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GLOBAL SOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL GOVERNANCE REFORM

A Report by the Global South Perspectives Network

FOGGS PAPERS

Cilene Victor and Georgios Kostakos, Editors

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Global South Perspectives network. In early 2023, the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS) and the research group Humanitarian Journalism and Media Interventions (HumanizaCom), of the Postgraduate Program in Social Communication at the Methodist University of Sao Paulo, co-convened the ***Global South Perspectives Network***, which brings together representatives from universities, think tanks, non-profit organizations, and government institutions across three key regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa. The Global South Perspectives Network aims to contribute to ensuring the participation and influence of the Global South in decisions related to global governance reform, including those within the United Nations. The ***goal*** is to ensure equitable partnership and representation in decision-making and action concerning issues of multilateralism reform. The network's ***mission*** is grounded in a commitment to creating pathways that amplify the voices of the Global South, while also promoting and encouraging attentive listening to these voices by the Global North. Additionally, it aims to foster a sense and practice of belonging in the international context of decision-making. This report presents the primary findings of the ***first survey*** conducted by the Global South Perspectives Network team, which focuses on perceptions of global governance reform held by over 500 individuals across the three key regions.

For more on the Global South Perspectives Network, see https://www.foggs.org/global-south-perspectives/

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACIRC - African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises

ACCR - Arab Center for Cyberspace Research

AI - Artificial Intelligence

AMISOM - African Union Mission to Somalia

ASF - African Standby Force

AU - African Union

AUKUS - Partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States

CPA - Comprehensive Peace Agreement

EP - Emergency Platform

EU - European Union

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

FOGGS - Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability

GRC - Global Resilience Council

HumanizaCom – Humanitarian Journalism and Media Interventions research group

LATAM - Latin America and the Caribbean

MENA - Middle East and North Africa

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NIEO - New International Economic Order

OCA - Our Common Agenda

UN - United Nations

UNDP - United Nations Development Program

UNDPO - UN Department of Peace Operations

UNESCO - UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

UNSC - UN Security Council

Foreword

In 2022, the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), a non-profit organization based in Brussels, Belgium, and the research group Humanitarian Journalism and Media Interventions (HumanizaCom), of the Postgraduate Program in Social Communication at the Methodist University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, organized a series of online roundtables aimed at discussing issues of global governance reform from the perspective of representatives of universities, think tanks, and civil society organizations across three key regions: Latin America and the Caribbean (LATAM), Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

In early 2023, as one of the roundtables' outcomes, FOGGS and HumanizaCom established the Global South Perspectives Network. This network brings together representatives of the aforementioned sectors from the three key regions, Asia to be included at a later stage. The goal is to ensure equitable partnership and representation of the Global South in the exchange of ideas, decision-making and action concerning issues of reform of the multilateral system, including the reform of the United Nations.

The network's mission is firmly grounded on the commitment to create pathways for amplifying the voices of the Global South, so that a more equitable relationship of mutual respect and understanding is established with the Global North. Moreover, the network aims to foster a sense of shared ownership and the practical application of inclusive principles in international decision-making contexts. This report presents the main findings of initial research conducted by the Global South Perspectives Network team, which focused on comprehending and assessing the perspectives of over 500 survey participants from LATAM, Africa and MENA regarding the pros and cons of multilateralism.

The report constitutes the first collaborative outcome of the Global South Perspectives Network and its preparation involved 14 researchers hailing from Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Ghana, Iran, South Africa, Uruguay, and Belgium/Greece. In addition to these researchers-authors, seven colleagues affiliated with the network, coming from Colombia, Ghana (two colleagues), Guyana, India, Jordan, the United States, made valuable contributions during the nascent stages of this project. The list of Network members as of now can be found in the Annex to this report.

The findings contained in this report stem from a comprehensive research methodology that encompasses three distinct methodological approaches – survey, focus group and document analysis. First, a survey was conducted, garnering responses from 531 individuals, with 517 of them originating from the three regions of interest, LATAM, Africa and MENA. The survey was administered in seven languages, namely Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish, expertly translated by network members.

Secondly, the research involved the organization of four focus group discussions, all coordinated by network members but involving several non-network participants. Three of these focus groups were region-specific and engaged civil society activists and subject matter experts from think tanks and academia, as well as former diplomats. The fourth focus group was dedicated to media professionals from

all three regions, with a particular emphasis on their role in covering topics related to the operations and reform efforts of the United Nations.

The third and final component of the research methodology comprised a meticulous analysis of three pivotal United Nations documents that frame ongoing UN reform efforts, further enriching the insights presented in this report.

In addition to the current comprehensive report, the results derived from this extensive research endeavour are intended to be disseminated through international events, publications and local workshops. The aim is to engage and sensitize individuals to the imperative of constructing a more pluralistic and inclusive multilateralism.

It is paramount to acknowledge that the completion of this study would not have been possible without the gracious participation of those who responded to the survey and aided in its dissemination, as well as those who actively contributed to the focus group discussions. As selfless and generous the contributions of all involved in this research were, it would not have been possible to put this report together and to organize its launch in New York, on the sidelines of the opening of the UN General Assembly's 78th Session, without the kind support of the Global Challenges Foundation, within the scope of the Global Resilience Council project of FOGGS; we are grateful for this support.

