STATEBUILDING

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# FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I present you the 2023 Annual Report of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS - or the 'Platform').

This report is issued at a time that our world is confronted with a growing number of interlinked and compounded challenges, with the multiplication of conflicts involving an increasing number of non-state actors, all with various overlapping root causes. In addition, we are still suffering from the persistent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside escalating issues of food insecurity, poverty and socio-economic divides, all exacerbated with the effects of climate change. Given the global nature of these challenges, a collective response is required if we want to reach sustainable solutions that benefit the needs of everyone, leaving no one behind. However, we are currently witnessing a crisis of the multilateralism system, coupled with growing inequalities between the Global South and the Global North, as well as escalating regional rivalries, posing significant obstacles to collectively address the multitude of challenges we as an international community are confronted with.

In this context, civil society has an important role to play and has also a responsibility to do its part in addressing these challenges, by amplifying the local voices and the needs of communities on the ground, and by advocating for concrete and resolute actions from their governments and international organisations. In this regard, the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) represents a unique network of civil society organisations (CSOs) from all around the world where members join forces and work together at all levels, through collective actions, cross-learning exchanges and via the sharing of good practices. At CSPPS, we firmly believe that despite the growing challenges we face, there is reason for hope, as civil society represents a powerful actor of change. We are happy to share with you this Annual Report **'Empowering civil society in a volatile world'** in which we present an overview of activities spearheaded and implemented by CSPPS in 2023.

In 2023, CSPPS continued to speak out against the continuous shrinking of civic space, while simultaneously giving opportunities to its members to engage directly with policymakers and donors through various partnerships, including the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS).

The IDPS continues to constitute a unique tripartite partnership in which CSPPS represents the voice of civil society and where it directly collaborates with the donors working on fragility, conflict and violence issues, represented by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), and with governments from fragile and conflict-affected countries, represented by the Group of Seven Plus (g7+).

As a Platform, we continued to explore new partnership opportunities and are pleased to announce that we have now embarked on a two-year partnership with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ), starting from January 2024. This partnership holds significant strategic importance for the Platform as it will enable us to actively engage on several important themes in today's world, such as electoral processes, digitalisation, migration, COVID-19 impacts, food security and poverty, gender equality, and climate change, among others. In parallel, CSPPS has continued its work within the Just Future Alliance. In this strategic partnership, supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), CSPPS will continue to act as a networking partner until end of 2025.

Activities reported in the Annual Report 2023 clearly point at the importance of collaborative efforts towards the realisation of more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. It is with this in mind that the Platform remains committed to our core mission to strengthen the voice and agency of local civil society in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. Additionally, we are committed to working in multilateral partnerships to prevent crises and foster genuinely sustainable peace and development worldwide.

On behalf of the entire membership of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, we extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all CSPPS partners for the unwavering support and ongoing collaboration in the context of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) and beyond.

**Peter van Sluijs**

**CSPPS Coordinator**

**Member of the CSPPS Executive Committee**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year of 2023 was a challenging year for CSPPS, as we had to adapt our strategic positioning and activities to growing interlinked global challenges. We witnessed the multiplication of conflicts in various places in the world, which include the political and security crisis in the Sahel region, the conflicts in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), ongoing violence in South Sudan, the civil war in Sudan, the escalation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and the ongoing war in Ukraine, amongst others. These conflicts are all the more complex as they are interconnected with other challenges, such as the impacts of climate change, poverty, food insecurity and inequalities between genders. In this context, CSPPS, as a global network of civil society organisations working on prevention and peacebuilding issues, has the opportunity to join forces from the civil society side to address these challenges in a comprehensive and inclusive way, and advocate for solutions that will benefit the needs of everyone, including marginalised groups.

This Annual Report presents the activities of the CSPPS, as executed in 2023. Despite the growing complex challenges mentioned above, the Platform continued its networking, lobbying and advocating activities at local, national, regional and global levels, by engaging with its members and partners in strategic high-level events and offering technical support to its members active on the ground.

In May-June, CSPPS amplified the voice of civil society during the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 Conference in Rome through the publication of the fourth Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ “If Not Now, Then When? An urgent call for transformative SDG16+ commitments at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda” drafted in cooperation with the Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network. The declaration calls for urgent action toward revitalised and transformative commitments on SDG16+ and stipulates action-oriented recommendations that require immediate action and genuine commitment to peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Its key messages have been amplified by the Platform and its partners during other strategic high-level events in 2023, such as the SDG Summit, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and inputs for the Pact for the Future.

Next to that, CSPPS adopted in 2023 a more comprehensive approach to peace, by recognising its interlinkages with other global phenomena, in particular climate change. For this reason, CSPPS engaged in the Conference of the Parties (COP) 28, specifically during its first ever Peace Day. In this context, CSPPS published the backgrounder “Compounding Challenges in Conflict Settings. Local voices reflecting on climate, peace and security interlinkages”, with the aim of highlighting the reality of climate change on the ground and its impact on peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities. CSPPS also joined forces with Cordaid through the publication of a position statement “Addressing the Climate Crisis in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings”.

In the context of its partnership with the consortium members of the Just Future programme - a five-year partnership launched in 2021 funded by the Dutch MFA which aims to improve security, justice and inclusive politics in decision-making processes through coordinated lobbying, advocacy and support networks for CSOs - CSPPS has been able to actively engage its members in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. Moreover, the Platform is pleased to announce its new partnership with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ), with whom a two-year partnership agreement was signed, starting from January 2024.

# ACRONYMS

ADB	African Development Bank
AfP	Alliance for Peacebuilding
AJCAD	Youth Association for Active Citizenship and Democracy
APT	Afghans for Progressive Thinking
AU	African Union
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
CAR	Central African Republic
CG	Core Group
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSDEA	Centre for Sustainable Development and Education in Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPPS	Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
CT	Country Team
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	Executive Committee
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings
FOCUS	FOCUS Principles : Country led pathways out of fragility
FPO	Focal Point Organisation
FriEnt	The Working Group on Peace and Development
g7+ group	Group of Seven Plus
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
GPA	Global People Assembly
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDEO	Institute of Personal and Organisational Development
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
IDPS	International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
IIDA	Women's Development Organisation in Somalia
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
KPSRL	Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NA4P	New Agenda for Peace

# ACRONYMS

NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P4DP	Platform for Dialogue and Peace
PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
R4R	Ready for Review Project
RFP	Réseau Femmes et Paix
SC4PS	Sustainable Cooperation for Peace and Security
SDG16	Sustainable Development Goal on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TAA	Tiro Association for Arts in Lebanon
TAP	Transparency, Accountability and Participation
TRUST	TRUST Principles : Commitment for results
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNOY	United Network of Young Peacebuilders
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
V4G	Vision 4 Generation
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WILPF	Women International League for Peace and Freedom
WIPC	Women's International Peace Center
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security
YWBOD	Youth Without Borders Organisation for Development

# ABOUT CSPPS

## WHO WE ARE

**OUR IDENTITY:** CSPPS brings together a diverse representation of civil society globally, both from countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence, and international civil society organisations working on issues of peacebuilding, statebuilding, conflict prevention and development at national, regional and global levels. CSPPS supports in-country interventions to amplify the voice of civil society in political dialogue and related policy processes. At the global level, CSPPS is representing civil society in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), a strategic tripartite partnership for political dialogue gathering civil society actors, governments from the g7+ group, and donors represented by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF).

**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 effectively 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:** If we shape and influence global and national structures and processes to address sources of destructive conflict and to build resilience, then countries and their citizens will be less likely to resort to violent conflict because they will have means to manage their grievances and build the quality of their lives.

### OUR OBJECTIVES:

- Strengthening and broadening civil society engagement and inclusion in peacebuilding, statebuilding and crisis prevention.
- Influencing conflict prevention, peacebuilding, statebuilding and development policies at all levels.
- Shaping and contributing to the IDPS, the SDGs and humanitarian processes with peacebuilding values.

