



REFLECTIONS ON THE ZERO DRAFT OF THE PACT FOR THE FUTURE

GLOBAL SOUTH PERSPECTIVES NETWORK



Convened by



**This report was prepared by
the Inclusive Society Institute
on behalf of
the Global South Perspectives Network,
in collaboration with the other two convening institutions,
the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
and HumanizaCom**

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Author: Nicola Jo Bruns Bergsteedt
Editor: Daryl Swanepoel



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1. Introduction

In the dynamic and ever-evolving arena of global governance, the Summit for the Future, set for 22-23 September 2024 in New York, emerges as a critical juncture in the quest for sustainable development and enhanced multilateral cooperation. With the United Nations (UN) spearheading this initiative, the summit aims to be a watershed moment, promising to recalibrate the global community's approach towards tackling the pressing challenges of our time. In preparation for delving into the intricacies of this pivotal event, this report endeavours to capture the essence of discussions and reflections that emanate from a gathering of esteemed minds under the Global South Perspectives Network on 1 March 2024.

This report is structured to provide a comprehensive overview, beginning with an executive summary that distils the key insights and recommendations shared during the meeting. Following this are detailed accounts of two thought-provoking presentations delivered by Dr Georgios Kostakos, Executive Director of the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), and Mr Zaheer Laher, Chief Director of UN Political, Peace, and Security at the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). These presentations offer a nuanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in our collective pursuit of a more equitable and sustainable future.

Moreover, the report includes four incisive responses from distinguished academics and practitioners who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the discourse. Prof Cilene Victor, Dr Adel Abdel-Sadek, and Prof María del Carmen Rico Menge, alongside Ms Buyelwa Sonjica, enrich the discussion with their diverse viewpoints, drawing attention to the multifaceted dimensions of global governance, human rights, and sustainable development. Their contributions underscore the critical role of inclusive dialogue and collaborative action in addressing the systemic issues that underpin the current geopolitical and socio-economic landscape.

The meeting, chaired by Daryl Swanepoel, CEO of the Inclusive Society Institute in South Africa, served as a platform for rigorous debate and collective reflection on the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future. This document, central to the Summit for the Future's agenda, aims to serve as a blueprint for invigorating the UN's role in global governance. However, as the participants noted, while the draft sets an ambitious framework for action, it falls short in detailing the practical measures required to effect tangible change, particularly in the face of persistent geopolitical tensions and humanitarian crises.

As we navigate the path towards the Summit for the Future, the insights and recommendations articulated in this report aim to contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable global order. The voices of the Global South, with their unique perspectives and lived experiences, are invaluable in shaping a future that truly reflects the collective aspirations of our global community.

Link to the webinar recording:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8ZaD7MUfsc&ab_channel=FOGGS

2. Executive Summary

In the grand theatre of global diplomacy, the Summit for the Future, set to take place on 22-23 September 2024, stands as a beacon of hope, a promise of concerted action against the multifaceted crises that plague our world. With the United Nations at its helm, this summit has been portrayed as a pivotal moment to recalibrate, realign, and reinvigorate the global community's commitment to sustainable development and multilateral cooperation. Yet, as representatives from the Global South Perspectives Network convened on 1 March to deliberate on the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future, their reflections cast a long shadow of doubt over the Summit's capacity to steer us away from impending calamities.

The Summit of the Future presents a unique opportunity to strengthen collaboration on pivotal issues and bridge the gaps in international governance. It's a chance to reaffirm the United Nations Charter as the basis for international cooperation and recommit to key initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Building on the momentum of the SDG Summit in 2023, Member States are poised to explore strategies for laying down a stronger foundation for global cooperation capable of addressing both current and future threats.

The Zero Draft, as envisioned, is meant to serve as a blueprint for consolidating United Nations activities, instilling a greater sense of urgency in addressing global challenges, and introducing novel initiatives, including the governance of cyberspace and outer space. These elements underscore a commitment to reinvigorating the UN's role at the centre of a revitalised and more effective multilateral system, which can make a real difference in people's lives. Yet, as commendable as these objectives are, they merely skim the surface of the deeper, more systemic issues at play.

The heart of the matter, as articulated by the Global South Perspectives Network, lies not in the 'what' but in the 'how'. The Zero Draft sketches a broad outline of the urgent actions needed but stops short of delving into the institutional and financial aspects of implementation. This omission is particularly glaring against the backdrop of current geopolitical tensions and humanitarian crises, from the nuclear brinkmanship in North Korea and Iran to the enduring conflicts in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip. The question that looms large is: How do we move beyond rhetoric to effect real change in these dire situations?

Patently amiss in the current draft is any proposal to reform the UN Security Council, most probably the most urgent, called for, and anticipated requirement to restore the credibility of the United Nations. It is proffered that future drafts will tackle this. The lack of the 'how' in the current draft does little to instil confidence that those proposals will indeed be responsive to the demands of the Global South. Time will tell.

