

## **DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

### **VIRTUAL CLOSED ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

### **A Common Agenda for Global Resilience through a More Inclusive Multilateralism**

*Date: Friday, 18 February 2022*

*Time: 16:00 – 18:00 CET*

#### **Background**

As part of a series of events on global governance issues, FOGGS convened an informal virtual roundtable discussion on the topic “A Common Agenda for Global Resilience through a More Inclusive Multilateralism” on 18 February 2022, bringing together a select group of representatives of non-state actor constituencies such as think tanks, scientific associations, civil society organizations, the private sector, and local authorities.

The aim of the event was to offer a space for exchange on key proposals contained in the UN Secretary-General’s *Our Common Agenda (OCA)* report. The related FOGGS proposal for a Global Resilience Council with advisory assemblies composed of non-state actors was also examined, as possible part of a new, inclusive, and more effective multilateralism that would adequately address the multidimensional and interconnected global crises of today and tomorrow. The discussion was intended as a contribution to the debate on the desirability and viability of the various global governance reform proposals in the leadup to the planned Summit of the Future in 2023.

This closed event was moderated by Georgios Kostakos (FOGGS Executive Director), with lead introductions by Harris Gleckman (FOGGS Executive Board Member), who spoke on recasting multilateralism through the *OCA* and the 2023 Summit of the Future along specific ideological battlelines that have been drawn in support of the various proposals, and Yvonne Rademacher (FOGGS Senior Global Governance Advisor), who explained the FOGGS proposal for a Global Resilience Council, including non-state actor constituency assemblies. Concluding remarks were offered by Richard Kinley (FOGGS President).

This summary presents the key thematic points raised during the discussion. To aid the conversation, two questions were posed to the participants:

1. How can we help advance non-state actor inclusion while simultaneously strengthening intergovernmental organs for an effective multilateralism?
2. As part of the above, how can we build support for a Global Resilience Council, including non-state actor constituency assemblies?

Due to the closed format of the meeting, no attribution is made to speakers. However, the list of participants is provided in Annex I, along with the agenda in Annex II, and the two opening presentations in Annexes III and IV respectively.

#### **Introductory Presentations**

In the first of the two introductory presentations by FOGGS to help frame the conversation, Harris Gleckman presented the current political battle lines in global governance. The six battle lines he identified are: (1) intergovernmental leadership vs.

Secretary-General and "multistakeholder" leadership; (2) the UN's place in global governance; (3) intergovernmental bodies and non-state actors; (3) multilateralism and/or multistakeholder governance; (5) scale of necessary changes; and (6) nomenclature.

He explained that key proposals in the *OCA* do not address some major issues that the multilateral system is grappling with in this crucial juncture, such as the current sectoral fragmentation and the split between, on the one hand, the policy and programmatic organizations in the UN system and, on the other hand, those organizations and the finance, trade, and monetary bodies. Harris concluded his presentation by stating that now is the time to present bold ideas for the next phase of global governance.

In the second introductory presentation, Yvonne Rademacher presented the FOGGS proposal for a Global Resilience Council (GRC) and compared it with the *OCA*'s Emergency Platform. She stressed that the Emergency Platform would be an ad hoc body and would have no decision-making or enforcement powers, while the GRC would be a permanent institution with Security Council style decision-making and enforcement tools.

Yvonne explained that the GRC, which was conceived by FOGGS in 2020, well before the *OCA* publication, would interact closely with advisory assemblies of non-state actors, thus boosting accountability and transparency, and also helping restore waning public trust in global governance. She pointed out that member states would continue to make the final decisions, but that the advisory assemblies would be more systematically consulted in decision-making and would be expected to assist through their respective memberships in the implementation of the eventual decisions. Similar to the Security Council, the GRC would be activated on the request of member states and intergovernmental bodies after the mandate and capabilities of other bodies had been exhausted. Certain requirements would need to be met for an issue to be brought before the GRC, as it would not interfere in anything that could be effectively handled by an existing multilateral body. She referred to the dedicated GRC website

(<https://www.foggs.org/grc-global-resilience-council/>)

where participants could find more information, and kicked off the discussion by asking the group:

- How do you see the *OCA* proposal for an Emergency Platform vs. a GRC?
- What elements do you see in the proposed GRC that could work well for the key global governance issues that your constituency focuses on, or for which elements do you have doubts?