# ABOUT CSPPS

## OUR STRATEGY

**NETWORKING:** Direct engagement, monitoring and advocacy in the context of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), in line with the implementation of the New Deal as well as the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSG). Enlargement of the CSPPS Network by engaging with potential new civil society partners and provision of support to establish vibrant civil society focal points and country teams in g7+ countries.

**AMPLIFYING:** Consolidation and strengthening of civil society coalitions through capacity strengthening and technical support. Ensuring civil society engagement at all levels of the IDPS process and the 2030 Agenda.

**LOBBYING:** Continued advocacy at the global level for the respect and acknowledgement of peacebuilding values and principles, and promotion of inclusive processes at all levels. Focus on addressing the root drivers of conflict and fragility through the development of fragility assessments, and in the inclusive and integrated design and implementation of New Deal Compacts.

## 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, echoing the growing importance of these groups in development cooperation, and recognising their role in both the domestic and international arenas.

**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-fertilisation between the two spheres on emerging trends and key policy issues.

**LINKING SOUTH-SOUTH OPPORTUNITIES:** CSPPS stands for a shift of power dynamics in the promotion and implementation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. In this regard, South-South cross linkages and cooperation is a key tool CSPPS relies on. Such cooperation is possible through the organisation of IDPS regional dialogues, the bi-monthly CSPPS Core Group meetings and through the Just Future program.



# ABOUT CSPPS

**A CORE CONSTITUENCY OF THE IDPS STRUCTURE:** CSPPS is part of a larger architecture called the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). Through its tripartite structure, the IDPS brings together government representatives from fragile states, international donors and civil society. It 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+:** CSPPS tackles the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the prism of SDG16+. Specifically, on grounding the SDG16+ into local context through meaningful consultations with civil society and authorities to determine priority areas for action, and localising SDG16+ with governments to catalyse more inclusive, national development processes and programming aligned with SDG16+ targets and enable continuous dialogues with multiple stakeholders. The New Deal principles (Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSG), FOCUS and TRUST) guide the actions of CSPPS members' engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states, and are also at the core of CSPPS strategic positioning within the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS).

## HOW THE PLATFORM WORKS

### INTERNAL STRUCTURE

At its core, our network hosts coalitions of CSOs within g7+ countries and beyond that are impacted by manifestations 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.

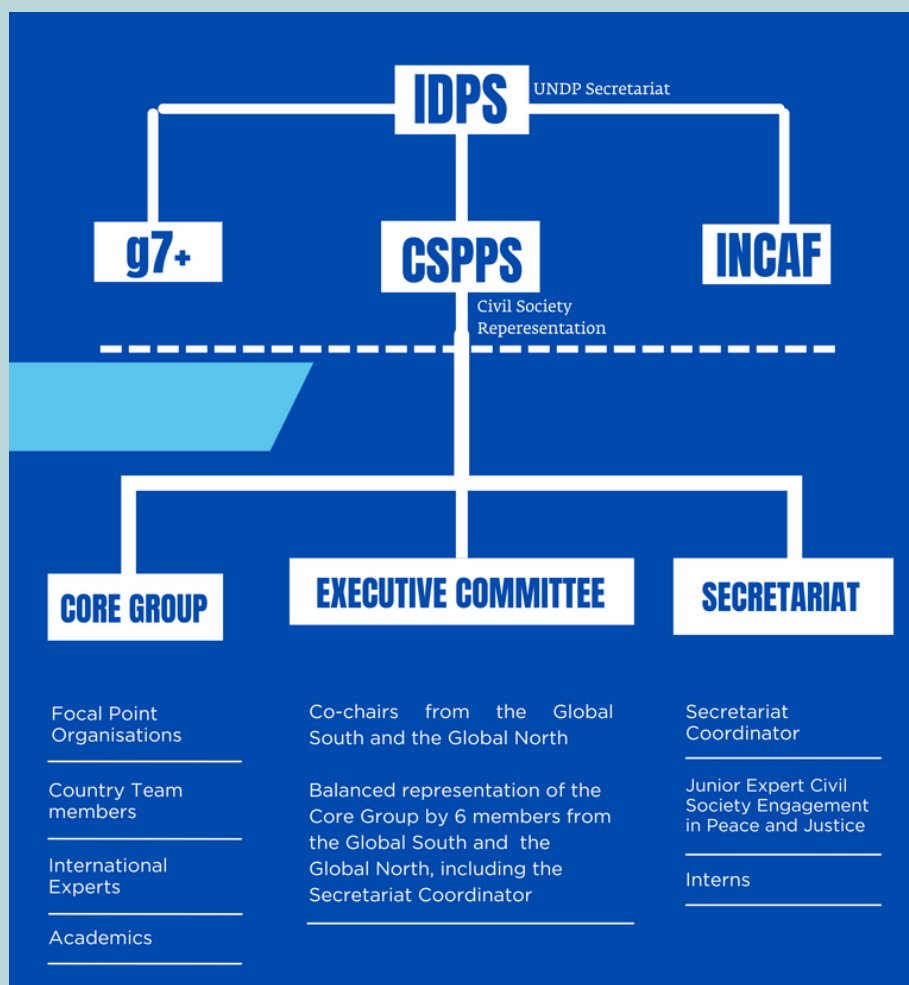
The Core Group (CG) is the main membership forum within CSPPS where engagement and leadership in peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes are discussed and decided. The CG is made up of designated representatives from FPOs, CSPPS members and international experts.

# ABOUT CSPPS

Functioning as a subset of the membership, an elected Executive Committee (EC) assists the Secretariat in day-to-day decision-makings and provides guidance and advice on the Platform’s issues and priorities, as well as reviews the use of the CSPPS budget. The EC is led by two co-chairs, one representing the Global South and one the Global North. This leadership system aims at reflecting CSPPS core values based on inclusivity and equal representation of our members from across the globe.

The Secretariat ensures the functioning of the CG, the EC and the participation of civil society in IDPS events. It facilitates dialogue between members and disseminates information about their activities.

Together, the Core Group, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat work to amplify the voice and agency of civil society, to strengthen the network of civil society organisations working on peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and to ensure that civil society is included and participates as principal agents of change. Our goal is to ensure that civil society is broadly and meaningfully represented in nationally owned processes.



