

## **STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE (I4PS) IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 TOWARDS RESILIENT LOCALLY-INFORMED SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINING PEACE**

Geneva Peace Week  
*Summary Note*

Ahead of the 2022 Geneva Peace Week (1-5 November 2021), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict ([GPPAC](#)), in partnership with the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), held a virtual discussion with leading human rights, development and peacebuilding experts to explore the definition of Infrastructures for Peace (I4Ps), share examples of inclusive I4Ps and discuss how to increase I4P inclusiveness. The discussion was based on findings from [regional consultations with local peacebuilders](#) on the role of I4Ps in advancing inclusive and sustainable I4Ps in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlighting a range of examples from Latin America and the Caribbean to Uganda to the Maldives to Nepal to the Philippines, experts shared that inclusive I4Ps have proven themselves impactful in the pursuit of sustaining peace. While it is not an easy process to establish such inclusive I4Ps, they effectively contribute to addressing root causes of conflict, supporting peace processes and mobilising responses to the needs within societies.

This summary note provides some of the key takeaways from the discussion to support human rights and peacebuilding experts in developing and strengthening integrated I4Ps in pursuit of sustaining peace.

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### **What are Infrastructures for Peace?**

Infrastructures for Peace (I4Ps) represent a dynamic network of skills, capacities, resources, tools and institutions that support the integrated approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace rooted in the development priorities. I4Ps help address root causes of conflict and violence, form constructive social relationships, and build resilience of societies against crises, risks and emerging threats. Taken together, I4Ps serve an important peacebuilding function and are a meaningful mechanism for delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While I4Ps serve many important roles, I4Ps are not replacements for formal peace processes or governance structures.

## The most important characteristics of I4Ps are

1. reliability, or the assurance that in times of crisis and conflict, such networks of people can be counted on to intervene;
2. the ability to be dynamic and evolve given shifting conditions.

## Why do we need inclusive I4Ps?

When I4Ps are inclusive, they support community resilience and enable diverse community needs to be raised to higher platforms. When a larger number of voices are represented in I4Ps, community members, national governments and multilateral partners alike have greater trust in their functions and are more likely to engage with them in peacebuilding processes, with better outcomes for all stakeholders.