In closing, we extend our warmest wishes to all readers and sincerely hope that this report serves as a source of valuable insights in the pursuit of a more equitable and cooperative global governance system.

Cilene Victor
HumanizaCom

Georgios Kostakos
FOGGS

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INTRODUCTION

By Cilene Victor and Georgios Kostakos

This introduction is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of the central themes and objectives of this report. It unfolds in three interconnected sections, each serving a distinct purpose.

In the first section, an exploration is undertaken into the broader context surrounding the reform efforts of the United Nations (UN). This exploration encompasses a detailed examination of when, why, how, and by whom the discourse on global governance reform was initiated. Additionally, it illuminates the growing relevance of this issue, particularly for actors hailing from the Global South. As the UN reform discourse gains momentum, understanding its origins and motivations becomes increasingly pertinent.

The second section of this introduction refers to the origins, growth trajectory, and overarching goals of the Global South Perspectives Network. It is crucial to highlight the genesis of the network, with its initial focus on global governance reform, and how it has matured into a platform for meaningful engagement and dialogue among different actors from the three regions covered as of now, namely Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and MENA.

Transitioning to the third and final section, a clear articulation is provided of the primary objectives and intentions behind this report. This section offers a lucid delineation of the network's aspirations and outlines the methodology employed to derive the report's findings. Understanding the purpose of this report and the approach taken in its creation is essential for comprehending the valuable insights it offers, along with the proposals and the role that the Global South Perspectives Network aims to play today and in the future.

The reform of the UN

In 2021, the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his *Our Common Agenda* report emphasized that "the choices we make, or fail to make, today could result in further breakdown, or a breakthrough to a greener, better, safer future. The choice is ours to make, but we will not have this chance again".

Amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and its global repercussions, such as escalating geopolitical tensions and disrupted supply chains for essential goods, the need for new global governance arrangements has only become more urgent. Establishing a modern, inclusive, effective, ethical and people-centered United Nations system can play a vital role in addressing the accumulating crises/

"the polycrisis" that the world is facing, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, food and water insecurity, the worsening climate crisis, increasing inequalities, widespread criminal violence and wars.

The Summit of the Future proposed by the UN Secretary-General and scheduled to take place in September 2024 provides a pivotal opportunity to bolster multilateralism with inputs from countries and regions, governments and non-state actors worldwide. In this context, ensuring the representation of those disproportionately affected by the ongoing crises is of paramount significance.

The Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), a global think-and-do tank dedicated to initiating and contributing to policy discussions spanning a diverse array of multilateralism, sustainability and global citizenship issues, recognizes the period leading up to the Summit of the Future as crucial. During this period, FOGGS is playing an active role in the review of existing global governance arrangements and the provision of input to the UN Secretariat and the intergovernmental negotiation process.

Partnerships with other think tanks and civil society organizations from around the world is key to the approach of FOGGS. In this context, systematic and proactive engagement of regional think tanks and individual experts in the global discourse is imperative. It helps elevate the unique circumstances of regions and offers timely guidance to the multilateral system as it navigates and addresses the accumulating crises. To facilitate this, FOGGS has initiated a series of roundtables with regional think tanks and experts. These roundtables are aimed at fostering collective brainstorming on the ongoing global governance reform process, enhancing the influence of think tanks, universities, and civil society organizations from Latin America, Africa, and MENA, and facilitating the transmission of insights to global institutions.

For the sake of transparency, as part of its UN2100 Initiative, FOGGS is actively developing a proposal for a Global Resilience Council. This council, operating at the highest level of global governance, would tackle non-military challenges faced by humanity.

The envisioned council would possess authority akin to that of the UN Security Council, albeit without veto power and other impediments that hinder the UNSC's effectiveness. It would be an inclusive council actively engaging assemblies representing various constituencies of non-state actors worldwide. Its primary purpose is to provide these actors with a robust platform in global governance.

To reinforce this proposal, FOGGS has convened numerous meetings and events involving diverse civil society organizations from around the world. These virtual, closed roundtables, which centered on organizations from Latin America, Africa, and MENA, transcended the confines of discussions solely related to the Global Resilience Council (GRC) proposal. Instead, they were conducted in the broader spirit of cultivating an inclusive and pluralistic approach to multilateralism.

The Global South Perspectives Network

As mentioned in the previous section, in 2022, FOGGS organized a series of virtual roundtables with strategic actors from various regions around the world to discuss the reform of the UN, the urgency of a more plural and inclusive multilateralism, and the proposal for the Global Resilience Council.

The roundtables in three specific regions - Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa – were organized by FOGGS in partnership with the research group Humanitarian Journalism

and Media Interventions (HumanizaCom), of the Postgraduate Program in Social Communication at the Methodist University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, sparked discussions among the participants that caught the organizers' attention for the potential of these debates.

The realization that the discussions should not end with those roundtables was the starting point for the initial forming of the network, initially comprised of representatives from academia and think tanks in these three regions.