# ABOUT CSPPS

## WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

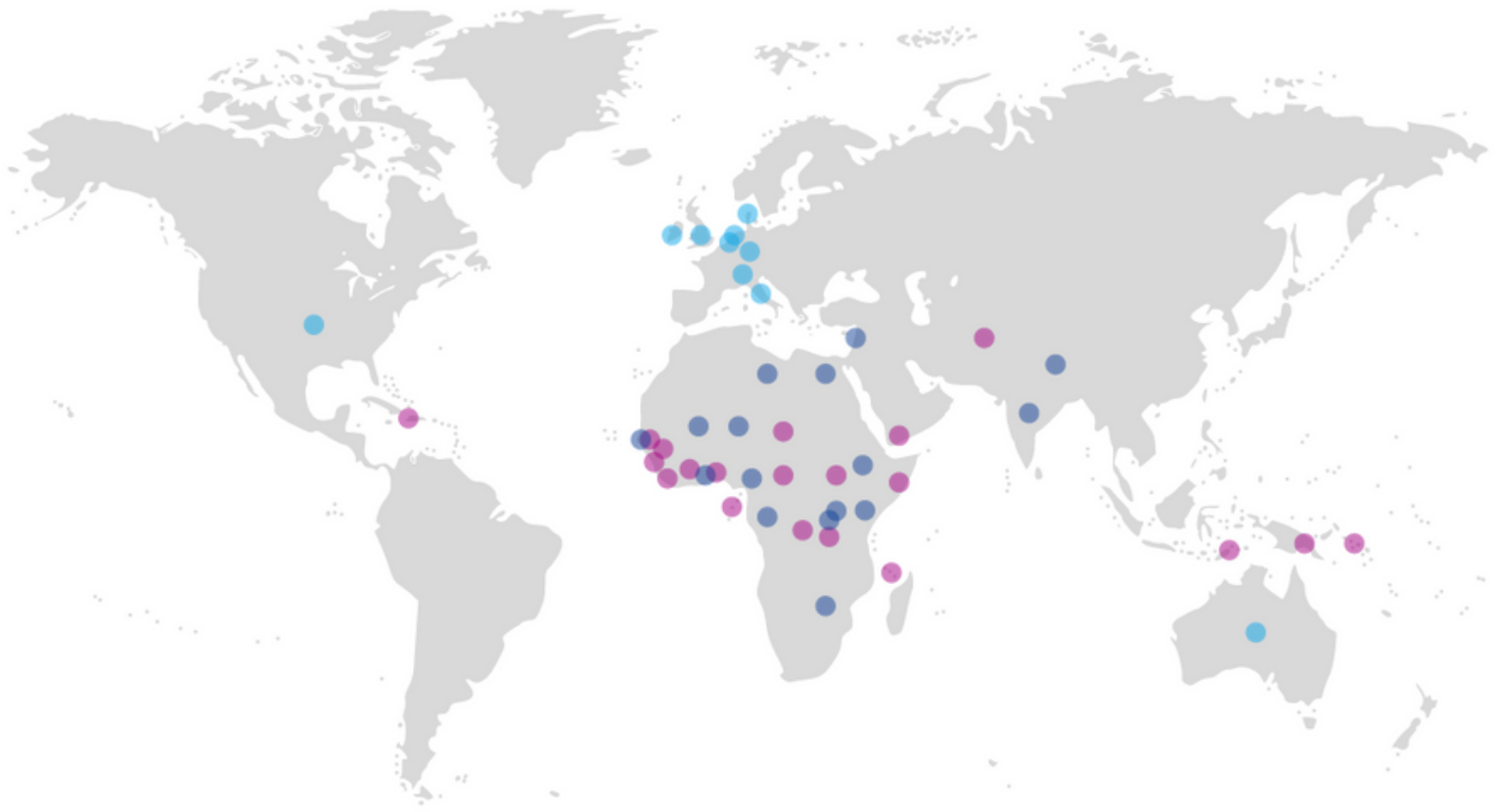
The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding coordinates and supports civil society participation in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). The IDPS is a unique tripartite partnership that facilitates dialogue, joint learning, action and mutual accountability 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 settings. 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) was developed in the context of the International Dialogue and signed by more than 40 countries and organisations at the 4th High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 at Busan, Korea. It 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 lies the New Deal principles (PSG, FOCUS and TRUST), which guide the actions of the three IDPS constituencies to tackle the challenges and deliver on the goals related to SDG16+.

A new phase of the IDPS was initiated in 2022 with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assuming Secretariat functions. An IDPS 2022-24 Peace Vision was defined to articulate how the partnership and its constituencies will strengthen collective action on international, regional and local peacebuilding.

# CSPPS IN THE WORLD IN 2023



**Civil society organisations alliance members in all 20 g7+ countries**

**Civil society organisations members in 17 non g7+ countries**

**International member organisations in 10 countries**



**CIVIL SOCIETY  
PLATFORM**  
FOR PEACEBUILDING  
AND STATEBUILDING

# INTRODUCTION

In 2023, CSPPS continued its role as a networking partner within the Just Future Consortium, a strategic partnership for the Platform as the grant offered by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) allowed us to support CSPPS activities in the Just Future countries, next to supporting the CSPPS Secretariat daily activities, and strengthen our global presence to achieve our lobby and advocacy goals. In 2023, CSPPS also secured a new two-year partnership agreement with the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), starting from January 2024, representing a unique opportunity to collaborate further with German stakeholders, as well as to expand the Platform's activities in order to address the various interlinkages challenges related to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding.

This year, the world has been confronted with multiple geopolitical and interlinked challenges, impacting both the Global North and the Global South, while contributing to exacerbate inequalities due to unequal access to resources and tools to address these crises. In October 2023, the world witnessed the escalation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, with civilians, including children, on the front line of the conflicts, resulting in one of the worst humanitarian crises the world has ever seen. Next to that, multiple other conflicts are ongoing in every part of the world, such as in Ukraine, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in Afghanistan, in Yemen, and in South Sudan - this list is not exhaustive. Moreover, undemocratic behaviours remained a reality in 2023, with several coup d'état and ongoing political instabilities in the Sahel. All these tensions and conflicts have significant compounding effects on other global issues, including climate change, poverty, access to health and education, among others. In this context, States have not been able to address these global challenges in a collective, efficient and comprehensive way. On the contrary, we are witnessing a growing crisis of the multilateral system, as well as worrying trends of shrinking civic space. For this reason, CSPPS continued to raise awareness on these issues and on the need to amplify and listen to the voice of grass-root civil society organisations, as well as to stress the need for collective action from governments, the donor community, and the civil society.

The financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has enabled CSPPS to sustain and expand its work, ensuring that civil society contributes meaningfully to relevant national and international peacebuilding and statebuilding policy processes, to partner with the fellow constituency partners of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) and wider stakeholders to ensure that the perspectives of civil society infuse global policy processes around SDG16 and the 2030 Agenda more broadly. CSPPS extends its gratitude to both the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for supporting the Platform in doing so, as well as the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development for their trust in partnering with us in the coming years.

# NETWORKING

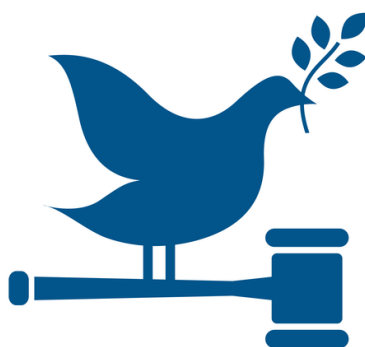
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# LOOKING BACK AT 2023

In the context of a crisis of the multilateral system, it is all the more important for civil society to make their voices heard, as they have a critical role to play in raising awareness on the many global challenges we are facing, and the opportunity to push on their respective government to act concretely on various issues in a collective way. As we are also facing a shrinking of civic space, resulting in less opportunities and further challenges for civil society organisations to continue their advocacy and lobby activities, networking is a powerful tool to share knowledge and good practices amongst civil society at all levels, as well as to amplify their voices. Consolidating and expanding the Platform's membership is thus an important task and we are happy to announce that we have expanded our presence to three new countries in 2023, namely Italy, Mali and Haiti.

CSPPS, as a South-North coalition of peacebuilding organisations, aims to strengthen civil society at the national, regional and international levels, by promoting coordination and peer-to-peer learning among civil society organisations, whether in-country through the Country Teams system or between-countries through frequent meetings. Our emphasis on cross-fertilisation of knowledge and experience is the cornerstone of the two other items of our strategy - amplifying and lobbying - as we believe that coordination is the key to efficient advocacy at the global level.

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## The Just Future Consortium

CSPPS is the networking partner of the Just Future Consortium, a five-year partnership launched in 2021 funded by the Dutch MFA, which aims to improve security, justice and inclusive politics in decision-making processes through coordinated lobbying, advocacy and support networks for CSOs. The Just Future program works in six countries, in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Niger and Mali.

In this framework, the Platform continued in 2023 hosting its **monthly CSPPS Just Future Networking Meetings** to provide a network base between partners engaged in the Just Future Consortium, enabling them to share best practices, tools and research, and build connections across the Consortium. These meetings focused on a wide range of issues involving various partner organisations, including hybridity of the security sector in the Sahel region, the role of customary leaders and authorities in peace agreements in Africa, supporting locally-led processes, learning trajectories, the role of civil society in Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) or Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) processes and women's leadership, inclusive community-centred security structures in South Sudan, next to addressing the changing state of affairs in Niger and of Mali.

