



Global Futures Forum Summary

Report

Overview

To ensure that diverse civil society perspectives are engaged in the preparatory process of the 2024 Summit of the Future and the preceding 2023 SOTF Ministerial Forum to strengthen and revitalize multilateralism, the Global Futures Forum (GFF), led by the Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN), took place March 20–21, 2023, in New York with an additional Missions Engagement Day on March 22, 2023.

The forum included over 180 participants in person, each day. Over 2,000 individuals registered to participate online.

A key GFF outcome document, an interim People's Pact for the Future is to be released in May.

Preparations for the GFF and the People's Pact brought together over 1600 civil society experts in [e-consultations](#) across seven thematic tracks: human rights and participation, development, environmental governance, global economic and financial architecture, global governance and innovation, global digital governance, and peace and security.

Additional GFF preparations included nine regional meetings, which help establish the framework for national and regional engagement in SOTF preparations in 2023 and 2024; four monthly town hall style meetings to update project partners on GFF preparations; and a series of youth research papers and youth information sessions.

Organizing priorities for the GFF

Youth and intergenerational co-leadership - The conference was led by a team of young activists and each of the thematic tracks was led by a member of civil society, academia or a think tank, and a young person;

Global South CSO engagement - Conference registration by region was led by (1) Africa, followed by (2) Asia – Pacific, (3) Europe, (4) North America, (5) Latin America and Caribbean, (6) UN NY NGOs and (7) Middle East and North Africa.

Complementarities among the 2023 SDG Summit and 2024 Summit of the Future processes

Selected quotes

H.E. Fergal Mythen Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, "Globally engaged civil society was vitally important to the process that developed the Sustainable Development Goals, and will be equally important in the achievement of a successful SDG Summit."

H.E. Alya Al Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, "Your efforts contributed to the success of the UN 75 Declaration. What is needed now is the political will to accelerate action on Agenda 2030 and to reinvigorate multilateralism."

Guy Ryder, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy, "The SDG Summit is the organization's top priority in 2023. The commitment to the SDGs, as well as to collective action and multilateralism, must be renewed."

H.E. Antje Leendertse, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations and Co-Facilitator of General Assembly preparations for the Summit of the Future, "Civil Society are essential partners in the preparations for the 2023 Ministerial Meeting and the 2024 Summit of the Future."

María Fernanda Espinosa, Co-Chair, Coalition for the UN We Need, "This conference, and this process, clearly demonstrate that a stronger United Nations system is a priority for civil society around the world."

Khalid Boudali, Presiding Officer, AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council, "African civil society, through ECOSOCC, are willing to engage, and have been engaging, through the AU Agenda 2063 and the Agenda 2030. . . . Platforms like this can help provide a bridge to enable African civil society to better engage in UN activities and in the work for a better UN."



Opening Plenary: The Role of Civil Society in the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future

The conversation was moderated by **Nudhara Yusuf**, Global Futures Forum Coordinator, and joined by **H.E. Alya Al-Thani**, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations; **H.E. Fergal Mythen**, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations; **H.E. Guy Ryder**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy; **Aishwarya Machani**, UN Foundation Next Generation Fellow; **Khalid Boudali**, Presiding Officer, AU Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC); and **H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, Co-Chair, Coalition for the UN We Need and Executive Director, Global Women Leaders: Voices for Change and Inclusion. (Full session [here](#))

Key takeaways:

- The SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future are inextricably linked. While the SDG Summit is the UN's priority this year, the Summit of the Future hopes to see the institutional reforms required to achieve the SDGs, such as reforming the global financial architecture.
- The commitment to the SDGs, as well as to collective action and multilateralism, must be renewed.
- The relationship between Our Common Agenda, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement must be seen as a totality, rather than as one replacing the other.
- The significance of including women, youth, marginalized groups, and grassroots organizations in the dialogue and learning from their innovative ideas.
- Civil society has always played and will continue to play an essential role in attaining what is required.
- Even before COVID-19 and the Ukrainian crisis, the SDGs were off track. It is critical to accept and acknowledge where we are, not to reject the SDGs, but to make the necessary adjustments.
- The coming time should be one of action, not just pleasant words.