This sentiment was echoed in the words of the Chief Director of the UN Political, Peace, and Security Division, South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). Mr Zaheer Laher's reflections on the Zero Draft highlighted both its potential and its limitations. While acknowledging the draft's role in consolidating UN efforts and fostering urgency, Mr Laher lamented its failure to address the practical pathways to resolving the kind of entrenched geopolitical conflicts and disasters that continue to ravage communities and destabilise regions across the globe.

The Global South Perspectives Network's critique extends beyond the immediate concerns of conflict resolution to encompass the broader challenges of global governance. The steady



erosion of trust between nations, exacerbated by growing unilateralism and geopolitical rivalries, poses a significant barrier to international cooperation. The Zero Draft, for all its merits, seems to skirt around these foundational issues, offering up a vision for the future that, while aspirational, appears disconnected from the realities of our fragmented world.

Moreover, the emphasis on new initiatives, such as policing outer space, while innovative and important, seems somewhat removed from the pressing needs of the Global South, whose communities are grappling with existential threats that demand immediate attention – poverty, inequality, climate change, and access to healthcare, to name but a few. The draft's failure to directly address these concerns, to provide a concrete roadmap for overcoming them, highlights a critical gap in its approach to shaping a more equitable and sustainable future.

In calling for an action-orientated and inclusive Pact, the Global South points to the need for a global consensus that transcends mere agreement on principles. What is required is a commitment to actionable strategies that are grounded in the realities of those most affected by global crises. This entails meaningful reform of the international financial and debt architecture, bridging the digital divide, ensuring fair trade, and ramping up financing for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

As we navigate the intricate landscape of global diplomacy, the voices from the Global South ring out with a clarity born of necessity and lived experience. Their insights offer not just critique but a roadmap for genuine engagement and collaborative problem-solving. It is through the lens of their collective wisdom that we can begin to unravel the complexities of our shared challenges, ensuring that solutions are not only proposed but enacted with equity and sustainability at their core.

This brings into sharp focus the pivotal role that the Summit of the Future must play – not as a mere convener of nations but as a catalyst for transformative change. The Summit's success hinges on its ability to bridge the chasm between high-level declarations and the tangible needs of people on the ground. It demands a concerted effort to not just envision a better future but to lay the foundational stones that will lead there. In this endeavour, the principles of justice, equity, and inclusivity must be the guiding lights, illuminating the path toward a future where the promise of global cooperation becomes a lived reality for all.

Standing at this crossroads, the Summit of the Future presents an opportunity to redefine the contours of global cooperation. But to seize this opportunity, the limitations of the Zero Draft must be confronted head-on. The eventual Pact for the Future, the Summit of the Future outcome, must forge a path that is not only ambitious in its vision but pragmatic in its execution – a path that truly addresses the how, not just the what, of tackling the formidable challenges the world faces.

In the end, the success of the Summit will be measured not by the loftiness of its declarations but by the tangibility of its outcomes. It is incumbent upon all stakeholders, especially those from the Global South, to ensure that the Pact for the Future does not become a missed opportunity. Instead, it should mark the beginning of a renewed global commitment to action, solidarity, and an actionable shared vision for a more just and sustainable world. Only then can there be hope of steering the Summit from a track to nowhere to a path toward meaningful change.

3. A Global South Perspective on the Summit of the Future and the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future

Speech by Zaheer Laher, Chief Director: United Nations Political, Peace, and Security, DIRCO

Thank you to the Inclusive Society Institute (ISI) of South Africa and the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS) for providing an opportunity to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation to participate in this discussion and address you on the upcoming United Nations Summit of the Future.

This forum provides us with an opportunity to relay the Government of South Africa's perspectives on the upcoming Summit, including our expectations. And importantly, it allows us an opportunity to engage with civil society.

Before I get to that, I think it would be important for us to reflect on the current global geopolitical environment and the context in which we are engaging in the negotiations process on the Pact that is anticipated to be the outcome of the Summit.

No doubt, the world is more globalised and the impact of a pandemic beginning in one part of the world, or a European border war can have an impact on the furthest corners of the globe.

If we are to address global challenges, we have no choice but to resort to collective action. Even when countries have chosen to ignore the rest of the world, they eventually have had to come back and work with other nations to address the challenges confronting them. No one can live in the so-called 'splendid isolation' that some sought in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is also clear that impediments to global cooperation are hindering relations between states and making it much more difficult to address our ever-increasing number of challenges, whether it be maintaining international peace and security, ensuring global sustainable development, addressing climate change and environmental challenges, or protecting human rights.