CSPPS engaged in a **workshop** on the UPR and the VNR process, organised by the Just Future consortium in Kigali, Rwanda, in February. CSPPS Coordinator, Peter van Sluijs, delivered a presentation in that meeting on the follow-up and review mechanisms in context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. CSPPS members from DRC, South Sudan and Rwanda also took part in the event.

A **Just Future international planning workshop** took place from 26 to 28 September in Nairobi, Kenya. Both Peter van Sluijs and Elise Granlie from the CSPPS Secretariat participated in the workshop. It aimed to exchange and reflect on current activities, ensure a cross-pollination of ideas, provide feedback and identify areas where partners can better work together as an alliance. Discussions also focused on CSPPS-activities in planning for 2024 in the DRC and South Sudan.

In the framework of Just Future Consortium activities, CSPPS member **Vision 4 Generation (V4G)** in South Sudan organised on 12-13 December 2023 a workshop with the aim of strengthening the CSPPS Country team's structure and coordination.

Furthermore, our CSPPS member in DRC, **Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)**, organised several activities aiming at strengthening women's engagement in the electoral process in the framework of national elections in DRC that took place on 20 December. CSPPS member **Réseau Femmes et Paix (RFP)** in Burundi also organised several activities in the framework of the Just Future partnership, such as workshops to improve the inclusion of vulnerable groups (including women and albinos persons) in decision-making process, the publication of an advocacy report related to the issue of inclusivity in decision-making areas, and the production of a radio program that highlighted the need for better consideration of the need of local population, specifically the most vulnerable one, by decision-makers.

As part of its Just Future related activities, CSPPS also engaged at the **African Union (AU)** level, specifically at the 5th Meeting of the African Union Security Sector Reform (SSR) Steering Committee, that took place on 22 and 23 November 2023 at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Our CSPPS focal point in Niger, Almoustapha Boubacar from CercleDev, took part in the event, together with other partners from the Just Future Consortium. The meeting focused on the theme 'The AU SSR Policy Framework, a Decade of Implementation: Successes, Challenges, and Perspectives for the Future'.



*Just Future workshop in Nairobi  
From left to right: Sabane Ibrahim Toure, Hedwige Hounon, Ali Bouzou*



## Welcoming new members

*As a global network of civil society organisations, CSPPS is always willing and enthusiastic to welcome new members that share our values and goals. We strongly believe that our strength is in our membership, as all CSPPS members, when working together and sharing their own perspectives, have the potential to have a significant impact at all levels on issues related to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding.*

### Fondation IDEO - Haiti

Foundation IDEO (Institute of Personal and Organisational Development) joined the Platform in November 2023, becoming CSPPS's first member from Haiti. They aim to contribute to a change of mentality and the establishment of a peaceful climate in Haiti, by supporting Haitian, and more particularly marginalised groups, on mental health issues. Their work is divided through four axes: 1) personal development; 2) access to psychological resources; 3) access to organisational development; 4) and peacebuilding and conflict prevention through peace education activities.

Through this new membership, CSPPS has now established complete representation across all G7+ countries. As the Platform represents civil society in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), CSPPS is therefore now in a strategic position, having the possibility to engage with all G7+ members on behalf of civil society.

### AJCAD - Mali

In May 2023, the Youth Association for Active Citizenship and Democracy (AJCAD) from Mali, joined the CSPPS network. AJCAD is an organisation that brings together young people committed to consolidating democracy and the state as a guarantee of stability and development. Its main activities focused on implementing and supporting youth-led initiatives in civic engagement, access basic social services for the most vulnerable, employability and peacebuilding. Over the past ten years, they have implemented more than sixty projects and programmes. In addition, AJCAD has a strong presence in Mali, being present in 200 municipalities and mobilising more than 20,000 young people for sustainable development, human rights and democratic governance.

### Sustainable Cooperation for Peace and Security - Italy

CSPPS welcomed Sustainable Cooperation for Peace and Security (SC4PS) in February 2023. SC4PS is a CSO founded by a multicultural team of experts in the field of international cooperation coming from the Euro-Mediterranean region. Their objective is to promote peacebuilding at a global level, as well as to support the implementation of both the UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security and the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals to build more inclusive and peaceful societies.



*CSPPS at the SDG16 Rome Conference  
From left to right: Marjus Cevoli (Italy), Gwendolyn Myers (Liberia),  
Elise Granlie (Secretariat), Musa Ansamana Soko (Sierra Leone)*

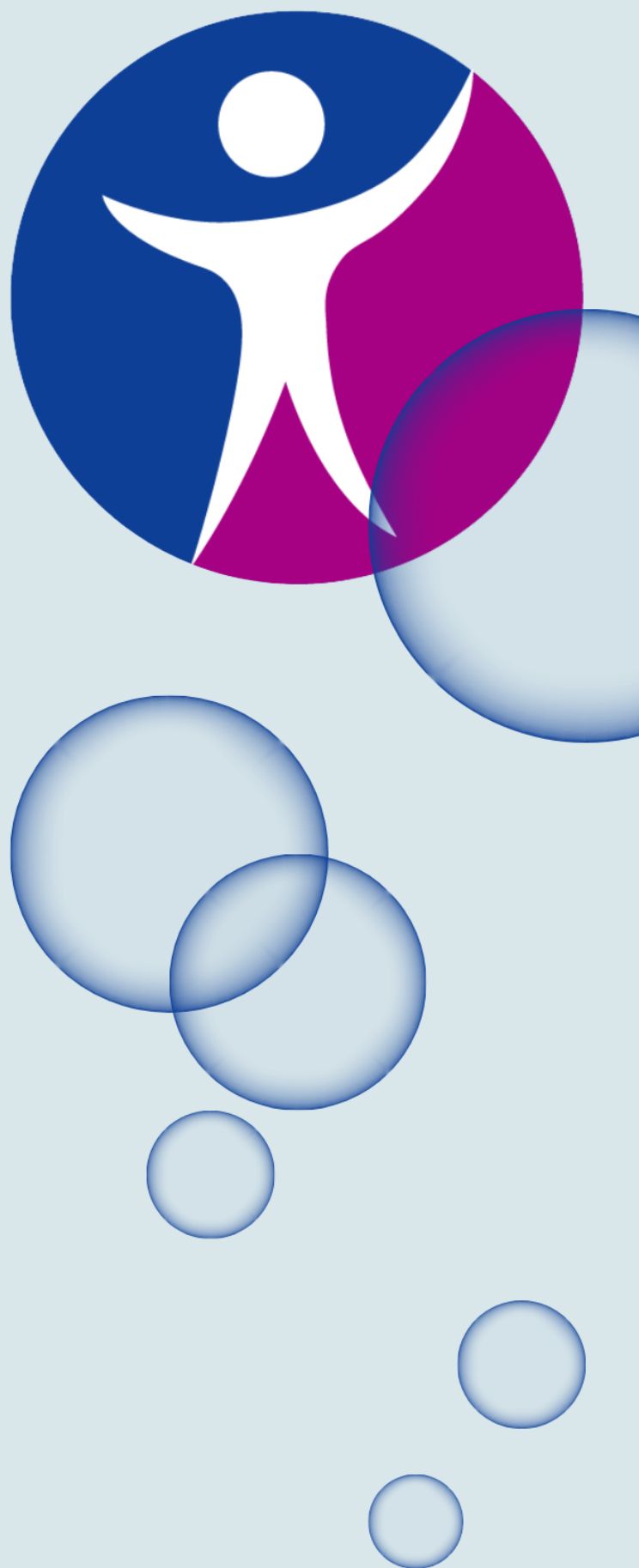
## Joining forces with external actors

Our focal point in Côte d'Ivoire, Diakalia Ouattara, from the Forum National sur la Dette et la Pauvreté, participated on behalf of CSPPS in the **Africa Resilience Forum 2023** on Financing Security, Peace and Development for a Resilient Africa, organised by the African Development Bank Group from 3 to 5 October 2023 in Abidjan, on the Ivory Coast. During the event, participants explored and identified innovative solutions to fill the financing gaps for African countries experiencing conflict and facing increasing security, and discussed how to mobilise resources and build effective partnerships between public and private sectors in those contexts.