## How have I4Ps been utilised during COVID-19?

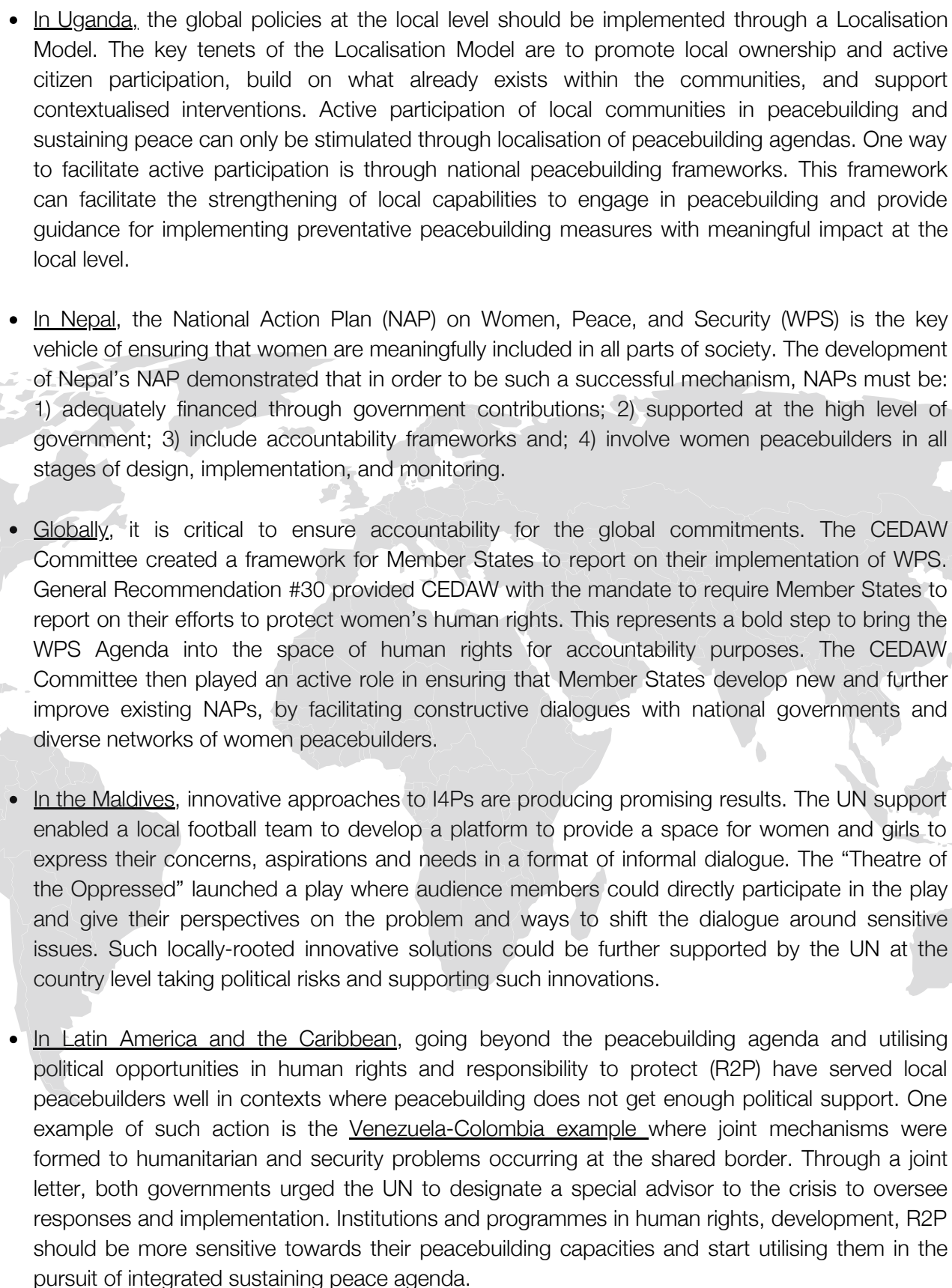
Despite the positive impetus from the international community to accelerate locally-informed and integrated action on peacebuilding, human rights and development, 2020 was overshadowed by an unprecedented challenge – the global COVID-19 pandemic. And I4Ps undertook important roles in supporting communities in addressing this crisis.

The pandemic has negatively impacted many processes and conditions that enable I4Ps to function such as social cohesion, civil space, and mediation processes, and communal interaction; however, it also provided a number of opportunities to learn about the weaknesses of I4Ps and provide an impetus for the donor community, as well as peacebuilding, human rights and development experts, to allocate human and financial resources to invest into stronger and more community-rooted I4Ps. This opportunity must be firmly seized.

## What are the examples of inclusive Infrastructures for Peace?

There are a multitude of examples of inclusive infrastructures for peace, with their respective shapes and forms developed specifically to respond to the needs of the specific context in which they appear. Some of the key examples include:

- In the Philippines, broadening participation in the peace process was instrumental in passing legislation that guided the implementation of a peace agreement in the Philippines. When negotiating the legislation in 2014, more people started expressing their interests in the agreement, and undeniably had a claim for being part of the process. To ensure that the process is as inclusive as possible, Moro National Liberation Front worked to include everyone, primarily through an insider mediation group consisting of representatives from a range of ethnicities, genders, and religious affiliations. This format allowed for a diverse group of people to express their opinions and ultimately come to a consensus on a range of key issues. The discussion space created by the group proved to be instrumental in finally passing the peace agreement and translating it into legislation that provides a framework for the implementation of the peace agreement.