A steady erosion of trust and competition between states, especially between countries in the Global South and the Global North, is weakening the ability of the international community to work together to address shared challenges. The obstacles we are facing include growing unilateralism; geo-political rivalries; inconsistent compliance with – and at times blatant violations of – international law and the application of double standards. There has also been a proliferation of alternate forums and side processes outside of established multilateral processes where decisions are taken amongst the few, thereby disenfranchising the many or to divert attention away from the non-delivery of multilateral commitments.

When the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations was commemorated in September 2020, World Leaders adopted a declaration in which they declared their commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre. This declaration contained 12 commitments, which included a request to the UN Secretary-General to prepare recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.



In response, in September 2021, the Secretary-General presented Our Common Agenda, a report highlighting challenges as well as opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments made by Member States in the UN75 Declaration. The Our Common Agenda report also calls for global solidarity, a renewal of the multilateral system to accelerate implementation of existing commitments and to address the remaining gaps in global governance.

The report called for a Summit of the Future (SOTF) to forge a new global consensus for the global community to be prepared for future threats and challenges.

This Summit – which will take place during the High-Level Week of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly in September – has already been preceded by a Ministerial Meeting, which took place on the side-lines of the United Nations General Assembly, High-Level Week, in September 2023. The Ministerial Meeting was an opportunity for Member States to set out their expectations and priorities for the Summit and its expected outcome: the Pact for the Future. The Ministerial Meeting also stressed the importance of having an ambitious, clear, and action-orientated outcome that can be achieved at the Summit of the Future.

As an outcome of the Summit, Member States have committed to adopting a Pact for the Future to cement collective agreements and to demonstrate global solidarity for current and future generations. The practical consultations process is expected to have an outcome in the form of an “action-orientated Pact for the Future” that would be agreed on by Member States through intergovernmental negotiations on various issues.

The Pact for the Future, which is being facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Namibia and Germany in New York, would comprise a chapeau and five chapters on:

- Sustainable development and financing for development;
- International peace and security;
- Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation;
- Youth and future generations; and
- Transforming global governance.

South Africa hopes that the Summit of the Future will be a key opportunity to focus on the implementation of the key multilateral outcomes that we have already adopted, including specifically the outcomes adopted in 2015. These are the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the SDGs), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (dealing with financing for development), and the Paris Climate Change outcomes.

We have stressed in engagements at the United Nations, that if we want this process to deliver real results, we have to start by engaging in some honest self-reflection.

We have reached the halfway mark of the target date set for implementing the 2030 Agenda and more people are living in extreme poverty and going hungry than in 2015 when the SDGs were adopted. Why is violent conflict on the rise? How do we speak of reinvigorating multilateralism after decades of Summits and declarations have left us with so many commitments not yet implemented? What do we mean by restoring trust and finding solutions for a better tomorrow if we look away whilst a horrific genocide unfolds before our very eyes?

The undertaking to hold a Summit of the Future should seek to do things differently as we seek decisive actions that make a positive impact in the lives of our people and transform

international systems of power, governance, finance, debt, trade, and technology so that they work for all countries, and developing countries are not left out.

For South Africa, and these are issues that developing countries negotiating within the context of the Group of 77 are calling for, we believe that some of the decisive actions that the Summit must focus on are a commitment to meaningful reform of the international financial and debt architecture; measures that go beyond GDP to inform access to development finance; harnessing the benefits of Science, Technology and Innovation for all; bridging the digital divide; achieving a fair pro-development multilateral trading system; and scaling up financing for adaptation, resilience, and loss and damage whilst ensuring that climate financing does not subtract from development financing. These essentially will give meaning to Goal 17, the means of implementation of the SDGs.

The Pact of the Future should focus on securing urgent progress on nuclear disarmament, including through the fulfilment of the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, which is key to upholding the non-proliferation regime and securing the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It also needs to address the importance of promoting conventional arms control, including curbing illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of such arms; and avoiding the weaponisation of space, cyberspace, and other emerging domains. It is also vital to prevent excessive military spending, and instead redirect resources to the achievement of more urgent priorities such as the SDGs.

For the SDGs to be fully realised, we need to address persistent challenges to peace and security because development and peace and security are interdependent, however, security measures should not be used as a pre-condition for development. The UN peace and security architecture must be revitalised to be able to effectively tackle threats to international peace and security. Of utmost importance is making meaningful progress in the negotiations for reforming the United Nations Security Council to make it representative and effective.

We also need to consolidate the gains we have derived thus far in developing partnerships through Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

The Pact of the Future must recognise the lack of progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and must seek interventions to greatly enhance actions toward implementing and achieving SDG 5. We seek a future built around human rights as a central pillar and this includes a discussion of two specific areas of human rights that continue to be overlooked and neglected. Specifically, racism and the Right to Development. The Pact of the Future needs to reflect stronger action and commitment on the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. In this regard, the comprehensive implementation of, and follow-up to, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) remains a priority for South Africa. International action on this topic has been underwhelming and the international response thus far is tragically insufficient. We must have greater action that builds on and strengthens existing mechanisms to combat this scourge. We also firmly believe that the Pact of the Future without a real commitment and recognition of the Right to Development will not be able to address the needs of the future and those who follow us.