In February 2023, FOGGS and HumanizaCom invited participants from the roundtables focused on LATAM, Africa, and MENA to a virtual meeting to aim for the creation of a network to connect experts from various fields. The productive meeting marked the inception of the Global South Perspectives Network.

Starting in April, quarterly meetings were scheduled to define what the network could produce to stimulate discussions focused on global governance reform from the perspective of the Global South. This report idea was born from those discussions, as will be explained in the next section of this introduction.

Currently, the network comprises 18 experts in topics related to multilateralism, based in the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Guyana, Uruguay, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, South Africa, Ghana, Turkey, England, Belgium, and the United States. In these initial seven months, the Global South Perspectives Network has been brainstorming and designing pathways to ensure the amplification of voices from the Global South and the sensitivity of listening by the Global North, aiming to stimulate the sense and practice of belonging in the context of international decision-making, such as the efforts to build the Summit of the Future, which will take place on 22-23 September 2024.

While global population statistics, estimated at 8.2 billion, may not be highly precise when considering their regional distribution, it is estimated that the three regions represented by the network team - LATAM, Africa, and MENA - account for nearly 2.1 billion people in total. This comprises 662 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 billion in Africa, encompassing four of its five regions (Middle Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, and Western Africa), and 490 million in the Middle East and North Africa.

This report materializes the first major effort of the Global South Perspectives Network to ensure that the voices of the Global South resonate and permeate the discourse and actions surrounding global governance reform.

This Report

This final section introduces the goals and structure of this report, the flagship initiative of the Global South Perspectives network, jointly convened by FOGGS and HumanizaCom.

Considerable research and collaboration have gone into producing this report, which focuses on the perspectives and concerns of over 500 research participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa regarding the urgent need for a more inclusive and diverse approach to multilateralism.

The primary objective of this report is to provide insights and guidance for meaningful participation by the Global South in discussions and actions related to global governance reform. To achieve this, the report and its findings will be shared at both international and local events, as well as in workshops, aimed at strengthening the planned initiatives for the Summit of the Future, scheduled for 2024.

To provide an overview of the subsequent sections, the report is organized into four parts, each delving into specific aspects of the findings and analysis.

In the first part, we present the results of a comprehensive survey conducted among participants from the three key regions under study. This section offers insights into the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perspectives on peace and security threats, non-military threats, global governance, the proposed Global Resilience Council and the media role in this context. Furthermore, we provide a critical analysis of these results, both at the global level and through the perspective of experts from the Global South Perspectives network.

The second part offers insights gathered from strategic actors through a series of focus groups. These discussions were held separately for each of the three regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa, with each one organized and facilitated by one or more local network members.

The third part conducts a content analysis, examining the extent to which the Global South is represented in key global governance reform documents. We explore whether the voices and perspectives of the Global South are adequately considered in these critical documents.

In the fourth part, the report presents an analysis of the role played by media and social media in addressing the target issue. It also includes insights from media professionals, shedding light on their perspectives regarding the possibilities and challenges associated with their coverage in these three regions.

We aspire to have this report contribute to amplifying the Global South's participation in international efforts to foster a more plural and inclusive multilateralism.

Methodological approaches

The methodology employed in crafting this report encompasses a comprehensive multimethod approach, thoughtfully devised by the members of the Global South Perspectives Network, focused on three key regions – Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and North Africa and the Middle East – with the aim of obtaining a panoramic view of the Global South participants' perspectives on global governance reform.

This multimethod approach combines a survey, focus groups, and document analysis for several compelling reasons. Firstly, given the diverse and complex nature of topics related to global governance reform, a multifaceted examination is essential. While the survey allows us to collect a broad spectrum of quantitative data, offering statistical insights into the opinions and perceptions of participants from different regions, it is crucial to note that the qualitative approach to interpreting the survey findings will

take precedence. This qualitative approach enables a deeper exploration of the nuances and underlying themes in the data.

Focus groups provide an added qualitative dimension, enabling us to delve further into the intricacies of participants' viewpoints, fostering in-depth discussions and exploring underlying themes.

Lastly, documentary analysis complements these methods by offering contextual and historical insights into global governance issues. By integrating these three approaches, we aim to provide a holistic, well-rounded understanding of the Global South's stance on global governance reform, ensuring a comprehensive and nuanced assessment.

In the sections that follow, the three methodological approaches -- survey, focus groups and document analysis – are presented in more detail.

About the Survey

The survey, created using Google Forms, consisted of 25 questions. It began with two open-ended questions centred on nationality and place of residence: "What is your main nationality? What country/territory do you currently reside in, and for how long have you been residing there?". Subsequently, participants answered 20 multiple-choice closed-ended questions, followed by three final open-ended questions to gather suggestions and impressions from respondents on the research topic.

Of the 20 closed-ended questions, the first four sought demographic data such as gender, age, educational background, and profession/occupation. The remaining 16 closed-ended questions were divided into four themes: threats to peace and security, non-military threats to human security, the role of the UN and multilateralism, including the creation of a Global Resilience Council, and the role of the media.

The section on threats to peace and security covered topics such as internal conflict/civil war, religious conflict, domestic terrorism, international terrorism, war with neighbours, conflicts with more distant countries, and organized crime.