Where we are as a Community: Briefings by Civil Society Representatives

The session was moderated by **Sandrine Dixon-Declève**, Co-President, of Club of Rome; and joined by **Kizito Byenkya**, Director of Campaigns and Co-Director of the Washington D.C. Office, Open Society Foundations; **Sofia Bermudez**, GFF Youth Coordinator, and UNESCO SDG4 Youth Network representative; **Jeffery Huffines**, Senior Advisor, Coalition for the UN We Need; **Soon-Young Yoon**, UN Representative, International Alliance for Women; **Jonas Gissel Mikkelsen**, Director of Copenhagen Institute on Future Studies; **Nicklas Larsen**, UNESCO-Co Chair in Anticipatory Leadership & Futures Capabilities; and **H.E. Brian Wallace**, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations. (Full session [here](#))

Key takeaways:

- There is a need for dramatic and daring change to strengthen the UN that includes both outsiders and insiders; the "who" and "how" are just as crucial as the "what."
- [Integrating futures and foresight](#) into our planning for the road ahead is crucial to both ensure proposals do not harm future generations, but also that we are optimizing our resources and capacities.
- It is critical to examine genuine youth involvement; young people do not need or desire to simply be in a photo or have a tokenistic place at the table. Young people are experts in their fields and want to be involved in decision-making.
- Deeper conversations at the regional and international levels are required in order to move past siloed conversations in New York.



- Women should be included in discussions, decision-making, and leadership positions. The “Feminist Framework for the OCA” provides a range of actionable policy recommendations.
- There is a need to work both short-term for immediate outcomes and long-term for a UN system that can deliver a brighter future.
- The current scenario is chaotic, yet there is a need to know how to operate in the face of adversity.

Interconnection Roundtables

These roundtables were meant to discuss the factors and issues that are common among all tracks and have a significant impact on more than one field.

Key takeaways:

- Gaps in UN financing, accountability, implementation and enforcement are cross-cutting.
- Independent sources of funding for the UN are needed.
- Economic and financial factors have an impact on all tracks and fields.
- There is a need to channel private investment in the right direction.
- The global tax system needs to change to reflect new revenue sources.
- Human rights and gender equality as a reference point and benchmark for UN reform.
- There is a sense of urgency in all tracks and at all levels.
- Women and youth should be at the center of the preparation stages.
- The importance of storytelling and bringing in the human side of these issues.
- Universal values impact change through an emerging global culture and consciousness.
- There is a need for a better-coordinated participation mechanism at the UN.
- The importance of having children and youth at the table and listening to the grassroots to make a difference.
- The importance of seeing and recognizing the solutions and progress achieved by all communities, including the indigenous ones.
- Small and medium powers can drive positive normative change.
- There is a need to track misinformation and guarantee access to the right content.
- There is a need to develop new ways to ensure that developing countries have a chance to develop sustainably.
- The Declaration on Future Generations, once adopted, can be a useful benchmark for progress as a tool for CSOs.

Women and Water Reception

The reception was hosted by APCO Worldwide, during which interventions were made by **Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, Co-Chair, Coalition for the UN We Need and Executive Director, Global Women Leaders: Voices for Change and Inclusion; **Lopa Banerjee**, Director, Civil Society Division and Executive Coordinator of Generation Equality, UN Women; **Martha Rojas**, Commissioner, Global Commission on the Economics of Water; and **Judit Arenas**, Executive Director, APCO Worldwide.

This reception situated the Global Futures Forum in its timing between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Water Conference, and discussed how women and civil society are key to both agendas, while touching on synergies with the wider Summit of the Future and Our Common Agenda process.