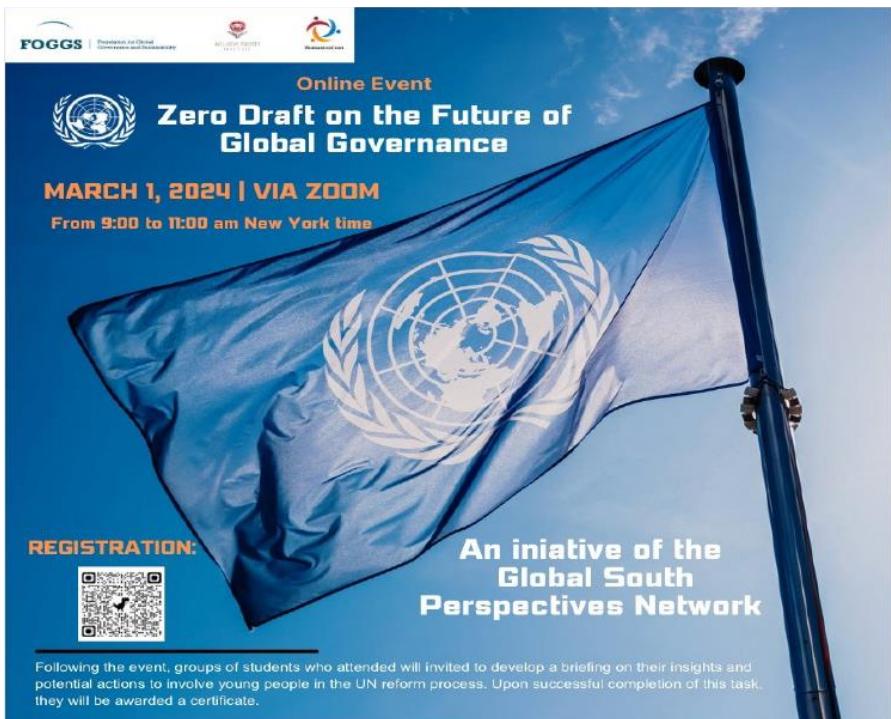
To have a successful Summit we are going to have to find a way to tackle difficult and divisive issues, such as sharing technology, unilateral co-coercive measures, different views on gender, and the recent alarming tendency of walking away from long-standing agreements, such as the principles set in the Rio Declaration of equity and CBD-R-RC.



South Africa is committed to a successful Summit of the Future that bridges the development divide and provides new solutions to the challenges of tomorrow. We are actively engaging in the negotiations on the Pact, and we are hopeful that despite the geo-political challenges that exist, we can and must strive for an ambitious outcome.

4. Summit of the Future & Pact for the Future

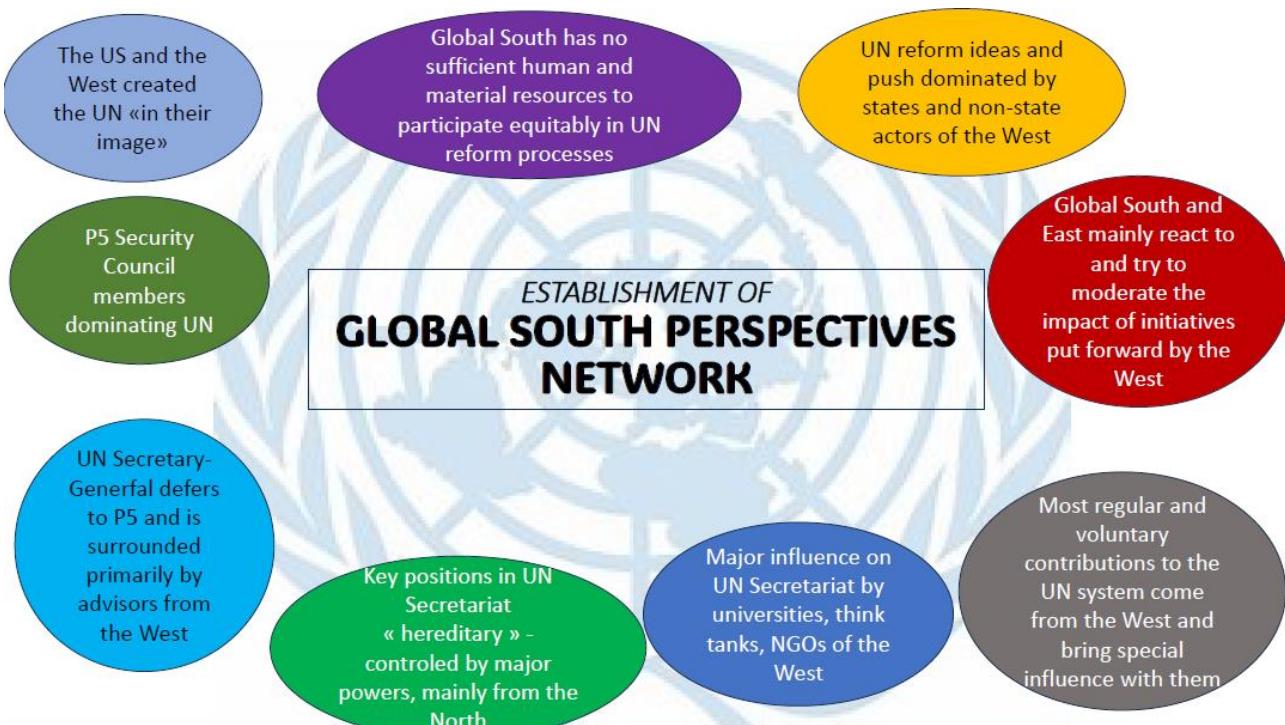
Presentation by Georgios Kostakos, Executive Director, FOGGS