The second set of questions, focused on non-military threats, included topics like food insecurity, water insecurity, Covid-19, climate change impacts, pollution, gender-based discrimination and violence, abuse of minorities, abuse of refugees and migrants, child abuse and neglect, other human rights abuses (serious economic inequality, corruption, etc.), generalized violence, and internet access, data protection, and cyberattacks.

In the third set of closed-ended questions, the focus was on the participants' evaluations of the effectiveness of responses and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations in addressing threats to peace and security and non-military threats in the Global South. It also explored how the Global South could participate in these actions and initiatives. The questions explored the participants' attitude towards the possibility of establishing a Global Resilience Council, as proposed by FOGGS.

In the fourth and final set of multiple-choice questions, the survey focused on participants' evaluations of the role played by mainstream media, social media, as well as UN media, in increasing awareness of the discussion on global governance reform. This analysis of the role of the medias and social media complements the analysis of the focus group with media workers, as will be explained later.

The survey concluded with three open-ended questions, aiming to elicit more spontaneous opinions from participants on the following topics:

- What specific areas or aspects of the United Nations and multilateralism do you believe need reform to better represent the interests and concerns of the Global South?
- What specific reforms to the UN and multilateralism would you suggest to ensure your country or the Global South more broadly has a more significant role in shaping global policies and decision-making processes?
- From your perspective, what role should your country and the Global South more broadly play in the reform process of the United Nations and multilateralism?

Over a period of 50 days, from June 19 to August 10, 2023, 530 respondents were reached, of which 512 were from the three regions of interest: LATAM, Africa, and MENA. The survey Google Form were carefully translated into the seven primary languages of the focus regions: Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. The translation of the form aimed to eliminate language barriers for survey participants.

The network team decided not to use specialized survey companies in order to test its reach and openness in the regions covered. Thus, the survey was promoted on the social media of network members, including Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, as well as on the social media of FOGGS and HumanizaCom. In addition to these efforts, the survey was shared in WhatsApp groups of academic experts and NGOs.

As will be observed later, the majority of the respondents have a profile of multipliers, which enhances the results obtained with this methodology.

Tabulating the data posed a significant challenge since each form represented a language, not a region. For example, the Portuguese form had respondents from Brazil but also from Portuguese-speaking Africa. Therefore, with the assistance of a data scientist, responses from the seven forms, each in a different language, were transferred to a single Excel spreadsheet, resulting in a total of 39,150 data points cross-referenced within 530 forms.

> The data preprocessing involved several steps, including raw data collection, cleaning to remove inconsistencies and outliers, normalization to ensure data was on a compatible scale, and imputation of missing values when necessary. Additionally, we carefully selected relevant features and engineered new variables when appropriate.

> The importance of this preparatory work cannot be underestimated, as it directly influences the quality of the results in subsequent statistical analysis, as well as in the qualitative analysis, the main focus of this report. We believe that by investing significant time and effort in data preprocessing, we have established a solid foundation for accurate statistical analyses to support the qualitative findings.
> Gilvani Moletta, Data Scientist

It is essential to emphasize that while the statistical analysis played a significant role in assessing the survey results, this report, authored by over a dozen experts from the three regions, places priority on the qualitative approach, considered by the network team to be more suitable for amplifying the voices of the Global South.

Focus groups

In addition to the survey, the Global South Perspectives Network recognized the need for in-depth qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of global governance reform from a Global South perspective. To address this need, four focus group discussions were conducted, one for each of the three regions plus one dedicated to media-related issues.

These focus groups, which took place between July and August 2023, were expertly coordinated by network members representing their respective regions. The first focus group discussion, dedicated to Africa, was led by Daryl Swanepoel from South Africa. The second, focusing on Latin America, was overseen by Professor Roberto Chiachiri from Brazil. The MENA region's focus group was coordinated by Professor Adel Abdel-Sadek from Egypt, with the participation of two additional regional experts, Mohammad Taher Gholi Tabar and Mahdy Yusofi, both from Iran. The fourth focus group brought together journalists and media professionals from all three regions and was coordinated by Professor Benedine Azanu from Ghana.

Project coordinators Cilene Victor and Georgios Kostakos facilitated the discussions in all four focus groups. In the region-specific groups, the conversation followed a structured agenda, covering key topics: threats to peace and security, non-military threats, the role of the UN and global governance, and the concept of a Global Resilience Council. In the media-focused group, the discussion aimed to understand the role of media in the context of existing threats, both military and non-military, as well as the challenges faced by media professionals in covering these topics and their perspectives on global governance reform.

Each focus group served as a platform for open and interactive discussion. It had a duration of one-and-a-half hour and was conducted remotely. Participants from various professional categories, including academics, policy institute/think tank experts, members of civil society, and journalists/editors (specific to the media focus group), were invited to share their insights, experiences, and recommendations related to the core themes of the report. In order to make participants feel more comfortable expressing their opinions on the topic, the principle of non-attribution was observed. Although many of the participants were public figures well-known in their countries, anonymity provided them with greater freedom of expression.

