



A Network of People
Building Peace

25 April 2022

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

I commend this initiative *to start* this important week with a discussion on concrete steps to meaningfully support local peacebuilders. Just yesterday, nearly 200 people were killed and thousands displaced in West Darfur violence, which proves that supporting local peacebuilders (in the absence of a functioning government) is more critical and urgent than ever.

We all know that people directly affected by conflict are *best placed* to build and sustain peace. ***In practice and based on my experience, this requires the donor community to commit to three shifts: 1) shift in the mindset, 2) shift in the practice and 3) shift in the expectations:-***

The first shift in the mindset means that donors *work with local peacebuilders* to ensure that financing mechanisms are *accessible* and support *local actors* in achieving *their* missions, without shaping *the nature* of their work. Effective financing mechanisms can be designed in partnership with local peacebuilders. When I was co-chairing the GPPAC-UNOY joint YPS Working Group, we developed a Youth-by-Youth grantmaking model, where young peacebuilders themselves design the selection criteria, review applications, and decide on the grants. Young peacebuilders in Nigeria were able to use this grant to start off the national coalition on YPS and advance the localization of the YPS Agenda.

Further, there is a good practice of the WPHF to have civil society on its board. This makes me think that a change of mindset is possible towards consulting with peacebuilders through creation of inclusive advisory and review boards and engaging local peacebuilders in donor conferences.

Second, to shift the practice, donors should go beyond working with same partners and *start working with peacebuilding networks and coalitions* that are representative of diverse local actors. Networks, such as GPPAC and the MENA Coalition on YPS help local peacebuilders combine their powers in a collective effort. These are *not only intermediary partners for donors* to channel money. In 2020, my organization - Justice Call - with the support from GPPAC and the UN Office of the Special Advisor on Genocide Prevention created the Women's Regional Network on Prevention in the MENA Region. Over 75% of young women's organizations in the Network had never received grants before. Now, this Network provides microgrants to its members and helps them obtain additional grants to sustain their work. Beyond supporting new actors, such an approach will encourage local actors themselves to coordinate and build a broader peace movement.

Finally, to shift the expectations, we need to know how much money is spent on local peacebuilding. Based on Justice Call and GPPAC's joint research in Sudan, we know that these numbers are impossible to track. This is especially so for young peacebuilders. We welcome the current initiative of the PBSO to launch a dashboard to track financing for peacebuilding within the UN System and we encourage the collection of data on resources for local peacebuilding. The SG should regularly report on this data in his annual reporting to get a realistic picture of financing for local peacebuilding. The donors should also establish a youth marker and develop data systems to track investments in young people, similar to those tracking funding for gender equality.

To conclude, we hope that these recommendations could be considered for a concrete outcome document, such as a resolution that could provide guidance for Member States to meaningfully strengthen the position of local peacebuilders. And we stand ready to support the next steps in making peacebuilders more powerful than conflict, more compelling than war.

Thank You!