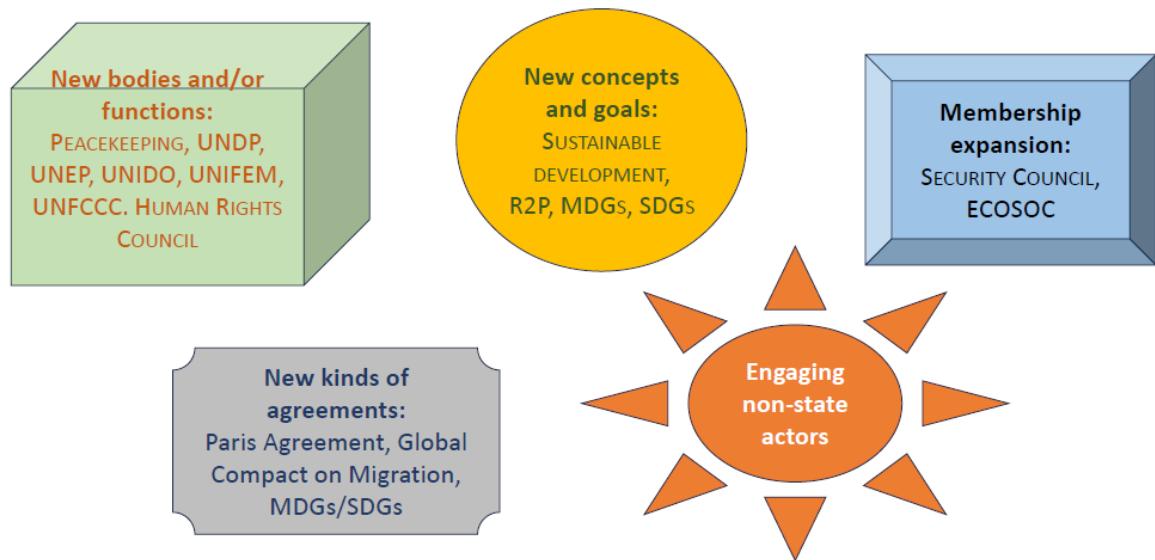
Summit of the Future & Pact for the Future

An Overview

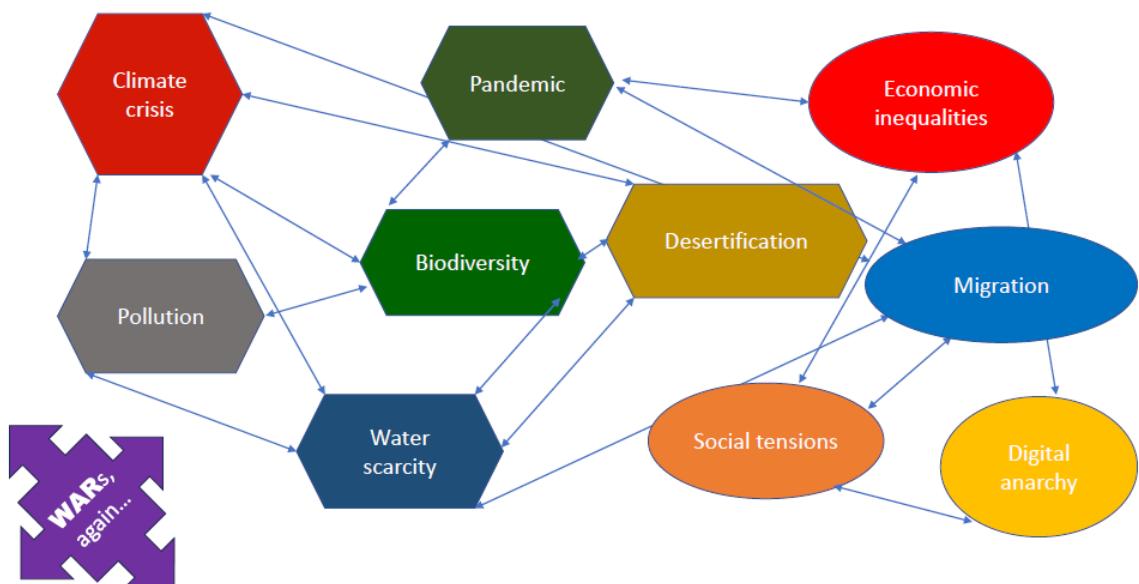
Georgios Kostakos, PhD
Executive Director
FOGGS