Intergenerational Plenary

The session was moderated by **Angga Dwi Martha**, Programme Management Officer - Youth2030, Office of Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; and joined by **Anja-Olin Pape**, former Chair for the Council of Europe Joint Council on Youth, Head of Strategy at Global Challenges Foundation; **Kehkashan Basu M.S.M.**, UN Human Rights Champion and Founder-President of Green Hope Foundation and **Maria João Rodrigues**, President of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, former Member of EU Parliament. (Full session [here](#))

Key takeaways:

- There is a need for models of intergenerational co-leadership and respect in which young people may learn from the old, their views are heard, and they are recognized as changemakers and action-takers.
- The SDGs and SOTF agendas are ambitious, and it requires the mobilization of young people. There have been several pronouncements. What is required is action.
- Go to the young people who are unable to come to New York; young people are not all expected to be able to attend the UN, but their opinions should be heard. Furthermore, greater financing for intergenerational cooperation is required.
- The importance of young people's mental health and the necessity to care for it.
- There is a need to modify habits and become better equipped to cope with the digital divide, digital transformation, poverty, health, catastrophes, and water and sanitation issues.
- Pressing need for an intergenerational, long-term approach.
- Young people should be included in policy development, decision-making, budgets, and implementation. This will lead to the creation of innovative and long-term solutions.
- Put more focus on the "hows" before, during, and after the UN summits.
- Strengthening the ongoing political processes to ensure young people's roles and priorities are recognized and included throughout the system.
- There is a need to identify the gaps in different future scenarios, visualize the ideal future, and think creatively about how to get there.
- Civil society plays a critical role in accomplishing all of the aforementioned, but should itself make conscious efforts for intergenerational co-leadership.

Regional Panel

This session was moderated by **Oyebisi Babatunde**, Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs with opening remarks by Rosario Diaz Garavito, Founder & Executive Director, Millennials Movement, and joined by **Anselmo Lee**, Regional Coordinator, Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development/SDGs (APSD); **Jackie Cabasso**, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation; **Javier Surasky**, Research Director, Cepei; **Georgios Kostakos**, Executive Director, Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS); and **William Carew**, Head of Secretariat, AU Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC); representing the regions of Asia, Pacific, Latin America & Caribbean, Europe, and Africa, respectively, to discuss their work in relation to the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future. (Full session [here](#))

Key takeaways:

- In Asia, issues of importance include overcoming barriers of language, distance and time to more effectively engage Asian civil society in the UN global community, utilize intergenerational dialogue to build collective youth leadership, and bringing other regional intergovernmental processes like the G20 & G7, in partnership with civil society, into UN deliberations.



- In the Pacific region, issues of importance include climate change, protecting the oceans, nuclear abolition, and advancing the principles of trusteeship to protect the global commons for future generations.
- In the LAC region, issues of importance include strengthening the capacity of regional actors to promote sustainable development, institutionalize mechanisms for meaningful participation of civil society in multilateral spaces, reduce the overlapping of regional organizations working on the same issues, and protect environmental and human rights defenders.
- In Europe, issues of importance include achieving the SDGs in all countries of the region as a universal agenda, applying the example of democratic representation of the European Parliament to the establishment of a UN Parliamentary Assembly and the distribution of resources to poor countries by the European Central Bank to the issuance of SDRs by the IMF.
- In Africa, the African Union provides African civil society with a platform through the Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) to provide input into the implementation of continent wide programs like Agenda 2063, Africa's development blueprint. It is important that Africa speaks with one voice at the UN.
- Cross-cutting issues include the importance of including the regional approach in all of the thematic tracks of the UN's work, and recognizing that each region has its own characteristics and challenges. Regional cooperation complements and reinforces global agreements made at the UN.