Throughout 2023, CSPPS Coordinator, Peter van Sluijs, continued to function as the Co-Chair of the **Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Steering Committee**. TAP is a broad international coalition of civil society organisations working together to advance SDG16 and to enhance accountability for the 2030 Agenda. In joining the TAP Network Steering Committee, CSPPS aims to support efforts to bring about greater interaction between individual TAP Network members and proactively seek new strategic coalitions to be built at the regional and international levels, in order to enhance policy influencing impact and to catalyse new innovative programming ideas.

In 2023 CSPPS continued its close collaboration with other Steering Committee members of the **Global SDG16+ Coalition**. The Coalition brings together major networks, initiatives and organisations active in the SDG16+ domain, to identify and plan for joint advocacy and action at both the national and the international levels. Along with the already present organisations in the Steering Committee, CSPPS welcomed the expansion of the steering committee to new members, namely the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), as a way to strengthen and amplify joint actions from the Coalition.

On the bilateral note, CSPPS has maintained strong and regular dialogue with like minded organisations - UNOY, GPPAC, or FriEnt to name a few - with the larger goal of ensuring strategic cooperation and efficient action towards the implementation of SDG16.



# AMPLIFYING

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This section showcases a selection of activities in which CSPPS has been involved in 2023 with the aim of promoting and elevating the voices of those working in contexts affected by conflict and fragility at the local, national, regional and global levels. As local stakeholders working directly in fragile and conflict settings have a comprehensive understanding of local dynamics as well as of the reality of the ground, we strongly believe that their voice must be heard and taken seriously into account in decision-making processes around conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding issues. However, local peacebuilders remain too often excluded from these spaces, specifically in high-level forums. In addition, global restrictions and shrinking of civic space are further hampering civil society to be heard.

In accordance with these beliefs, and with the aim to address challenges local peacebuilders are facing to make their voice heard, CSPPS has continued in 2023 of giving its members a larger platform to express their experience and knowledge, inviting them to participate in key events or including them in various projects.

## Fifth edition of the Voices of SDG16+ campaign

‘Voices of SDG16+: Stories of Global Action’ is a collaborative video campaign that aims to highlight the significant work of civil society on SDG16+ at the global level, specifically within discussions at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) of the United Nations. In this framework, individuals and CSOs have the opportunity to submit short videos telling their “stories” of best practices and efforts being undertaken towards SDG16+ at both local and national levels. This year, the fifth edition focused on the theme “Accelerating Action on SDG16+ to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. During the HLPF on the 13th July 2023, a side event was organised to showcase selected entries from Legal Aid (Rwanda), Commonwealth for Human Rights Initiative (India), Justice and Empowerment (Nigeria), Amani Institute (Democratic Republic of Congo), and Nagarik Aawaz (Nepal). The selected videos from 2023 finalists are available [here](#) on the Voices of SDG16+ campaign’s official website.



Flyer of the Voices of SDG16+ Campaign

## Seventh season of the Peace Corner Podcast

The Peace Corner Podcast is an intern and youth-driven initiative that offers peacebuilders around the world the opportunity to share stories that voice personal journeys, challenges and solutions for peace, including from the grassroots level, but also at the national and international levels. This year, interns from CSPPS, as well as the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), contributed to the seventh season of the podcast, under the theme of “**Climate Justice and Peacebuilding**”. Charis Apostolopoulou, Elise Granlie, Noé Montel and Victor Hounkponou recorded an episode, featuring a different aspect of the interconnection between Climate Justice and Peacebuilding, such as interlinkages between climate and conflict, as well as humanitarian and peacebuilding sectors, and the significant role of youth. All episodes from the Peace Corner Podcast can be listened to on [Soundcloud](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [Spotify](#).

## Unboxing Localisation Trajectory

This year, CSPPS has been involved in the Unboxing Localisation Learning Trajectory, an initiative spearheaded by the Platform, in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law (KPSRL). CSPPS strongly believes that supporting locally-led peacebuilding and development efforts is the way forward to a more equitable, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable world. Through this learning trajectory, we aim to explore all unboxed aspects of localisation in an inclusive manner for improved policy and practices.

This year, three different sessions of the Unboxing Localisation Learning Trajectory have been organised. The IVth session “Measuring Localisation”, held on 20 March 2023 and co-hosted with the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR), focused on challenges related to measuring localisation in terms of capturing progress on our ambitions to work more localised. The theme of the Vth session, co-hosted with the Women’s International Peace Center (WIPC), held on 6 September 2023, was “From consultation towards local leadership: Inclusive programming in practice”, and the last, sixth session of the learning trajectory in 2023, co-hosted with GPPAC on 14 November 2023, was dedicated to innovative funding for local peacebuilding action. Please find the summary reports of the sessions mentioned on the [KPSRL website page](#).

## Amplifying the voice of civil society through new publications

In the context of civil society’s engagement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of SDG16, CSPPS has been invited to contribute to a series of case studies focusing on security sector governance issued by the **Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)**. Our case study, “Inclusive Governance for SDG16+: the case of CSPPS” highlights how the Platform engages around follow-up and the review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and reflects on our approach to ensure civil society participation in VNR processes. Specifically, our contribution showcases the Ready for Review Project (R4R) which ensured meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of national and local CSOs during earlier VNR processes in Côte d’Ivoire, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste. The publication entitled “The Contribution of Civil Society to Sustainable Development Goal 16 Through Security Sector Governance and Reform. A selection of case studies” was launched on 12 January 2024.

Next to this, CSPPS contributed to a publication issued by the **European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)** in October 2023, entitled “‘Peace’ in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Good Practices and Recommendations”. This paper aims to illustrate through ten case studies how to pursue the integration of the peace component as part of efforts to implement the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. The CSPPS case study reflects on good practices and lessons learned in both Liberia and Somalia, drawing on projects implemented by the Platform for Dialogue and Peace (P4DP) in Liberia and Women’s Development Organisation (IIDA) in Somalia.



# LOBBYING

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## Advocating for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Ahead of the SDG Summit and the HLPF, the TAP Network issued on 18 May 2023 the report “Halfway to 2030 Report on SDG16+. A Civil Society Assessment of Progress Towards Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies”. Together with Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) and GPPAC, CSPPS contributed to the report, by writing the chapter on Target 16.1, entitled “Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere”. The report highlights that despite some reasons for hope, progress towards SDG16+ has been slow and uneven, and in many cases backsliding, therefore urging the need for action.

CSPPS took part in the **SDG16 Conference in Rome** from 30 May to 1st June 2023, a conference co-organised by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. The event, which gathered representatives of governments, international organisations, civil society, and academia, aimed at discussing and finding means to get SDG16 back on track, ahead of the 2023 SDG Summit and the High-Level Political Forum. CSPPS members from Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Italy, Yemen, Somalia, the United States, Germany and the Netherlands participated in the Conference and the Civil Society Day, in which the latter was organised one day prior to the conference. Moreover, CSPPS had a significant role in the SDG16 Rome Conference, as the Platform spearheaded the process of drafting a new, fourth Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ in cooperation with the TAP Network. As a result, the 2023 Declaration entitled “If Not Now, Then When? An urgent call for transformative SDG16+ commitments at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda” was issued on the first day of the conference. The declaration calls for urgent action toward revitalised and transformative commitments on SDG16+ and stipulates action-oriented recommendations that require immediate action and genuine commitment to peaceful, just and inclusive societies.