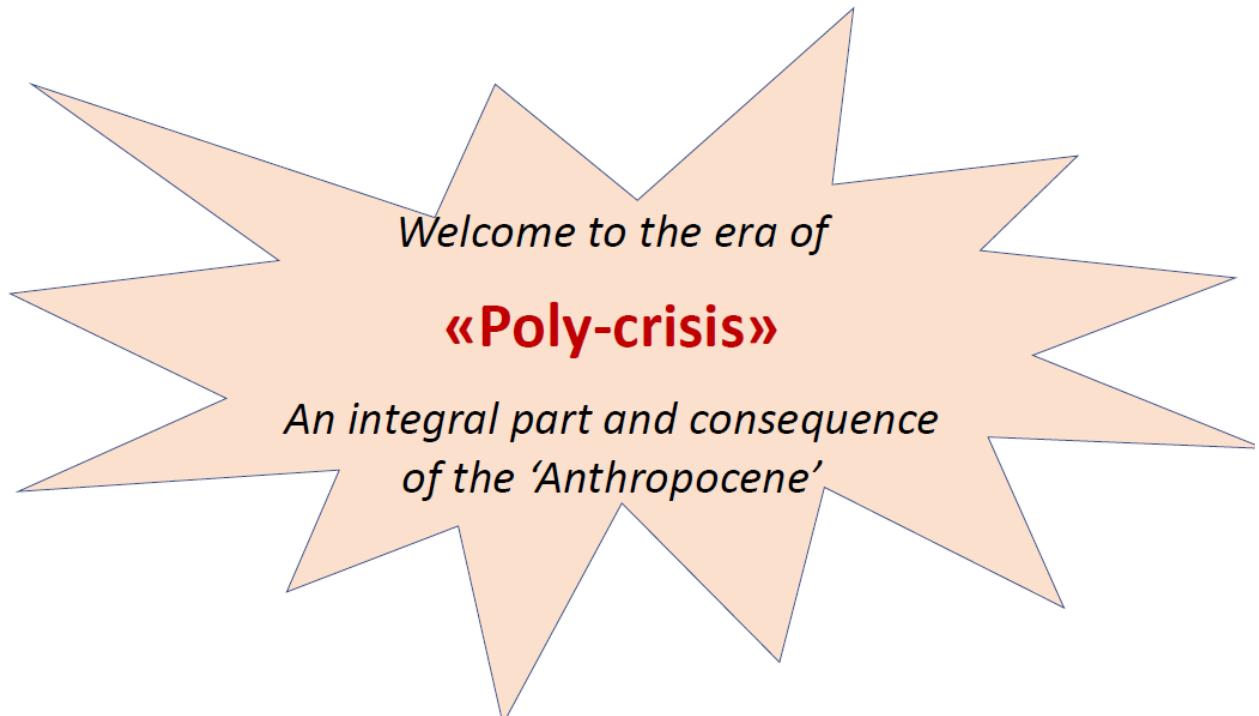
UN REFORM: A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS...



Interconnected threats / global crises



AND THERE GO THE SDGs...



September 2020

UN75 DECLARATION

[In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic]



Para 20. We request the Secretary-General to report back before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges. (see [full declaration](#))

September 2021

OUR COMMON AGENDA



90 proposals «...aimed at turbocharging the 2030 Agenda and making the Sustainable Development Goals real in the lives of people everywhere. Because halfway to 2030, we are far off track....» One proposal to hold a «Summit of the Future» in September 2023 – eventually moved to September 2024 (<https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda>)

September 2023

SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE MINISTERIAL

SOTF outcome, «**Pact for the Future**», to include **Chapeau** and five chapters:

Chapter I.

Sustainable development and financing for development

Chapter II.

International peace and security

Chapter III.

Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

Chapter IV.

Youth and future generations

Chapter V.

