



GLOBAL FUTURES FORUM 2023

E-CONSULTATION REPORT

Development Track

January 25 to February 7, 2023

The Development Track of the e-consultations on a "People's Pact for the Future: Civil Society Perspectives for the UN We Need" was co-facilitated by Javier Surasky (CEPEI) and Georgios Kostakos (FOGGS) and its main part took place from 25 January to 7 February 2023. It was part of the effort by C4UN and partners to feed civil society perspectives into the intergovernmental preparations for the UN's September 2023 Ministerial Forum and the September 2024 Summit of the Future.

This global online discussion was one of seven thematic tracks that will feed into the consultations at the [Global Futures Forum](#) (GFF) slated to take place on 20-21 March 2023 in person in New York, and virtually. One of the primary outcomes of the GFF will be to further develop the ideas discussed during the e-consultations for inclusion in the proposed [People's Pact for the Future](#). This document will be used for advocacy and further refinement in the year ahead for final adoption at next year's Global Futures Forum (GFF2024).

To get the e-consultation started, the co-facilitators posed the following questions:

- Q1. Should the SDGs be "updated" after December 2030? If that is the case, which key aspects of sustainable development that are not part of the 2030 Agenda would we need to consider including in the future?
- Q2. What institutional innovations may need to be introduced in the UN architecture to help advance the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation?
- Q3. What practical suggestion can you offer to help fund the worldwide implementation of the SDGs adequately?

What follows is a thematic summary of the rich email exchange during the two weeks of the e-consultation. The co-facilitators apologize in advance for any important point or nuance that may have been left out or is inaccurately reflected in the summary.



Key issue areas raised during the e-consultation

The 2030 Agenda as a living document

As a participant put it, “We should aspire to view the 2030 Agenda as a living document that we will have to keep up with the changing times and global needs. Climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, green energy, digital infrastructure, sustainable urban development, access to clean water and sanitation, improved healthcare, and food security are key aspects that should be heavily looked into and strengthened accordingly.” Several of the proposals put forward by the e-consultation participants aimed at updating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as can be seen in the following sections.

Learning lessons from other monitoring, reporting and follow-up processes

We need to learn from the monitoring, reporting and follow-up processes under MEAs and other binding international agreements, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council and the work of the Committee on World Food Security. We could thus find ways to reinforce the development agenda monitoring, reporting and follow-up system, including the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and periodic SDG Summit process, to strengthen implementation.

Inclusive governance of Sustainable Development

We should be aware of what the UN means by non-state actor “inclusion” or “participation” in Sustainable Development governance at all levels. Caution is due so that civil society’s calls for participatory governance do not get instrumentalized to reinforce power imbalances that have emerged in the economy sphere in particular, using a multi-stakeholder façade to garner legitimacy. With the use of modern technologies it should be possible to open the governance space to greater and more substantive citizen participation. At the same time, there has to be a broader rethinking of UN structures and processes, leading to a “UN 2.0” that would allow the worldwide achievement of the SDGs.

Measuring Sustainable Development

GDP is not a good indicator of Sustainable Development since it does not consider variables such as inequality, creation or destruction of assets -including biodiversity and ecosystems, culture and human capital. By putting the economy first and emphasizing quantitative growth, GDP does not reflect nor helps achieve the balance that needs to exist among the three Sustainable Development pillars. Complementary, as well as alternative, indicators exist but still need to be streamlined.



Financing, technology and innovation for Sustainable Development

Access to new financing, sharing technology, and supporting innovation were repeatedly highlighted as a ‘must’ to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation worldwide, but also as an element to rethink sustainable development governance and methods of work. Some unfolding processes were recalled on financing as probably applicable: The IMF recently created the Resilience and Sustainability Trust, ‘Debt-for-climate swaps and debt-for-nature swaps,’ and the ‘Bridgetown Initiative’ on financing resilience or recovery from disaster. It will also be necessary to help developing countries climb higher in global trade value chains.

Areas/recommendations where there seems to be consensus

The SDGs should continue, even if updated

First of all, the SDGs do not have an expiration date but can be carried over to future decades, as they bring together all important elements of human well-being, sustainability and resilience. Updating the SDGs does not mean creating a new list of goals and targets but mostly strengthening interlinkages between them, building around them more muscular governance at the global level, and completing the promises made back in 2015 with concrete and action-oriented commitments. Nevertheless, some new indicators could be included to reflect the experience with the current set of indicators, while omissions like lack of any reference to cyberspace and the digital divide, should somehow be corrected.

New governance for Sustainable Development as part of “UN 2.0”

The UN’s capacity to provide leadership and support to regional and national efforts towards the SDGs should be strengthened, in the context of accountable, trackable, and feasible regional and national annual work programs. A “UN 2.0” should adopt new ways of reaching consensus on global plans and policies, and take effective action to advance sustainable development in a global multicultural context. It should also involve more systematically and substantially various stakeholder networks.