### **Key Discussion Points**

Overall, there was a shared sense of historic opportunity and urgency to rethink global governance and revive the United Nations as the central global governance body. There was also a shared position that non-state actors have a crucial role to play in ensuring the legitimacy and implementation of decisions made through their active participation alongside governments. The 2023 Summit of the Future and other upcoming global events were seen as major opportunities to generate momentum for the adoption of practicable ideas for tackling today's global challenges and the more coherent engagement of non-state actors to that end.

**Topic 1: Overall assessment of the UNSG's OCA report and the current multilateral system**

OCA Report

There was strong support for what the UN stands for, with participants generally welcoming the *OCA* Report and being appreciative of the window of opportunity it opens to influence global governance. Aspects of the *OCA*, such as protecting global commons and global public goods as well as proposals that stress risk awareness as reflected in the Emergency Platform, would help with the urgently needed incorporation of strategic foresight into and reform of the system.

However, participants commented that the *OCA* report was regarded as the agenda of the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) rather than that of the UN system as a whole or of the UN member states, and most agreed that the UNSG's report was "underwhelming" and focused on what was doable in the "current" multilateral environment. However, this current environment was felt to have been poorly defined in the report, which also did not address some of the major issues that the multilateral system has been grappling with, such as the system's prevailing fragmentation and the split between the policy, programmatic and financial elements. On this topic, there were comments made that the Secretary-General might be facing resistance to establishing anything that could be a new permanent mechanism of the UN system, thus he had opted to be pragmatic instead of systemic in the *OCA*. The ad hoc nature of some of the proposed initiatives had to be understood in this context as an attempt to increase the resilience of the UN system without encountering too much resistance.

Trust in the Multilateral System

There was a general discussion about the major flaws in the global governance system going beyond the United Nations system, and that the multilateral system needed to be strengthened and updated to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Weakened global institutions and decision-making, as well as disunity between major powers are reflected in reduced trust in multilateral institutions. In order to restore the public's trust, there was a need for a clear process of communication on what needed to be done in an understandable and coordinated manner, and a two-way link between any global actions and national and local level debates. There was a consensus that putting every issue and crisis under the umbrella of 'security' was dangerous, therefore the distinction between traditional, "hard security" and non-military, "human security" was important to make.

Crisis Example 1: COVID-19

In terms of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a discussion around the obvious absence of an appropriate top global-level governance body that could effectively coordinate a crisis of this kind. For instance, as a non-military matter, this global health crisis rightly did not make it on the agenda of the Security Council. However, there was no other institutionalized mechanism in place to engage the scientific community with the world's political leadership. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed very publicly the ineffective coordination and lack of collective highest-level management of a global health crisis.

The group also pointed to the debate around vaccine distribution that had brought to the fore the many shortcomings of the multilateral system, with UN agencies and associated multistakeholder partnerships fighting over funding and who would deliver vaccines. Participants expressed concern that these internal power struggles turned into an institutional culture that seeped into how people work in the UN system and that the lack of transparency, accountability and effectiveness of multistakeholder partnerships eroded public trust in multilateralism.

## Crisis Example 2: Climate Change

Roundtable participants saw an opportunity to link the outcomes of UNFCCC COP26 (Glasgow) to the proposals for a new institution, such as the GRC, and the associated constituency assemblies. There was a strong view that sub-national actors, namely local and regional authorities, needed to be part of decision-making. Moreover, there was an urgent need for better inter-agency coordination to address the multidimensional aspects of climate change, which could not be done by UNFCCC as such but needed an umbrella body bringing together the whole of multilateralism.

### UN Reports Not Leading to Implementation and Action

Participants highlighted the gap between theory and solutions that had been identified in countless UN reports, but then found no practical application. They asked who in fact was reading UN reports and drawing conclusions from them. At the same time, cities and local authorities submitted voluntary reports to the UN, but also there it was unclear what happened with the information provided after a report was submitted. Even policymakers would not read these numerous reports, not even the summaries of most. In order to restore trust in multilateral bodies and the work they do, or should be doing, a high priority was to translate reports into specific policies and actions, to start really addressing the challenges of our time.

## **Topic 2: Reactions towards the proposed Global Resilience Council**

### The OCA's Emergency Platform and GRC

Some participants welcomed as helpful the comparison/juxtaposition made between the OCA's Emergency Platform and the Global Resilience Council proposed by FOGGS. Others recommended avoiding the comparison so as not to undermine the UNSG's Emergency Platform proposal and paralyze the current multilateral system in times of urgent challenges. An in-between approach would have the OCA's Emergency Platform serve as a steppingstone towards the establishment of the GRC, public awareness of which was expected to rise in the forthcoming discussions around the various proposals.