*Participants of the SDG16 Conference in Rome*

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE SDG16 CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS FROM OLLA ALSAKKAF



*Olla Alsakkaf at the SDG16 Conference in Rome*

*On 23rd of January, the CSPPS Secretariat met with Olla Alsakkaf, Founder and Chairperson of Peace Environment for Development, in Yemen. During the meeting, she reflected on the Rome SDG16 Conference, which took place from 30 May to 1st June 2023.*

Olla stressed how important it is for CSPPS, as well as other CSOs networks to be part of such high-level events, as civil society actors represent the voices from local and grassroots levels, which must be heard by decision-makers. She explained that decision-makers tend to be distant from the realities of the people, the Rome SDG16 Conference allowed CSOs to ensure that they meet the needs of the people, through putting pressure and investigating follow-up action from their part. On a personal level, the Conference represented great opportunities for networking and learning activities. Moreover, she was the only Yemeni representative, as even the Yemeni government was not present, which allowed her to bring the perspective of Yemen to the discussion. In this regard, her intervention in one of the side-events focused on both the civil war in Yemen and climate action related to SDG16.

Olla also identified avenues for improvement on the representation of CSOs at the Conference. Even when CSOs were represented in the event, their number remained low compared to other actors attending, and they were mainly present in side-events. This idea showcases the need for CSOs networks, such as CSPPS, to continue their advocacy work for a better inclusion of civil society in decision-making processes and high-level events.

Regarding the outcome of the Conference, she highlighted how difficult it is to measure the impact of this kind of events, as many promises and announcements are made in these frameworks by stakeholders, which raises the question of follow-up action afterward. However, among the positive outcomes of the event, she highlighted the importance of the launch of the fourth Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ entitled "If Not Now, Then When? An urgent call for transformative SDG16+ commitments at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda", which she described as the best part and most important moment of the Conference. CSPPS has been significantly involved in the drafting process of the declaration. Given the importance of this declaration, it should, according to Olla, be given greater prominence, both within the Rome Conference as the launch of the declaration occurred during a side-event, and by the media. Olla also applies this remark on the need for more media's coverage on CSPPS activities, as the Platform is doing great work that needs to be widely shared.

In the upcoming 2024 Rome SDG16 Conference, Olla would like to see more actors from fragile and conflict-affected states, as they are the ones who truly understand what peace means, with the potential to share inspiring stories based on the reality of the ground at the global level. It would allow to go beyond talks and promises and therefore identify more actionable and practical steps as 2030 is approaching.



During the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** that took place in New York from 10 to 19 July 2023, CSPPS has been involved in several activities on SDG 16+. Among them, and as part of the Global SDG16+ Coalition, the Platform co-hosted on 12 July a side-event on **“SDG 16+ as an Enabler for the 2030 Agenda”**. The event brought together stakeholders from across the SDG 16+ community with the aim of sharing lessons learned and strategic approaches for strengthened implementation going forward, and reflecting on key opportunities for mobilisation in the context of the SDG Summit. In the framework of the HLPF, CSPPS, together with its partners from the Global SDG16+ Coalition, issued a statement entitled **“SDG 16+ at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda”**. Peter van Sluijs, CSPPS Coordinator, attended several side-events during the HLPF week, such as the SDG16 Conference side event, where he presented key headlines of the 2023 Rome Civil Society Declaration.

In the framework of the **SDG Summit** that took place in New York on 18-19 September 2023, CSPPS co-organised, with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, International IDEA, the TAP Network, the Pathfinders, and other partners from the Global SDG16+ Coalition, the side event **“Delivering the SDGs through Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”** on 20 September 2023. The session was a great opportunity to discuss how to amplify commitments, draw out solutions across SDG16+, and demonstrate how concrete action on peace, justice, equality and inclusion drives progress across the SDGs, strengthens multilateralism, and consolidates democratic principles.



*Flyer of the side event ‘Delivering the SDGs through Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’*

## Engaging in a multi-stakeholder dialogue with IDPS constituencies

CSPPS members took part in a special **IDPS consultation meeting on the New Agenda for Peace** on 7 March 2023. The meeting gathered IDPS constituencies with the aim of discussing lessons learned from tripartite engagement in conflict-affected and fragile contexts and share critical points of consideration for the New Agenda for Peace.

On the 3rd and 4th July 2023, a CSPPS delegation, composed of Adam Dicko, Gwendolyn Myers, Elizabeth Hume, Peter van Sluijs, Musa Ansumana Soko, Elise Granlie and Victor Hounkponou participated in the **IDPS Policy Dialogue and Steering Group meeting** in Paris. During the meeting, IDPS members agreed on strategic planning towards the 2023 SDG Summit and the 2024 Summit of the Future, to reflect on how IDPS can position itself in order to effectively influence global policy making on peacebuilding and statebuilding issues.

In September 2023, a CSPPS delegation including, Elisabeth Hume, Gwendolyn Myers, Musa Ansumana Soko, and Peter van Sluijs, was present in New York for the **UNGA High-Level Week**. In this framework, the delegation took part in several events hosted by IDPS, such as the High-Level session on **“Accelerating Progress on SDG16 in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings”**, and a working-level session on country engagements that focused on strategic planning for 2024. On this occasion, IDPS released a statement entitled **“Turning the Tide for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Society”**.



*Panel at the UNGA High-Level Week  
Elisabeth Hume (CSPPS) at the right*

## Additional CSPPS engagements in the context of the UNGA High-Level Week

Also in New York, Peter van Sluijs took the floor during other side events, such as the one organised by UNOY/GPPAC on **“Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals through Youth, Peace and Security agenda at the local level”**, in which he emphasised concrete steps to protect and strengthen the role of young peace actors in implementing the SDGs. During a **Global People Assembly (GPA)** side event, Peter van Sluijs also highlighted the need for accelerated action on peace, justice, and inclusion. Elisabeth Hume from AfP partnered in the session, addressing the New Agenda for Peace. Following the Assembly, the **“Declaration of the Global People’s Assembly 2023”** was issued.

## Addressing the Climate-Peace-Security Nexus during COP28

Environmental crises are highly varied, both in their nature (whether they are human-made or natural disasters) as well as in the consequences they have. These phenomena can jeopardise peacebuilding efforts, either by being an additional trigger of violence or by being one of the primary sources of conflict. At the local level, the impacts of climate change are affecting more and more the activities of CSPPS members, who must address additional kinds of conflicts and tensions around access to natural resources such as land, water and food. As the climate change phenomena is getting worse day by day, CSPPS believes that it is today - more than ever - necessary to recognize and address the compounding challenges in the context of the Climate, Peace and Security Nexus.

Ahead of the first ever Peace Day at COP28, held in Dubai from the 30th November to the 13th December 2023, CSPPS published a background paper "Compounding Challenges in Conflict Settings. Local voices reflecting on climate, peace and security interlinkages", written by Fidèle Djebba (Association Rayons de Soleil), Joël Yodoyman (Espaces Verts du Sahel), Sharad Neupane (Asian Academy for Peace, Research and Development) and Elise Granlie (CSPPS Secretariat). The paper highlights the reality of climate change and its impact on peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities, in Chad (Espaces Verts du Sahel), Cameroon (Association Rayons de Soleil) and Nepal (Asian Academy for Peace, Research and Development). In addition, Peter van Sluijs from CSPPS Secretariat was present at the COP28 with colleagues from Cordaid. In this framework, CSPPS issued together with Cordaid a positioning paper "Addressing the Climate Crisis in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings".



COP28 in Dubai

## Addressing the HDP Nexus in the context of the INCAF Consultation

CSPPS members took part in the consultation organised by DAC/INCAF on the “Interim Report on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus”. After providing written comments, CSPPS members participated on the 7th of November 2023 in an online consultation, which gathered various stakeholders from the civil society community. The final report was presented at the DAC-UN Dialogue on HDP Nexus on 4th of April 2024.