It is crucial to emphasize that the focus groups played a pivotal role in this research, as they allowed for in-depth exploration and interaction. By gathering individuals with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and regional perspectives, the aim was to capture a holistic view of the Global South's thoughts and concerns regarding global governance reform.

This diversity of voices enriched the qualitative approach, enabling this research to delve deeper into the nuances of each region's unique challenges and opportunities.

As a direct outcome of each focus group, each coordinator, who is a member of the network, was invited to write an analytical article that would express the richness of the debates among network members and external participants in this activity, which constitutes a vital part of this project's methodology.

Document Analysis

Document analysis constitutes an integral component of the methodological triad. This analytical pursuit involved a thorough examination of seminal documents that provided a valuable lens through which to scrutinize the evolution of the UN reform discourse.

In this context, an in-depth analysis of three key documents was conducted:

- Our Common Agenda (Report of the UN Secretary-General)
- A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future (Report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism)
- Strengthening the International Response to Complex Global Shocks – An Emergency Platform (Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 2)

This document analysis culminated in the report chapter titled "Assessing the Official Perspective and Approach to United Nations Reform", written by Dr Klaus Kotzé, who was invited to conduct this investigation.

The chapter critically evaluates these recent UN documents, which were produced or commissioned by the UN Secretary-General's Office. It aims to assess whether these documents sufficiently encompass the viewpoints and perspectives of the Global South, effectively address the Global South's interests and priorities, and exhibit a sense of urgency in addressing these concerns.

PART I – SURVEY

1. Demographic characteristics

As mentioned in the introduction and methodology sections of this report, for over 50 days, from June 19th to August 10th, the survey was made available and accessible on the FOGGS website and the social media platforms of the members of the Global South Perspectives Network and partners, including universities, civil society organizations, and the think tank community.

The survey reached 531 respondents, of whom 512 were of the three regions of interest for this research: Latin America and the Caribbean (LATAM), Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The survey had participants from 48 countries.

Participants had the option to choose the language used in the Google Form, reducing linguistic and cultural barriers. Thus, a card (Figure 1) was widely disseminated organically, without paid promotion, on social media and WhatsApp groups, containing the survey access link in Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish. With the exception of Turkish, all other translations were done by network members.

Figure 1: One of the survey promotion cards

Source: Victor & Kostakos, 2023.

LATAM - demographic characteristics

The survey covered **11 countries in LATAM**. These countries include Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Equador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, República Dominicana, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Primary Nationality: Participants in this region represent a wide variety of nationalities. The most common nationalities among respondents were Brazil (81), Uruguay (75), Argentina (19), Colombia (10), and Mexico (9).

Gender: The majority of respondents identified as male (109), followed by female (93).

Age: Respondents in the LATAM region span a broad age range. The majority fall within the 55-64 age group (58), followed by the 45-54 age group (52), the 35-44 age group (45), and those older than 65 (32).

Profession/Occupation: Participants from this region have declared diverse professions and occupations. The most common categories include educators (75), individuals working in government roles (23), those engaged in science/research (17), the non-profit/NGO sector (12), students and individuals in business/entrepreneurship (9 each), and a category labeled "others" (21).

Educational Level: Concerning educational levels, the majority of respondents hold higher education qualifications. This includes 48 with bachelor's degrees, 62 with master's degrees, 53 with doctoral degrees, and 28 with postdoctoral qualifications. Additionally, there is representation from individuals with primary education (1) and secondary education (10).

Africa - demographic characteristics

The survey covered **21 countries in Africa**, excluding North Africa, which was included in MENA. These countries include Angola, Benin, Cameroon, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Kenya, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

Analyzing the demographic data from Africa, we observed the following key demographic insights:

Primary Nationality: The participants represent a wide variety of African nationalities. The most common nationalities among respondents, together accounting for over 50% of the regional sample, are South Africa (88), Guinea-Bissau (39), Ghana (19) and Democratic Republic of the Congo (16). ***Gender:*** The majority of respondents identified as male (135), followed by female (62). Additionally, some individuals identified as non-binary (3).

Age: Respondents cover a wide age range. The majority fall within the 25-34 age group (75), followed by the 35-44 age group (33), the 45-54 age group (34), and the 55-64 age group (29). There is also representation of younger and older age groups.

Profession/Occupation: Participants have diverse professions and occupations. The most common categories include students (65), educators (40), individuals in business/entrepreneurship (25), and government professionals (25).

Educational Level: Regarding educational levels, the majority of respondents have higher education qualifications. This includes 93 with bachelor's degrees, 59 with master's degrees, and 27 with doctoral degrees. Additionally, there is representation of individuals with primary education (2) and secondary education (15).

MENA - demographic characteristics

The survey covered **16 countries and territories in MENA**, spanning both historical and recent geopolitical divisions. These countries and territories include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Türkiye, UAE and Yemen.

Gender: Among the respondents, the majority identified as male (67), followed by female (40). Additionally, a few individuals identified as non-binary (2), and one preferred not to disclose their gender.

Age: The respondents in the MENA region represent a diverse age range. The majority fall within the 35-44 age group (35), followed by the 45-54 age group (29), and the 25-34 age group (25).