### Further Clarifications Needed

It became clear during the discussion that further clarifications were needed on the proposed GRC. For instance, contrary to some comments made during the discussion, the FOGGS team maintained that the GRC would not require a UN Charter amendment to be established and would be able to deal effectively with a range of issues of a non-military nature. One of the fundamental questions raised was whether the GRC could, in fact, overcome the political gridlock and the dysfunctionality that characterizes UN bodies, notably the Security Council.

More clarity was needed on where and how the GRC would add value, and how such a new multilateral body would be better equipped to handle a crisis than existing institutions. Some felt that it might be more feasible to revitalize and enhance the authority of existing institutions like ECOSOC, rather than starting with a new institution.

There was also need for further clarifications on the membership and rules of procedure envisaged for the GRC. The roundtable participants agreed that there was a need to change the status quo, but many cautioned that any new mechanisms should maintain member states as the leaders, while ensuring that countries in the Global South would be given a strong voice and adequate representation. The proposal should also be more upfront about the engagement of UN system agencies, as resistance could be expected from those who fear losing power they currently hold in the system.

## The Term "Resilience"

The group did not agree on the use of the term "resilience" and whether the proposed Council should indeed be called the "Global Resilience Council." Some were hesitant because it seemed like there was a focus on getting back to where one had previously been before a crisis, thus not looking to a better way forward. It was also suggested that instead of being called Global Resilience Council the new body could be called UN Council for Sustainable Development. Those in favor of calling it a "Global Resilience Council" felt that the word "resilience" conveyed adaptability and proactiveness vis-à-vis the numerous crises that are already hitting or will hit in the near future our world, with resilience being a key precondition for sustainability and well-being.

### **Topic 3: The role of parliamentarians and non-state actors; not all are the same in the UN system and the proposed GRC**

#### States and non-state actors

Participants agreed that governments should remain central actors in the multilateral system but also stressed that there were clear limitations to the intergovernmental approach, especially in this era of renewed great power rivalries. Thus, improving how governments work with non-state actors in the multilateral system needed to be an urgent focus.

There was agreement that non-state actors needed to be engaged in decision-making processes. While there had been a steady increase in stakeholder participation since the UN was formed in 1945, the context had changed more dramatically and the UN system itself had not kept up with the times. The WHO Handbook on Social Participation for Universal Health Coverage that was addressed to national governments could offer a good template for non-state actor engagement, also for the proposed Global Resilience Council.

#### About the Idea of Advisory Assemblies

There were many questions on the composition of the proposed advisory assemblies of non-state actors, which would be working closely with the Global Resilience Council. One question, for instance, pointed to the fact of overlapping constituencies, such as women scientists. Participants asked:

- (1) Who will be represented in the various (hypothetical) assemblies?
- (2) How can we improve the participation of CSOs at a more global or high-profile level?
- (3) How can CSOs be better incorporated into the work of the UN at national and local levels too, not only at headquarters level?

Specifically in reference to the comparison of the OCA's proposal for an Emergency Platform vs. FOGGS' proposal for a GRC, a participant asked what the strengths and weaknesses of advisory assemblies would be. From that perspective, there was an acknowledgement that assemblies could provide effective engagement of and leadership within the corresponding constituency, bringing the respective strengths to the collective level, but there was also the danger of assembly consultations weakening the resolve and slowing down the process of responding to a crisis.

#### Status of Specific Groups

Some felt that specific groups, such as parliamentarians and scientific bodies, should be given a distinct role in multilateralism. Specifically, the participation of parliamentarians would enhance the connection between intergovernmental bodies and national parliaments, with positive effects on resource mobilization and implementation on the

ground, as well as accountability and oversight. Parliamentarians are directly elected by citizens and represent the core of representative democracy. Therefore, they should be given an elevated position over other constituencies and should not be counted as civil society at large.

Furthermore, the scientific community should be at the table as an independent autonomous voice at the UN and in the proposed GRC. A scientific advisory body, made up of both social and natural scientists, should be separated from assemblies representing other constituencies, such as women's groups, trade unions, etc. in the same way that, in the G20 context, the Think 20, the Women 20, and the Business 20 articulate different and specific interests. Participants agreed that there was a need for science to point societies in the direction of better policy, as is the case for climate with the IPCC.

The group agreed that younger generations should be given a central place at the table. Overall, stakeholder engagement in multilateralism should be strengthened but a balance should be maintained between the respective roles of state and non-state actors.