## A new strategic partnership with Germany

CSPPS welcomes its new partnership with the German BMZ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. In January 2024, a partnership agreement was officially approved and signed by both parties. This partnership is highly strategic for CSPPS, especially in the current context, as it means on one hand additional resources to support the Platform daily coordination and activities, and on the other hand, further engagement with the German Government on issues of shared concern, including electoral processes, digitalisation, migration, COVID-19 impacts, food security and poverty, gender equality, and climate change, among others

## Engaging civil society actors at the UN level

From the 30th November to 1st December 2023, CSPPS Co-Chair Gwendolyn Myers alongside CSPPS Focal Point in Nigeria Theophilus Ekpon participated in the first edition of the Annual **CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding** that took place at the UN Headquarters in New York. During the event, civil society from local, national, regional and global levels had the opportunity to network and connect, as well as to strategically influence global peacebuilding goals and priorities at the level of the United Nations. Key challenges related to geopolitics, politicisation of funding, human rights violations, and shrinking civic space that civil society faces have also been identified, ultimately hindering the impact of their work.

# THE NEXUS IN PRACTICE

A Spotlight Report by the  
Peace & Security Thematic Working Group  
DAC-CSO Reference Group

- April 2024 -



# SPOTLIGHT ON THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

## REFLECTIONS FROM THEOPHILUS EKPON

*On 9 January 2024, Theophilus Ekpon, CSPPS Focal Point in Nigeria and Executive Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development and Education in Africa (CSDEA), met with the CSPPS Secretariat with the aim to reflect on 2023 activities, specifically related to the promotion of the YPS agenda.*

According to Theophilus, grasping the concept of peace begins when people are still young, as adults already have their mind set. For this reason, targeting young people, especially children, is key in order to develop peacebuilding skills among them.

In Nigeria, where young people constitute more than half of the population, his organisation, CSDEA, has been raising awareness and advocacy on the UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security, and on its interlinkages with the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, for many years. In this regard, they are actively involved in the technical lead related to the implementation process of the YPS agenda in Nigeria, specifically through their co-chair role in the Nigerian Coalition on YPS. Being a member of CSPPS allowed them to strengthen their advocacy and lobbying efforts on youth engagement in peacebuilding and statebuilding, through engaging with IDPS stakeholders in Nigeria and beyond, specifically the national government.

Theophilus highlighted that CSPPS is strategically positioned to work with young people and on YPS, as it allows CSOs from national, regional, and global levels to work together, and engage in a dialogue with diverse stakeholders. One concrete example of such cooperation is the participation of CSPPS members in high-level meetings. In this regard, Theophilus had the opportunity to take part in two key events in 2023, namely the first edition of the **Annual CSO-UN Dialogue on 'Building and Sustaining Peace Together'** from the 30th November to 1st December, and the **2023 UNOCT Civil Society Roundtable on Digital safety for youth** on the 7th December, both held in New York. During these events, he shared key messages, such as the need to address the root causes of conflict, including poor governance, exclusion, competition between regional and global powers when engaging in digital projects, as those projects alone are not enough to achieve sustainable peace. In his opinion, it is highly strategic for CSPPS to take part in such events, as it allows CSPPS members to bring their own ideas, principles and work to the global stage, and thus directly influence global policies and discussions.

Like all peacebuilding actors, CSPPS is also facing challenges in its daily work, such as the need to attract more funding in order to exploit its full potential, also mentioned by Theophilus. Indeed, Theophilus believes that in addition to its networking and advocacy activities, CSPPS's contributions in promoting the YPS agenda, and SDG16+ more globally, could be even greater if the Platform was able to support financially concrete local actions implemented by CSPPS.

# 2023 MAIN OUTREACH EVENTS

## MARCH

- Unboxing Localisation IVth session
- IDPS Consultation meeting on the New Agenda for Peace

## JULY

- Launch of the 5th edition of the Voices of SDG16+ Campaign
- Organisation of a side-event on “SDG16+ as an Enable for the 2030 Agenda” at the High-Level Political Forum
- Launch of the statement “SDG16+ at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda” at the High-Level Political Forum
- IDPS Policy Dialogue and Steering Group meeting

## OCTOBER

- Launch of the EPLO Study “Peace’ in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Good Practices and Recommendations”

## DECEMBER

- COP28 in Dubai

## MAY

- SDG16 Rome Conference
- Launch of the 4th Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+

## SEPTEMBER

- SDG Summit in New York
- UNGA High-level week and Global People Assembly in New York
- Just Future International Planning workshop in Nairobi
- Unboxing Localisation Vth session

## NOVEMBER

- CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding in New York
- Consultation on the DAC-INCAF “Interim Report on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus”
- Unboxing Localisation VIth session

# UPDATES FROM OUR MEMBERS

## Tiro Association for Arts (Lebanon)

On the 26th of June 2023, our CSPPS-member organisation **Tiro Association for Arts (Lebanon)**, represented by Kassem Istambouli, received the 2023 Sharjah Award for Arab Culture and Arts at UNESCO in Paris. This award recognizes their significant contribution to Arab culture, specifically their work for an independent culture and arts network in Lebanon. TAA is dedicated to foster increased engagement in arts and culture within local communities, transcending the boundaries of prevailing political and religious contexts. The organisation was established with the fundamental belief that these communities possess the ability to communicate their expressions through art, serving not only as a mirror to their identities, but also as a platform to depict the challenges and issues faced by both their respective communities and the broader Lebanese society.



*Kassem Istambouli at the ceremony of the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture*

## Vision for Generation Organization (South Sudan)

On the 12th and 13th of December 2024, our member from South Sudan, **Vision for Generation Organization (V4G)**, organised a country-team workshop. This meeting aimed at strengthening the coordination of civil society organisations on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding in the context of Just Future activities. 62 participants from 22 diverse CSOs gathered during this workshop to enhance the capacity and governance structure of the CSPPS Country Team, as well as to reflect on the the relevance of the New Deal process in the current context of South Sudan and at the global level.

## Youth Without Borders Organization for Development (Yemen)

Our member **Youth Without Borders Organization for Development (YWBD)** from Yemen celebrated their 10th anniversary. On this occasion, they published an assessment report entitled “10 Years of impact making. An integrated bottom-up approach towards peacebuilding and development 2013-2023”. During a CSPPS Core Group meeting, held on the 24th of October 2023, Maged Thabet, CSPPS National Focal Point in Yemen, presented the main ideas of the report and concrete activities implemented, such as the establishment of safe spaces providing psychological and health support and economic empowerment, the use of sports and art activities to increase civic engagement among the population, providing equipment to hospitals and health services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and financial and technical support to civil society actors in Yemen, among others.

## Afghans for Progressive Thinking (Afghanistan)

All year long, in spite of a restricted environment, **Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT)**, our focal point organisation in Afghanistan, continued to promote youth leadership, education, and a culture of peace. As part of its mentorship and leadership development programs, APT gave the opportunity to young people, specifically women, to reflect on the ground realities and on the challenges Afghanistan has been facing since the return of the Taliban in August 2021. Their objective is to ensure that the voice of the youth is not suppressed. As a result, APT released several publications, such as “Two years After Afghanistan’s Fall: What Was Life Like Under the Taliban Rule?”. In addition, Policy Briefs Pamphlets which include an analysis of ground reality context and recommendations from the youth were released, as well as a “Collection of Messages From Young Women Who Are Being Denied The Opportunity To Pursue Education And Exercise Their Right To Work”. You can access these publications through this [link](#).

# UPDATES FROM OUR MEMBERS

## Réseau Femmes et Paix (Burundi)

In the context of the Just Future consortium, our member from Burundi, **Réseau Femmes et Paix (RFP)**, actively engaged in various activities aiming at improving the inclusion of vulnerable groups, specifically women and albinos persons, in decision-making process. These activities include the publication of an advocacy report related to the issue of inclusivity in decision-making areas, and the production of a radio programme that highlighted the necessity of better considering the needs of the local population, specifically the most vulnerable one, by decision-makers.