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- In Uganda, the global policies at the local level should be implemented through a Localisation Model. The key tenets of the Localisation Model are to promote local ownership and active citizen participation, build on what already exists within the communities, and support contextualised interventions. Active participation of local communities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace can only be stimulated through localisation of peacebuilding agendas. One way to facilitate active participation is through national peacebuilding frameworks. This framework can facilitate the strengthening of local capabilities to engage in peacebuilding and provide guidance for implementing preventative peacebuilding measures with meaningful impact at the local level.
  - In Nepal, the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) is the key vehicle of ensuring that women are meaningfully included in all parts of society. The development of Nepal's NAP demonstrated that in order to be such a successful mechanism, NAPs must be: 1) adequately financed through government contributions; 2) supported at the high level of government; 3) include accountability frameworks and; 4) involve women peacebuilders in all stages of design, implementation, and monitoring.
  - Globally, it is critical to ensure accountability for the global commitments. The CEDAW Committee created a framework for Member States to report on their implementation of WPS. General Recommendation #30 provided CEDAW with the mandate to require Member States to report on their efforts to protect women's human rights. This represents a bold step to bring the WPS Agenda into the space of human rights for accountability purposes. The CEDAW Committee then played an active role in ensuring that Member States develop new and further improve existing NAPs, by facilitating constructive dialogues with national governments and diverse networks of women peacebuilders.
  - In the Maldives, innovative approaches to I4Ps are producing promising results. The UN support enabled a local football team to develop a platform to provide a space for women and girls to express their concerns, aspirations and needs in a format of informal dialogue. The "Theatre of the Oppressed" launched a play where audience members could directly participate in the play and give their perspectives on the problem and ways to shift the dialogue around sensitive issues. Such locally-rooted innovative solutions could be further supported by the UN at the country level taking political risks and supporting such innovations.
  - In Latin America and the Caribbean, going beyond the peacebuilding agenda and utilising political opportunities in human rights and responsibility to protect (R2P) have served local peacebuilders well in contexts where peacebuilding does not get enough political support. One example of such action is the Venezuela-Colombia example where joint mechanisms were formed to humanitarian and security problems occurring at the shared border. Through a joint letter, both governments urged the UN to designate a special advisor to the crisis to oversee responses and implementation. Institutions and programmes in human rights, development, R2P should be more sensitive towards their peacebuilding capacities and start utilising them in the pursuit of integrated sustaining peace agenda.

## Opportunities and Recommendations:

The discussion outlined a number of opportunities that could support human rights and peacebuilding experts in developing and strengthening integrated I4Ps in pursuit of sustaining peace:

- **Expanding multi-stakeholder and inclusive I4Ps:**
  - The example of advancing inclusive peace process in the Philippines shows how making a consistent and intentional effort to meaningfully include a range of stakeholders ensures the sustainability of peace for all.
- **Ensuring that local needs are at the core of I4Ps:**
  - The Uganda case study demonstrates that the success of global policies at the country level largely depends on the participation of and attention to the needs of local communities.
- **Enabling coordination and complementarity among I4Ps:**
  - Often, some of the I4Ps are the coordination mechanisms themselves; however, the coordination among various networks, actors and institutions across the peacebuilding, development and human rights realms are required to ensure coordination and complementarity, as exemplified in the LAC example.
- **Integrating accountability and implementation for global commitments:**
  - The CEDAW Committee highlighted how addressing the lack of accountability is key in ensuring that WPS agendas are translated into effective legislation and impacts on the ground.
- **Guaranteeing adequate, predictable and quality financing for I4Ps:**
  - Several participants have emphasised that peacebuilding, development and human rights goals are rarely adequately financed. This demands the broadening of potential donors and encouraging more resource allocations, as well as ensuring greater coordination among donors to advance more quality financing.



### We would like to hear from you!

To help us strengthen our recommendations and join our work to advance stronger Infrastructures for Peace, we invite you to participate in [an online survey](#)>> and share your perspectives!