**Topic 4: The way to a successful Summit of the Future in 2023**

For a successful Summit of the Future in 2023, participants agreed that there was a need to aim high and advance solutions that could actually stand up to the magnitude of the challenges the world has to deal with. The science-policy nexus needed to be strengthened for evidence-based decision-making. A review of financing the UN system and ways to diversify the sources of funding needed to accompany the discussion on institutional changes.

## Annex I: List of Participants

Roundtable Participants	Organization
BEST, Stuart Junior Policy and Project Management Advisor	Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
BUMMEL, Andreas Director	Democracy Without Borders
CHAUDHRY, Ravi Founder Chairman	Cenext Group and Fellow, World Business Academy; Former Chairman, TATA Group Companies
DEACON, Andy Acting Managing Director	Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy
DENIS, Mathieu Science Director	International Science Council (ISC)
DOVE, Fiona Executive Director	Transnational Institute (TNI)
FLORIZONE, Richard President and CEO	International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
GLECKMAN, Harris Executive Board Member	Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
GUPTA, Keshav Founder	The Dais Foundation
HUFFINESS, Jeffery Senior Advisor	Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN)
JOENSSON, Jibecke Head, Brussels Office	CMI – M. Ahtisaari Peace Foundation
JOSHI, Neena Junior Global Governance Advisor	Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
Kingham, Ronald A. Executive Director	Environment and Development Resource Centre (EDRC)
KINLEY, Richard President	Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
KOSTAKOS, Georgios Executive Director	Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
NORBERG, Sofia Head of Innovation	Global Challenges Foundation (GCF)
RADEMACHER, Yvonne Senior Global Governance Advisor	Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS)
RODRIGUES, Maria João President	Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)
SCHOLZ, Imme Deputy Director	German Development Institute (GDI/DIE)
SIDIROPOULOS, Elizabeth Chief Executive	South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA)
SRIVASTAVA, Leena Deputy Director General for Science	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)
ULBERT, Cornelia Executive Director	Institute for Development and Peace (INEF)
VAN DER PÜTTEN, Martin Head of International Relations	City of Dortmund

## Annex II: Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
16:00 – 16:20 CET	<b>Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introductory Remarks / Roundtable Moderation</li><li>- Introduction of Participants</li></ul>
16:20 – 16:40 CET	<b>Introductory presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The FOGGS proposal for a Global Resilience Council, including non-state actor constituency assemblies</li><li>- Recasting multilateralism through the UN Secretary-General's report <i>Our Common Agenda</i> and the 2023 Summit of the Future</li></ul>
16:40 – 17:40 CET	<b>Moderated discussion</b> Key questions (and corresponding discussion rounds) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How can we help advance non-state actor inclusion and strengthen intergovernmental organs for an effective multilateralism?</li><li>- As part of the above, how can we build support for a Global Resilience Council, including non-state actor constituency assemblies?</li></ul>
17:40-18:00 CET	<b>Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Summary by the moderator and proposed next steps</li><li>- Final word by all participants</li></ul>



## Annex III: Presentation slides on the current debates on the multilateral system.



### Multiple Global Governance Battles are Going On and are Reflected in the Our Common Agenda

#### Backdrop

- UN System fragmentation vis-à-vis multidimensional and interconnected global challenges
- Split between the policy and program parts of the UN system and the finance, trade, and monetary bodies

 **The OCA Report does not address either of the above is**  
FOGGS recommends a new intergovernmental coordination arrangements between all the UN system's governing bodies, an Intergovernmental Leadership Council

#### Battle Line #1

##### Intergovernmental leadership vs. Secretary-General and "multistakeholder" leadership

- OCA pushes for greater SG leadership and a reduced role for intergovernmental leadership
- OCA calls for more multistakeholder groups whose membership terms of reference would be set by the Office of the Secretary G


This prompted the General Assembly to

- insist on its role which was expressed in a complicated General Assembly resol
- and the current series of five thematic consultations
- SG's role is important in engaging with and advising member states, as well as actors, and operationalizing intergovernmental decisions through the UN system

#### Battle Line #2

##### The UN's Place in Global Governance


- OCA calls for an endorsement of 'networked multilateralism'
- In networked governance, each organization, each TNC, ea government does what it chooses to do.
- In this arrangement, the UN has a reduced role in defining global goals and objectives with a significant loss in accountability for the system as a whole

 FOGGS sees as necessary a more central role for the UN and the intergovernmental system vis-à-vis major global issues

#### Battle Line #3

##### Intergovernmental Bodies and Non-State Actors


- OCA calls for greater inclusiveness for non-state groups --- via ad hoc multistakeholder partnerships.