Thematic Track Reports *(Full session [here](#))*

During the course of the two days, participants were invited to engage in the work of seven thematic tracks to prioritize a meaningful set of recommendations, roadmaps, and an action plan. These discussions followed extensive e-consultation processes that preceded the GFF. Linkages to the SDGs and between thematic tracks were explored. These thematic discussions represent contributions to an interim "People's Pact for the Future" to be shared in May and finalized in early 2024 as a vehicle for feeding diverse civil society ideas and insights into the 2024 Summit of the Future.

Thematic co-leads were invited to present their key recommendations followed by brief reflections from Member States, UN Agencies, and other partners. This session was Co-Moderated by **Nudhara Yusuf & Daniel Perell** and welcomed by **H.E. Antje Leendertse**, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations and Co-Facilitator, Pact for the Future of the September 2024 Summit of the Future. Thematic reflections were made by **H.E. Christopher Lu**, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the UN; **Dr. Adam Day**, Head of the Geneva Office, Centre for Policy Research, UN University and a member of the secretariat team for the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism; **Dr. Arunabha Ghosh**, CEO of the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water, India; **Alexandre Stutzmann**, Minister at the Delegation of the European Union to the UN; **Craig Mokhiber**, Director and Deputy to the ASG for Human Rights, OHCHR; **Lopa Banerjee**, Director, Civil Society Division and Executive Coordinator, Generation Equality, UN Women; **Deborah Walsh**, Representative of the Australian Safety Commissioner; Representative from Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the UN; Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief of UNCTAD New York; **Henk-Jan Brinkman**, Permanent Observer for the International Development Law Organization to the United Nations; and a spokesperson for each of the 7 thematic action tracks.

UN & Global Governance Innovation

- Call for an independent & qualified Secretary-General serving for a single term.
- Initiate Article 109 UN Charter Review Conference.
- Create a UN Parliamentary Assembly.
- Facilitate instrument of UN World Citizens' Initiative.



- Create a UN Civil Society Envoy & Council.
- **Key reflections from US Ambassador Christopher Lu:** Would support Article 109 UN Charter Review focused on UN Security Council reform. The GA should be given more of a say on security matters & the SG should be given more authority. States do not have a monopoly on good ideas so creating more mechanisms for civil society input is important. We need to make the UN more known and actionable at the national level.

Development & HLPF

- Keep the 17 SDGs but update the targets.
- Clarify SDGs implementation & operational arrangements.
- Define Alternatives to GDP.
- Establish Global Resilience Council.
- **Key reflections from Adam Day: Development must work for prevention.** The UN should address a broader set of risks beyond military threats as suggested by the proposal for a Global Resilience Council, by upgrading the Peacebuilding Commission into a Peacebuilding Council. IFIs should be re-mandated to think more about investing in resilience & prevention.

Environmental Governance

- Add Crime of Ecocide to the ICC Rome Statute.
- Set-up an Earth Governance Regulatory Body to protect planetary boundaries.
- Pursue decarbonization agenda.
- Mobilize financing for environmental action from alternative sources that engage citizens.
- **Key reflections from Arunabha Ghosh:** To create democratic demand for these proposals, transformative education, empathy and empowerment are required. The science of the decarbonization agenda loses meaning if we don't have the resources. We need to think about mobilizing resources at scale by big and small businesses.

Human Rights & Participation

- Strengthen civil society & youth co-leadership based on the Young Feminist Manifesto.
- Strengthen the protection of human rights defenders as well as environmental & socio-economic defenders.
- On funding, resourcing & capacity building, double the resources of OHCHR.
- Encourage Human Rights Council Procedures, Mechanisms and Treaty Bodies to adopt an intergenerational strategy.
- Redefine how civil society relates to ECOSOC, the General Assembly, the Security Council, and other UN bodies.
- **Key reflections from Ambassador Alexandre Stutzmann & Craig Mokhiber:** Protection of human rights & participation at the UN begins at home. A political recommitment to normative standards is required for transformation. One third of the Charter gets only 4% of the budget. Mainstreaming human rights needs to include the IFIs. On UN-civil society relations, yes to the participation of children, youth, women & parliamentarians; models of self-governance should be promoted by the UN.