Ensuring the means of implementation

The necessary means of achieving the SDGs, notably funding and technology transfer, should be made adequately available not only in quantity but also in terms of transparency of use and focus on those most in need. Facing the technology gap is a prerequisite for leaving no one behind.



Areas where there seems to be disagreement among those in the conversation

Thematic priorities

The discussion remains open on what topics should be considered first in updating the SDGs (as we defined “updating” before).

What kind of structure for a renewed sustainable development governance?

Participants made various suggestions:

- *Creating a “Global Resilience Council”* (<https://www.foggs.org/grc-global-resilience-council/>) to tackle in a coordinated way the multi-dimensional threats to human security and bring into global decision-making the voices of non-state actors, including indigenous peoples and the youth, was the most supported.
- *Establishing a UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG)* on finding and mapping loopholes and institutional, systemic issues impeding the UN from going beyond norm settings. The OEWG outcomes would provide the basis for member states negotiations to reform the UN and multilateralism in the direction stipulated by the OCA.
- *“Pacts-based building blocks”* to accelerate SDGs implementation by promoting synergies and making SDGs’ interdependency explicit. Examples included a Health-Pact, a Livelihoods-Pact, Environment and resilience building-Pact, Capacity Development-Pact, Governance-Pact, and Markets-Pact.
- *Establishing a “Global Policy Forum”*, where policymakers from all UN member states could come together to identify areas of agreement and disagreement and develop strategies to move forward on difficult issues. It would be accompanied, among other things, by a *Global Policy Network* of experts and a *Global Policy Observatory*, an independent institution that would monitor and report on the implementation of UN policy.

At the Global Futures Forum, we should plan to explore the following recommendations further:

The SDGs have been at the centre of our e-consultation, as they are the tangible goals for bringing about sustainable development for all. Although the SDGs have been set for more than seven years, their achievement is lagging behind and is even partially reversed by major global crises like the COVID19 pandemic, the climate crisis, new and old wars, and deepening inequalities. We are now beyond the point of focusing on discussions and analysis. It is the time to concentrate efforts on identifying and collaborating to implement strategic solutions. [‘Act decisively before it is too late,’ Guterres warns countries when laying out his priorities for 2023.](#) To that end, as a result of the Development track e-consultation, we suggest discussing the following issues at the GFF:



1. While preserving the continuity and the integrity of the SDGs, are there any key topics that have been left out and need to be included, in some way, because of their centrality in achieving human well-being, sustainability and resilience? Possible such topics with which the **SDGs could be updated** could include cyberspace and outer space. Moreover, if we would like the SDG framework to be fully comprehensive in terms of human well-being pursuits, SDG16 could be more clearly defined and/or broken up to specifically include peace & security and human rights along with good governance.
2. In terms of **operational arrangements**, a more precise assignment of implementation responsibilities among existing institutions and the organization of implementation partnerships in support of national, regional, and local actors are still needed for each and all SDGs.
3. In terms of **institutional arrangements at the highest level**, there is a clear need to bring together the fragmented global governance architecture to address all aspects of multi-dimensional mega-challenges like climate change and pandemics in a coordinated way and ensure across-the-board implementation of decisions reached in specialized intergovernmental bodies. The proposal to establish a Global Resilience Council responds to such a need and could be discussed further.
4. The urgent need to find **alternative measures of sustainable development and progress**, as GDP is far from capable of giving the whole picture. It does not show inequalities and does not account for the creation or destruction of assets, including economic infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystems, culture, and human capital, nor considers the unpaid care work carried out mainly by women. The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress Report from 2009 recommends not trying to capture sustainable development in a single number but using a dashboard of indicators, like in a car, but should there be a key indicator that would be central?

In closing, please note that there are overlaps between e-consultation tracks, which should be taken into consideration for the organization of the GFF discussions, so that they can be as focused and productive as possible. Such areas of overlap that involve the Development track include but are not limited to:

- Development financing and GDP replacement with the Global Economic & Financial Architecture, as well as with Environmental Governance financing;
- Sustainable Development governance arrangements with Environmental Governance arrangements (there is a long-lasting conceptual lack of clarity on the division/differentiation between the two) and Peace & Security institutional arrangements (when it comes to new threats / challenges to human security).

Individuals whom we would recommend to speak at the Global Futures Forum are:

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Elisa Shafiqah: elisa@diplomacymy.com (Chair, Malaysian Youth Diplomacy)



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Carolyn Savage: carolyn.bpw@gmail.com (Co-Chair Aotearoa Sustainable Development Goals Alliance)

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Isabel Ortiz: iortiz@globalsocialjustice.org (Director, Global Social Justice Program, Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD))

Joseph Stiglitz: ... (Professor, Columbia University)

Resources, studies, advocacy tools

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