 FOGGS proposes greater inclusiveness via constituency assemblies.

#### Battle Line #4

##### Multilateralism and/or Multistakeholder Governance

- OCA calls for
- 9 new multistakeholder groups on crucial issues and no new intergovernmental treaties
- including turning UNWomen into a multistakeholder body

 FOGGS


- opposes out-sourcing governance to multistakeholder groups - proposes greater engagement of non-state actors via constituency assemblies.
- supports greater governmental investment in and effective implementation of the outcome of intergovernmental negotiations

#### Battle Line #5

##### Scale of Necessary Changes

- OCA calls for increased use of multistakeholderism as a key element in a United Nations 2.0

A significant number of States are inclined to consider only incremental changes in the governance of the UN system.

 FOGGS considers that today's mega-crises are beyond the current capacities of the UN system and that major institutional changes (like the Global Resilience Council) are necessary.

#### Battle Line #6

##### Nomenclature

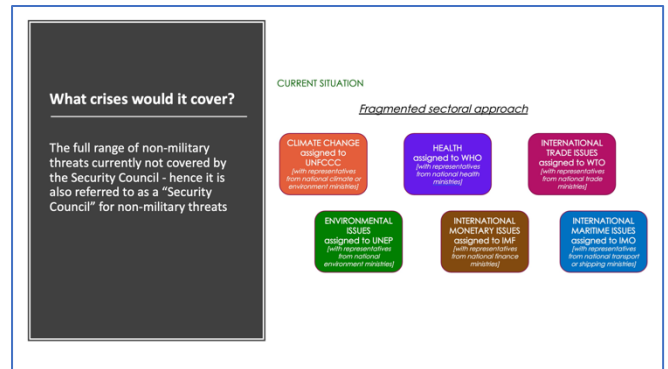
- "stakeholder" vs "community", "constituencies", "citizens"
- "inclusiveness"
- "democracy" at the international level
- "United Nations 2.0"
- "food systems" vs "food /agricultural crisis " and "hunger"



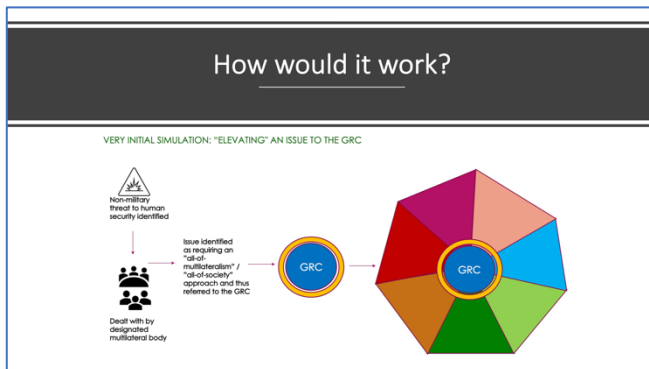
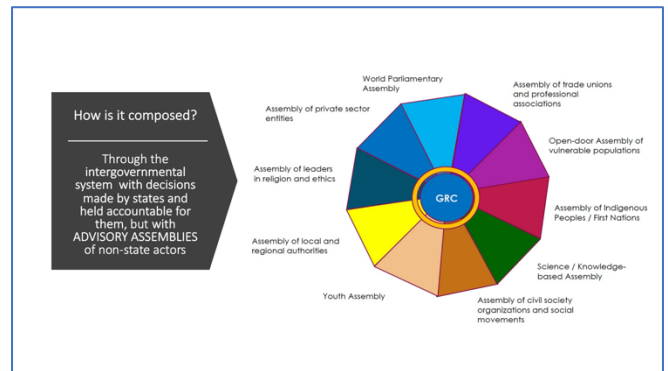
## Annex IV: Presentation slides on the Global Resilience Council.

**OCA Emergency Platform vs. FOGGS Global Resilience Council (GRC)**

Emergency Platform	Global Resilience Council (GRC)
ad-hoc, temporary	permanent
crisis-specific	multi-dimensional
anticipated delays in crisis response with a specific body having to be set up	ready to respond
members selected by the SG	members of the intergovernmental system + non-state actor Advisory Assemblies
no decision-making/enforcement power	decision-making and enforcement power
no provision for institutional memory and learning	continuity



- ### What functions would it have?
- Early warning
  - Scientific advice
  - Inclusive deliberations
  - Public outreach
  - Coordinated action
  - Accountability
  - Broad legitimacy
  - Enforcement power
  - Compelling vision



### Learn more about the GRC

<https://www.foggs.org/grc-global-resilience-council/>

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