Transforming global governance

(<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n23/252/95/pdf/n2325295.pdf?token=8tUhcbnK72We6g1UH&fe=true>)

Spring 2023

INTERIM PEOPLE'S PACT FOR THE FUTURE



Unfortunately not in the structure of the Pact for the Future...

2023

11 Policy Briefs issued by the UN Secretary-General (<https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda/policy-briefs>)

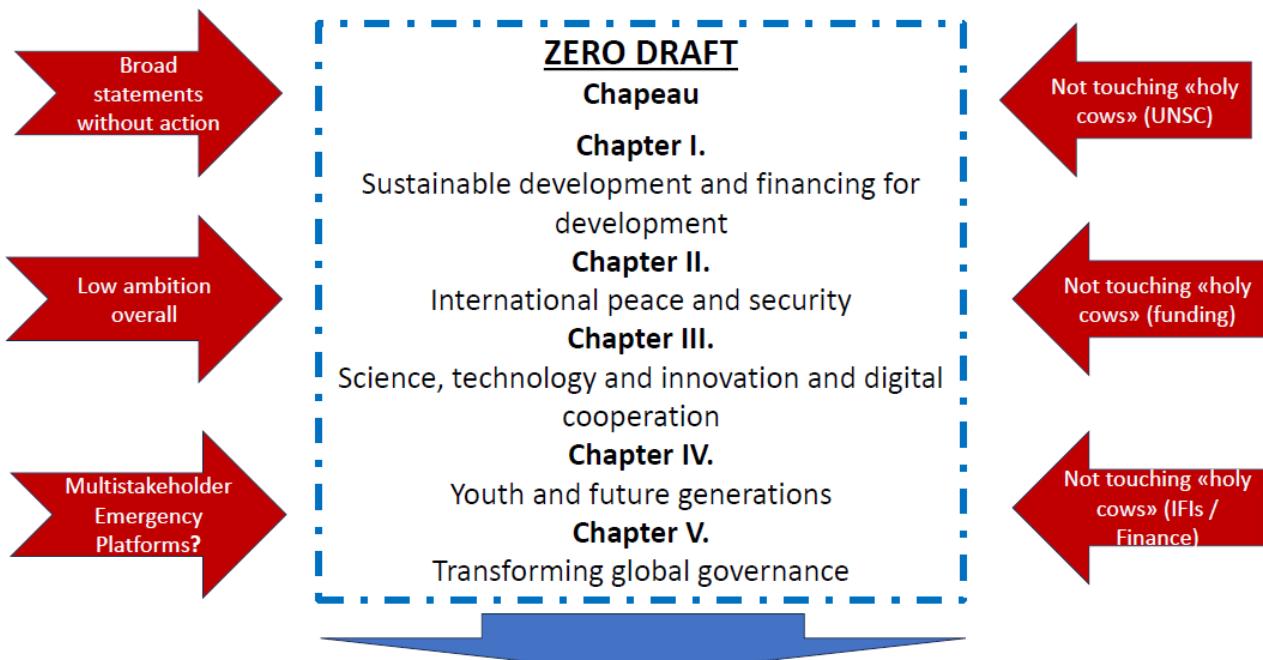
CONSULTATIONS organized by the SOTF Co-facilitators, including written and oral inputs by civil society (<https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future>)

Report of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (<https://highleveladvisoryboard.org/>)

January 2024

DRAFT PACT FOR THE FUTURE
Chapeau
1. We, the Heads of State and Government, representing the peoples of the world, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters to take action to safeguard the future for present and future generations.
2. We are at a moment of acute global peril. Across our world, people are suffering from the effects of poverty, hunger, inequality, armed conflicts, violence, displacement, terrorism, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity. We are at a moment of political polarization and potentially catastrophic and existential risks. Yet, at the same time, it is a moment of opportunity, one of advances in knowledge and technology, one in which, if used well, could deliver a better future.
3. The challenges we face are so acute that any one of us alone is unable to meet them. Left unaddressed, they will threaten the well-being of all of us, and the world, and the well-being of our planet, while the cost of inaction will only benefit only a few.
4. We recognize that challenges such as these can only be met through strong and sustainable international cooperation. We are at a moment when the world is more interconnected than ever before, and when the political, economic, environmental and technological challenges we face are increasingly interconnected and relate to an uncertain future. We know that the challenges we face are interconnected, and that the solutions must be too. International financial architecture must adapt to the challenges they face and live up to the responsibilities it must, to ensure that the financial commitments that are made, remain unbroken.
5. We believe there is a path to the well-being of all of humanity. We are committed to moving forward in a spirit of cooperation, of respect, of dialogue and emerging consensus. We commit to ensuring that, while we must respect and value diversity, we must also meet the more complex challenges to come, and to commit to deliver on our existing commitments. We will renew our commitment to work together, which is the vital precondition for effective international cooperation.
6. Today, we propose a new vision in international cooperation with a new approach. We will cooperate in a spirit of openness, of respect, of dialogue and emerging consensus. We commit to ensuring that, while we must respect and value diversity, we must also meet the more complex challenges to come, and to commit to deliver on our existing commitments. We will renew our commitment to work together, which is the vital precondition for effective international cooperation.
7. To achieve this, we reaffirm our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We also reaffirm that the three pillars of the United Nations – development, peace and security, and human rights – are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We further





Not necessarily, if only...