## Asian Academy for Peace, Research and Development (Nepal)

Our member from Nepal, the **Asian Academy for Peace, Research and Development**, organised on 20-21st November the 2nd Nepal Dialogues Summit. The summit, based on a grassroots-to-global approach to share experiences, gathered over 30 international and national entities with the aim of exchanging experiences and reflections, and advocating for a culture of dialogue for non-violent conflict transformation and political change.



# A NEW LEADERSHIP FOR A GLOBAL PLATFORM

*In November 2023, the CSPPS Executive Committee decided to innovate the leadership structure by electing not one but two chairs, one representing the Global South and the other representing the Global North. Behind this change, is a true commitment and willingness to reflect CSPPS core values, based on inclusivity and equal representation of our members from across the globe. This new co-chair system in this regard symbolises the partnership and close cooperation between our constituency members, as well as pinpoints at the necessity to work closely together in order to address current global challenges related to conflict prevention, sustaining peace and inclusive development processes.*

## MESSAGE FROM ELIZABETH (LIZ) HUME, CO-CHAIR OF CSPPS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dear CSPPS Global Network Members and Partners,

As the Executive Director of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, I know the importance of global networks because no single organisation alone can solve the challenging, complex crises and conflicts we face. However, collective action by a strong and united network working together with other like-minded networks can produce profound change, which is why AfP is a proud member of CSPPS. As we continue to break violent conflict records globally, CSPPS is more vital than ever to advancing and building the peacebuilding and conflict prevention sector with a focus on strengthening multilateral institutions, international dialogue, and SDG 16+.



Being a member of the Executive Committee and now a co-chair of the EC with Gwendolyn Myers is an incredible honour highlighting women's leadership and the need for partnership between the global North and South. We must work and learn from each other to address our increasing conflict dynamics globally, even in the global North! Again, I am honoured and privileged to help lead the collective work of dedicated CSPPS members driven by a brilliant CSPPS Secretariat. CSPPS and strong global collaboration are needed now more than ever to tackle increasing global violent conflict and fragility, and this is what gives me hope that we can build a more sustainable and peaceful future.

All my best,

Liz Hume

Co-Chairperson, Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS)



# MESSAGE FROM GWENDOLYN MYERS, CO-CHAIR OF CSPPS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dear CSPPS Members and Partners,

I am thrilled to have joined this global network dedicated to advancing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16+ in fragile situations as Co-Chairperson. This journey which commenced on November 23, marked a pivotal moment for both CSPPS and myself.

As the new co-chair system signifies a turning point in CSPPS's leadership structure, being at the centre of this transformation is an honour and a responsibility I embrace wholeheartedly.

I see this role as an opportunity to amplify youth and women's voices, champion meaningful inclusion, and contribute to sustainable peace and development globally.

Representing the Global South as co-chairperson alongside Madam Elizabeth Hume symbolises a commitment to promoting women's leadership for peace, and I remain dedicated to championing this ethos in all of my operations at the Global South. Recollecting from the start of my tenure, the CSPPS has continued to contribute tremendously to global peace. Navigating my role at CSPPS has been an enriching journey, deepening my understanding of the complexities and nuances of peacebuilding efforts. Engaging with such diverse voices and perspectives within this global network has taught me the profound impact of collaborative peacebuilding.

The collective strength of CSPPS members fuels my dedication to advancing sustainable development and peacebuilding at the forefront of global challenges. Looking ahead to 2024, my strategic vision for CSPPS includes: enhancing global collaboration through strengthening partnerships with organisations and stakeholders to amplify the impact of CSPPS on a global scale, empowering youth and women by prioritising initiatives that promote meaningful youth and women's inclusion in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes, and continuously working towards the advancement of SDG16+ in fragile situations through strategic advocacy and collaborative efforts.

I am grateful for the trust placed in me by CSPPS and look forward to a year of impactful collaboration, growth, and contributions to global peace.

Yours in Peace,

Gwendolyn Myers

Co-Chairperson, Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS)



# STRATEGIC OUTLOOK FOR 2023

2024 will be a crucial year, as SDG 16 is going under Thematic Review during the High-Level Political Forum, which will be held in July in New York. This evaluation process is all the more important as we are beyond the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To date, progress related to the implementation of SDG16, and the 2030 Agenda more globally, has been very limited and challenged in many ways, specifically regarding the possibility of having an inclusive and participatory decision-making process as civil society is restrained from operating in numerous countries, delegitimized and faced with constant threats and intimidation. Civil society organisations working on peacebuilding, statebuilding and conflict prevention issues are in this regard facing challenging times, being often sidelined during peace processes and high-level political dialogues, and lacking sufficient funding for concrete actions at the local and community levels.

Through its members, CSPPS is determined to pursue its lobby and advocacy efforts for the promotion of SDG16+, and bring in the perspectives from CSOs in global, regional and national forums. In this regard, a key priority for CSPPS in 2024 will be to showcase the voices of civil society in next year's high-level events, including the HLPF, the Summit of the Future, the Pact for the Future, the SDG Summit and the SDG16+ Rome Conference.

In addition, as a multi-stakeholders approach is key to address the complexity of the world, the Platform will continue working in collaboration with various peacebuilding actors and partners. In the framework of the IDPS tripartite partnership, CSPPS will keep engaging with the donor community and member states from the g7+ group for a meaningful inclusion of CSOs. In line with the IDPS Agenda - which aims to build political momentum for change and trust between fragile and conflict affected countries, development partners, and civil society, transform the way national and international partners work together to promote peacebuilding and statebuilding and work towards country led pathways out of fragility - we truly believe that it is only through cooperation and working together that we will achieve positive results in the promotion of SDG16+. With the aim of learning from each other, sharing good practices and remaining challenges, and coordinating global actions and campaigns, the Platform is involved in several partnerships, including the TAP network, the SDG16+ Coalition, the Just Future Consortium, and is planning to continue engaging proactively with them in 2024.

Next to that, 14 countries where our members are present and active, have indicated that they will prepare for the Voluntary National Review (VNR) ahead of the HLPF in 2024. CSPPS strongly believes that this is an opportunity for CSOs to engage in a dialogue with their national governments, to ensure that civil society voices and the realities from the ground are taken into account. In this regard, one of the priorities of the Platform will be to determine with the concerned CSPPS members how we can support them, as well as making the connection with the SDG16 Thematic Review to ensure complementarity and joint actions from the civil society.

In 2024, we look forward to further our engagements with Germany through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ), with whom we have signed a two-year grant agreement. Beyond additional resources for the management of CSPPS daily activities, this new partnership is also highly strategic as it will allow us to collaborate closely with German stakeholders, who are key actors in the field of peacebuilding and statebuilding at the global level. In addition, through the operationalisation of the agreement, we will have the opportunity to strengthen in 2024 our activities on various issues - including electoral processes, digitalisation, migration, COVID-19 impacts, food security and poverty reduction, gender equality and climate change.

Moreover, CSPPS is aware and worried by the growing challenges and complexity of the world, which is facing ongoing tensions and conflicts, accelerating effects of climate change, rising disinformation, combined with a backlash on human rights that is disproportionately affecting women and girls. In this context, civilians, especially from the Global South, are the first ones to be confronted with the negative impacts of those new challenges. Paradoxically, we are also witnessing a growing trend of civic space restrictions, which prevent civil society actors, specifically CSOs, from making their voices heard on issues and challenges that concern them first and foremost.

Alongside these specific and targeted plans for 2024, a key part of our efforts is directed at securing longer-term core financing for the Platform needed to ensure the continuation of the Platform's activities.

On behalf of the entire membership, we would like to thank all partners for supporting the work of CSPPS and for joining forces with us on the global journey towards building a more resilient and peaceful future.



**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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