Global Digital Compact

- Support the work of the SG's Tech Envoy, the Roadmap on Digital Cooperation & UN Internet Governance Forum.
- Empower individuals by democratizing the internet as a global public good.
- Protect human rights and privacy online with universal standards.
- Close the Digital Divide within and between countries by ensuring universal connectivity by 2030.



- Develop an Online Code of Ethics.
- **Key reflections from Lopa Banerjee & Deborah Welsh:** The CSW on gender and technology looked at addressing the gender digital divide and using a human rights approach in the deployment of AI and other emerging technologies. Ensuring online safety for all peoples and communities using digital spaces is a precondition for digital inclusion and is key to closing the digital divide. The UN Global Digital Compact will provide a critical moment for stakeholders to come together to advance human rights online based on the rule of law and democratic principles and values.

Global Economic & Financial Architecture

- Establish an International Anti-Corruption Court.
- Increase transparency in World Trade Organization decision-making and include new stakeholders in national committees on trade facilitation.
- Tax currency transfers, airline ticket purchases, and other transnational services, and adopt a UN Tax Convention to mobilize public finance and leverage private finance for Critical Public Goods.
- Convene a Biennial Summit for the World Economy to achieve more equitable socio-economic recovery.
- Expand the IMF's Special Drawing Rights as a means for debt relief and financing critical global public goods.
- **Key reflections from Chantal Line Carpentier & Representative from Permanent Mission of Nigeria:** On corruption, limiting illicit trade flows must include the unethical transfer of funds by business from the public sector; the multilateral trading system must be aligned with the SDGs and climate adaptation; SMSEs representing 70% of business also need to be represented at trade negotiations; and proceeds from any Tobin Tax needs to go directly to the people.

Peace and Security

- Prevent war by strengthening international mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- Implement UN Charter Article 26 through plans and action for disarmament that convert military resources into economic and social development resources.
- Stand-up a United Nations Emergency Peace Service.
- Include nuclear weapons abolition in the post-2030 SDGs, with the goal of achieving their complete elimination by 2045.
- Advance the human rights to peace, nuclear abolition, and climate protection in the World Court and Human Rights Council.
- Eliminate the Security Council veto and establish three additional Councils on peacebuilding, climate security and health security.
- **Key reflections from Henk-Jan Brinkman & Adam Day:** SDGs are critical to addressing the drivers of conflict; we need to focus on positive peace and peacebuilding. While prevention needs to happen at the national level, a universal approach is essential. Global governance based on equity also applies to security. Addressing climate, biological and AI risks will require more networked approaches beyond traditional forms of global governance.



Closing Plenary

The Forum closed with a **Vote of Thanks**, presentation of timeline & announcements moderated by **Fergus Watt**, C4UN Coordinator and joined by **Maher Nasser**, Director of Outreach Division, UN Department of Global Communication; **Daniel Perell**, C4UN Co-Chair and UN Representative at the Baha'i International Community; **Keisha McGuire**, President and CEO, Present and Future Institute (PFI); **Beckie Malay**, Convenor, GCAP Philippines; **Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, C4UN Co-Chair.

Launch of the Summit of the Future Information Clearinghouse Bulletin

Keisha McGuire announced the launch of the Summit of the Future Information Clearinghouse co-sponsored by C4UN, PFI and International Development Law Organization (IDLO). The Information Clearinghouse is a collaborative researcher and policy practitioner platform to produce a concise, timely electronic bulletins and a rich web-portal as reference tools feeding into the 2024 Summit of the Future and preceding Ministerial Forum in September 2023. It serves as a one-stop-shop resource hub for both Member States and the wider multistakeholder community to access UN Member State publicly stated positions, as well as academic, think tank, media and civil society/grassroots perspectives on SOTF preparatory processes. (More details [here](#))

Talanoa Dialogues: stories from the grassroots

For 45 minutes, four distinct Talanoa Dialogues were conducted. Participants heard stories from the grassroots that grounded the realities of why we were doing what we were doing. Learning from experiences of others, particularly indigenous and minority groups, the conversations were critical in breaking out of usual proposal and project centered thinking, and for teaching, learning, inspiring, and having a humanity-centered discussion about the different thematic tracks.