- ❖ The Global South remains vigilant but also proactively engaged
- ❖ A pro-reform coalition of middle and small powers across regions emerges, with a vision and concrete proposals
- ❖ The UN Secretary-General, his team and his HLAB engage flexibly, not only to promote the initial proposals included in *Our Common Agenda*
- ❖ The world's citizens get engaged and demand serious action by their politicians
- ❖ Global civil society remains engaged, vigilant and pro-active





**SOME MONTHS
WITH A LOT TO DO
AHEAD OF US!**

Thank You!
For your attention and
your actions!

info@foggs.org
www.foggs.org



5. Collective insights on Global Governance

The discussion brings to light several critical points on the challenges and opportunities within global governance and humanitarian efforts. There is a unanimous recognition of the gap between the formulation of global agendas, such as the 'Agenda for Humanity' and 'Agenda 2030', and their practical implementation. The discourse underscores the necessity of moving beyond noble intentions to actionable strategies, emphasising the importance of the 'how' in achieving these global goals.

A pivotal concern highlighted is the engagement of diverse global actors, from governments and civil society to academia, in effecting meaningful change. The need for clear, accessible communication is stressed, pointing out the barriers posed by complex jargon and the predominance of English, which limits wider engagement and understanding. The call for action over intentions resonates throughout, advocating for tangible progress across various spheres, including academia, government, and multilateral organisations.

The discussions also address structural challenges within the United Nations, advocating for reforms that reflect the dynamic socio-economic landscape of the contemporary world. A vision for a reformed UN, with a more inclusive representation of the Global South and a reassessment of outdated international laws, is deemed essential for addressing global challenges effectively. The establishment of dedicated leadership to steer this transformation is suggested to ensure independence, objectivity, and high-level engagement from all global regions.

Focusing on regional perspectives, particularly from the Middle East, the dialogue highlights the inadequacies of current global governance mechanisms and their impacts on regional conflicts and disparities. Including the younger generation in global dialogues is critical, considering their unique perspectives and the direct impact of governance flaws on their future. The necessity of a development-focused approach to address transborder challenges, such as illegal immigration, cyber-attacks, and poverty, is advocated over a security-centric one.

The collective insights call for a holistic approach to solving global and regional issues, urging reforms in global governance to ensure fairness, justice, and sustainability. The significance of regional initiatives and cooperative efforts among countries is acknowledged as vital for establishing effective models and mechanisms to address global inequalities and foster sustainable development. The discussions culminated in a call for worldwide engagement in crafting actionable strategies and reforms, aiming to bridge the gap between ambitious global agendas and their realisation, of a more equitable and sustainable global order.

The insights have been gleaned from the remarks by the panellists:

- **Ms. Buyelwa Sonjica, former Cabinet Minister, South Africa**
- **Prof. Cilene Victor, Professor at Methodist University; Fapcom Communication College; FGV LAW; HumanizaCom Research Group Leader, São Paulo, Brazil**
- **Prof. Mohammed Taher Gholi Tabar, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran**
- **Prof. Carmen Rico Menge, former Dean, Faculty of Social Communication and Director of International Relations, Catholic University of Uruguay9:**



6. Epilogue

We continue the engagement with the SOTF process and beyond to ensure that the Global South perspectives are taken into account when planning the future of global governance: a human-centred, inclusive, sustainable and resilient one.

Notes



INCLUSIVE SOCIETY INSTITUTE

This report has been published by the Inclusive Society Institute

The Inclusive Society Institute (ISI) is an autonomous and independent institution that functions independently from any other entity. It is founded for the purpose of supporting and further deepening multi-party democracy.

The ISI's work is motivated by its desire to achieve non-racialism, non-sexism, social justice and cohesion, economic development and

equality in South Africa, through a value system that embodies the social and national democratic principles associated with a developmental state. It recognises that a well-functioning democracy requires well-functioning political formations that are suitably equipped and capacitated. It further acknowledges that South Africa is inextricably linked to the ever transforming and interdependent global world,

which necessitates international and multilateral cooperation. As such, the ISI also seeks to achieve its ideals at a global level through cooperation with like-minded parties and organs of civil society who share its basic values.

In South Africa, ISI's ideological positioning is aligned with that of the current ruling party and others in broader society with similar ideals.