Profession/Occupation: Participants in this region have a wide range of professions and occupations. The most common categories include educators (32), individuals in business/entrepreneurship (11), those in the fields of engineering/technology and students (10 each), and individuals engaged in science/research and government roles (9 each).

Educational Level: Concerning educational levels, a significant portion of respondents holds higher education qualifications. This includes 40 with bachelor's degrees, 29 with master's degrees, 19 with doctoral degrees, and 11 with postdoctoral qualifications. Additionally, there is representation from individuals with primary education (1) and secondary education (10).

2. Peace & security threats

The topic of military threats is addressed in questions 7, 8, and 9 of the survey. The objective of this block of questions was to identify the main threats to peace and security in the countries of the three regions covered, while also understanding how participants assess the performance of competent institutions in addressing this issue.

To ensure an analysis that goes beyond a rehashing of the numbers, some of the survey results are examined in papers authored by members of the network. They are included in this report grouped by question block.

The papers authored by Andrea Waichman and Olivia Simão for LATAM and by Mahdy Yusofi for MENA are based on responses to the following questions:

Question 7: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not significant" and 5 being "extremely significant," please rate the main peace & security threats your country faces.

Options: Internal conflict/civil war; Religious conflict; Domestic terrorism; International terrorism; War with neighbours; Conflict with more distant countries; Organized crime (e.g., drug and human trafficking).
Question 8: Which of the peace & security threats mentioned below do you consider to be the most pressing for your country.

Options: the same as for the previous question.

Question 9: How would you assess the current response and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations in addressing these peace & security threats?

Options: the same as for the previous two questions, with a scale indicating Highly effective, Moderately effective, Ineffective and Unsure/No opinion.

LATAM

Peace and security threats in LATAM and the role of the UN

by Andrea Waichman and Olivia Simão, from Brazil

Based on the analysis of responses provided by participants to questions 7, 8, and 9, this section presents an overview of the perspectives on peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean, along with an evaluation of the UN's performance in this context.

In contrast to many other regions worldwide, Latin America and the Caribbean, characterized by their vast and complex geography, are renowned for their relatively low incidence of intergovernmental armed conflicts. This region has successfully maintained a remarkable degree of regional stability, distinguishing it from other areas that have witnessed frequent and severe conflicts.

However, despite the absence of conflicts between nations, Latin America and the Caribbean grapple with various challenges stemming from internal conflicts, often linked to ethnic, social, economic, and political issues. This context has witnessed the emergence of guerrilla movements and insurgents in several countries, posing threats to internal stability. Furthermore, persistent socioeconomic inequalities and limited access to essential resources have fueled violence and social unrest, resulting in an upsurge in organized crime.

Organized crime, encompassing drug trafficking, cartels, paramilitary groups, street gangs, among other elements, was identified as a primary threat to peace and security in the region by the majority of respondents (93%). These threats have contributed to political violence and a multifaceted conflict with various actors and strategies, resulting in widespread drug use, uneven economic growth, and the permeation of a culture of violence. Urgent solutions to mitigate this threat were deemed necessary by 89% of the respondents.

To address organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is imperative to strengthen law enforcement institutions, and investments in education and economic opportunities for young people in vulnerable areas. This approach involves promoting international cooperation to combat drug and arms trafficking, while advocating for rehabilitation and reintegration programs for gang members and criminals. Transparency in governance and the reinforcement of the rule of law are pivotal aspects of reducing organized crime in the region.

Regarding religious conflicts, most respondents either considered them insignificant (57%) or not very significant (23%). The intricate cultural diversity of Latin America and the Caribbean is mirrored in religious conflicts. A comprehensive understanding of these conflicts necessitates a careful analysis of their origins and unique characteristics in each context. Addressing these issues calls for inclusive dialogue and efforts aimed at fostering religious tolerance, embracing cultural diversity, and promoting peaceful coexistence among the diverse religious groups within the region.

The socio-cultural dynamics of the region indicate that ethnic conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean have historical roots. They manifest in various forms, from territorial claims to demands for cultural recognition. Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities have historically faced exploitation and marginalization, resulting in significant social inequalities. The enduring source of ethnic conflict lies in the pursuit of equal rights and access to resources. To comprehend these conflicts, a sensitive analysis of their origins is necessary, coupled with a commitment to social justice and equal rights.

Internal conflicts and civil wars were perceived as either inconsequential (50%) or less significant (22%) by the majority of respondents. The decline in armed insurgencies in recent decades is likely the contributing factor. However, it is noteworthy that there are still areas where internal conflicts persist. These internal conflicts have led to population displacement, resulting in an increased flow of refugees within the region and to neighbouring countries. Wars with neighbouring or distant countries were not regarded as threats to the region's peace and security. Latin America and the Caribbean, as a sub-regional system, have not been involved in international conflicts in recent decades. Nevertheless, concerns have arisen regarding potential international terrorist financing activities in the post-September 11 era within the tri-border

area of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. Regional cooperation has been promoted to counteract terrorism, involving the implementation of security measures to mitigate these threats.