Side events

The Global Futures Forum also included a series of side events that were held online. (Recordings can be found [here](#))

- Event 1: Inclusion of Senegalese Youth in Climate Change Policies and Decision-Making Bodies.
- Event 2: Autonomisation des femmes rurales en agriculture (Translation: Empowerment of rural women in agriculture).
- Event 3: Food Security and Social Insecurity Problems in Georgia.
- Event 4: SDG midpoint showdown: achievements and Setbacks for communities facing discrimination.
- Event 5: Global Governance public opinion survey.
- Event 6: Championing the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education.

Youth Pavilion

The GFF featured an online youth pavilion. Organizations used 30-minute time slots to showcase research papers, or projects and initiatives spearheaded by young people. (Recordings can be found [here](#))

- Event 1: Ecopeace Teen Cafe.
- Event 2: UNISC International.
- Event 3: Amnesty International & Citizens for Global Solutions.
- Event 4: Agora.
- Event 5: School of International Futures & Next Generation Foresight Event
- Event 6: Peace Child International.



- Event 7: Citizens for Global Solutions.
- Event 8: World Future Council & Youth Negotiators Academy.

Youth Hosted Reception and Youth Futures

Since its inception, the GFF has prioritized mainstreaming youth views throughout the initiative. (More details [here](#))

- A youth-hosted reception supported by the Monaco Mission to the UN showcased the outcomes of the youth pavilion, and other youth initiatives including the youth forums at CSW, and upcoming work for the ECOSOC Youth Forum, and provided young people with an intergenerational networking opportunity to create meaningful relationships and progress their work and the solutions they are already leading in their communities. During the reception, interventions were made by **Sofia Bermudez**, GFF Youth Coordinator, and UNESCO SDG4Youth Network representative; **Ishaan Shah**, UK Youth Representative to the United Nations; **Francesca Reynolds**, Impart UK CEO, and **Bianca Liu Herzog**, Associate Programme Management Officer in Coordination at the UN Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.
- In the Youth Futures initiative, research papers by young scholars (based on an open call) across the seven thematic tracks were showcased. This was an attempt to broaden the breadth of problems with which young people interact across global governance systems beyond consultation or participation concerns.

The main takeaways are that 1) youth are not here only for the youth agenda; young people are experts in their fields and they can bring a lot to the table; 2) young people are working on solutions for the present and the future, and that doesn't only mean climate issues; 3) young people are asking to be considered as stakeholders and part of the change; and 4) young people have a role in paving the way and bringing other young people to the table, but it's not only the youth's responsibility; it's a responsibility on everyone's shoulders.

UN Missions Engagement Day

On March 22 2023, civil society delegations presented recommendations from the [GFF Global Governance Innovation Proposals](#) to the Permanent Missions of Australia, Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ireland, Mexico, Oman, Spain, Sweden and the Delegation of the European Union.

AU ECOSOCC Dialogue

In partnership with C4UN, the African Union Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) hosted "[The Africa Dialogue: Bringing the Voice of the African Citizenry to the UN](#)" at the Baha'i International Community to discuss how African civil society, together with governments and the African Union, can promote the development of common positions between countries and among constituencies to ensure that the interests of the African continent are considered at the 2023 HLPF & SDG Summit, and the preparatory Ministerial Forum in September 2023 for the Summit of the Future In 2024. (Recording can be found [here](#))







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