For 70% to 90% of respondents, the UN's actions on peace and security issues were deemed ineffective or moderately effective. The United Nations' engagement in conflicts and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean is limited. One reason is the prioritization of urgent violent conflicts in other parts of the world. Additionally, the UN has delegated an active role to the OAS in managing the most pressing regional security and policy concerns.

In the past, the UN has played a significant role as a mediator in regional conflicts, fostering dialogue and peaceful dispute resolution. Its involvement in brokering the Chapultepec Peace Accords, which concluded the civil war in El Salvador, serves as a notable example. Additionally, in more recent times, through peacekeeping missions and operations, the UN has contributed to stabilizing conflict-affected nations such as Haiti. Moreover, the UN has played a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance during natural disasters and humanitarian crises in the region, rendering crucial support in areas like food aid, shelter, and healthcare.

It is worth noting that approximately 25% of respondents expressed uncertainty or had no opinion regarding the UN's actions concerning peace and security issues. As mentioned earlier, enhancing communication strategies is imperative to ensure that the UN's activities reach a broader audience in the Global South, including individuals who currently lack interest or knowledge in this field.

While Latin America and the Caribbean are among the world's least conflict-ridden regions in terms of wars, they still grapple with significant challenges related to internal conflicts, as emphasized. Diplomatic mechanisms and regional institutions that promote dialogue and peaceful dispute resolution have largely contributed to maintaining regional stability. The region must persevere in its efforts to address these internal challenges and seek solutions that foster peace, justice, and development for a more stable and prosperous future.

AFRICA

Out of a total of 200 respondents in Africa, in question 7, the threats that appear as most concerning are conflicts with neighbouring countries, ranking first (120), followed by conflicts with distant countries (116), religious conflicts (105), domestic terrorism (85), international terrorism (81), and organized crime (58).

As for question 8, the military threats that respondents consider to be the most pressing for their countries are organized crime (102), followed by internal conflict/civil war (62), and in third place, war with neighbouring countries (11).

Regarding question 9, which asked respondents to assess the degree of response from the UN and multilateral organizations, the inefficiency of the UN was more pronounced for the following threats: organized crime (92), internal conflict/civil war (85), international terrorism (68), domestic terrorism, and war with neighbouring countries (67 each).

Among those who considered the responses from the UN to be highly effective, the number did not exceed 30, in the case of conflicts with more distant countries, and 29 for international terrorism.

Although only a small number of respondents rated the UN's response as highly effective for threats such as conflicts with more distant countries and international terrorism, these areas still represent a minority of responses, indicating an ongoing challenge for the UN in demonstrating effectiveness on security issues in Africa.

These results highlight the complexity and diversity of security concerns in the African region, as well as critical perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the UN and multilateral interventions. This underscores the need for a multifaceted and adaptive approach to addressing security challenges in Africa and improving strategies for international cooperation.

Peace and security threats and the role of in MENA

By Mahdy Yusofi, from Iran

This analysis focuses on the examination of peace and security threats encountered by countries in the South. Specifically, it delves into questions 7, 8, and 9 from a survey conducted among individuals in West Asian and North African countries, collectively referred to as the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA).

The survey, conducted in various languages, aimed to gain deeper insights and analyses regarding the Middle East survey results. This analysis is organized into three distinct parts, each addressing one of the questions posed to respondents from MENA countries.

Rating Peace and Security Threats: The first question asked respondents to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the significance of the main peace and security threats faced by their countries. This question encompasses topics such as internal conflict or civil war, religious conflict, domestic terrorism, and international terrorism. The analysis of responses reveals that religious conflicts, along with domestic and international terrorism, are perceived as the primary peace and security threats by residents of these countries. Conversely, internal conflict or civil war is not regarded as critically significant by the respondents.

Identifying the Most Pressing Threats: The second question sought to determine which peace and security threats respondents considered the most pressing for their countries. This question encompassed a range of threats, including internal conflict/civil war, religious conflict, domestic terrorism, international terrorism, war with neighbors, conflict with more distant countries, and organized crime (e.g. drug and human trafficking). The analysis of responses indicates that civil conflicts, religious conflicts, conflicts with non-neighbouring countries, global terrorism, and organized crime are perceived as the most pressing and urgent threats to these countries. In other words, respondents view civil and religious conflicts, global terrorism-related issues, and organized crime as particularly pressing concerns. Additionally, conflicts with non-neighbouring countries emerged as a newly recognized threat that residents deem pressing and burdensome.

Assessing the UN's Response: The third question aimed to gauge the respondents' assessments of the current responses and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations in addressing these peace and security threats. Essentially, it sought to understand how residents of the mentioned countries evaluate the actions and measures taken by the UN to address international issues and threats facing their nations. Shockingly, the majority of respondents expressed the belief that these actions have been insufficient in addressing and resolving these dangers. In other words, they indicated that the UN and certain other international organizations have been unable to effectively address the problems and provide lasting solutions. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that some respondents expressed a lack of positive feedback and held negative opinions about the UN's actions, particularly concerning the resolution of issues like international terrorism.

Based on these findings, it becomes evident that more attention is required to address the genuine and most critical concerns of these populations. A substantial effort must be dedicated to implementing practical and enduring solutions that genuinely address the local people's problems. It is essential to recognize that solutions devised behind closed doors, divorced from the actual issues faced by local populations, cannot be considered genuine solutions.

3. Non-military threats

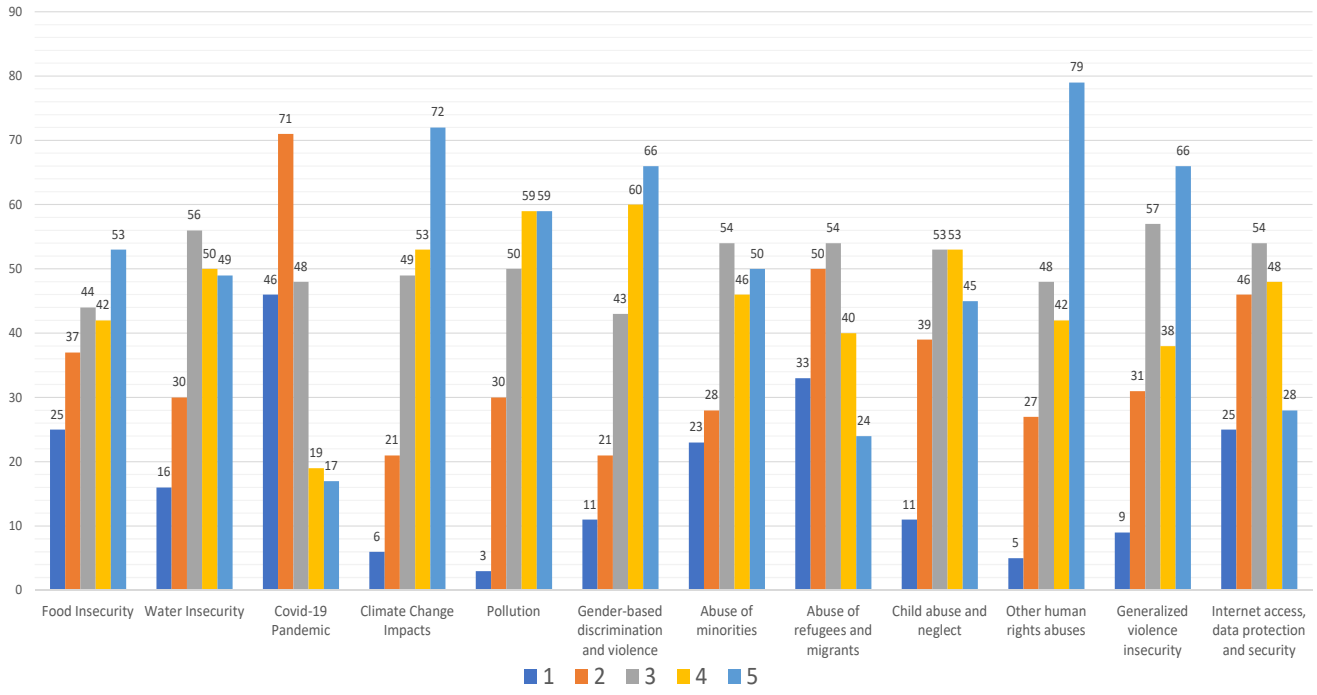
Here, the block consists of four survey questions, from 10 to 13, focusing on non-military threats.

Question 10: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not significant" and 5 being "extremely significant," please rate the main non-military threats your country faces.
Question 11: Which of the non-military threats mentioned below do you consider to be the most pressing for your country?
Question 12: How would you assess the current response and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations in addressing these non-military threats?
These three questions had response options encompassing key threats such as food insecurity, water insecurity, Covid-19, climate change impacts, pollution, gender-based discrimination and violence, abuse of minorities, abuse of refugees and migrants, child abuse and neglect, other human rights abuses (serious economic inequality, corruption, etc.), generalized violence, and internet access, data protection, and cyberattacks.
Question 13: What specific actions should the United Nations and related multilateral organizations take to address these non-military threats faced by countries from the Global South more effectively?
This question had the following response options: Strengthen existing international agreements and frameworks; Create new agreements or frameworks; Strengthen/reform existing intergovernmental bodies; Create new intergovernmental bodies; Strengthen existing funding mechanisms; Encourage the creation of new funding mechanisms; Promote dialogue and partnerships more effectively; Enhance capacity-building, technology transfer, and innovation; Ensure broader involvement of civil society.

In this section, we follow the same dynamic, inviting experts from the network to comment on and analyze the results of this block of questions.

For Latin America, we invited researchers Carmen Rico from Uruguay and Malvina Rodrigues from Argentina, and for the Middle East and North Africa, the qualitative analysis was conducted by researcher Shabnam Delfan Azari.

Before delving into the qualitative approach, we present below an overview of the most significant non-military threats in LATAM and MENA, replicating the graphs from question 10.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Food Insecurity
Water Insecurity
Covid-19 Pandemic
Climate Change Impacts
Pollution
Gender-based discrimination and violence
Abuse of minorities
Abuse of refugees and migrants
Child abuse and neglect
Other human rights abuses
Generalized violence insecurity
Internet access, data protection and security
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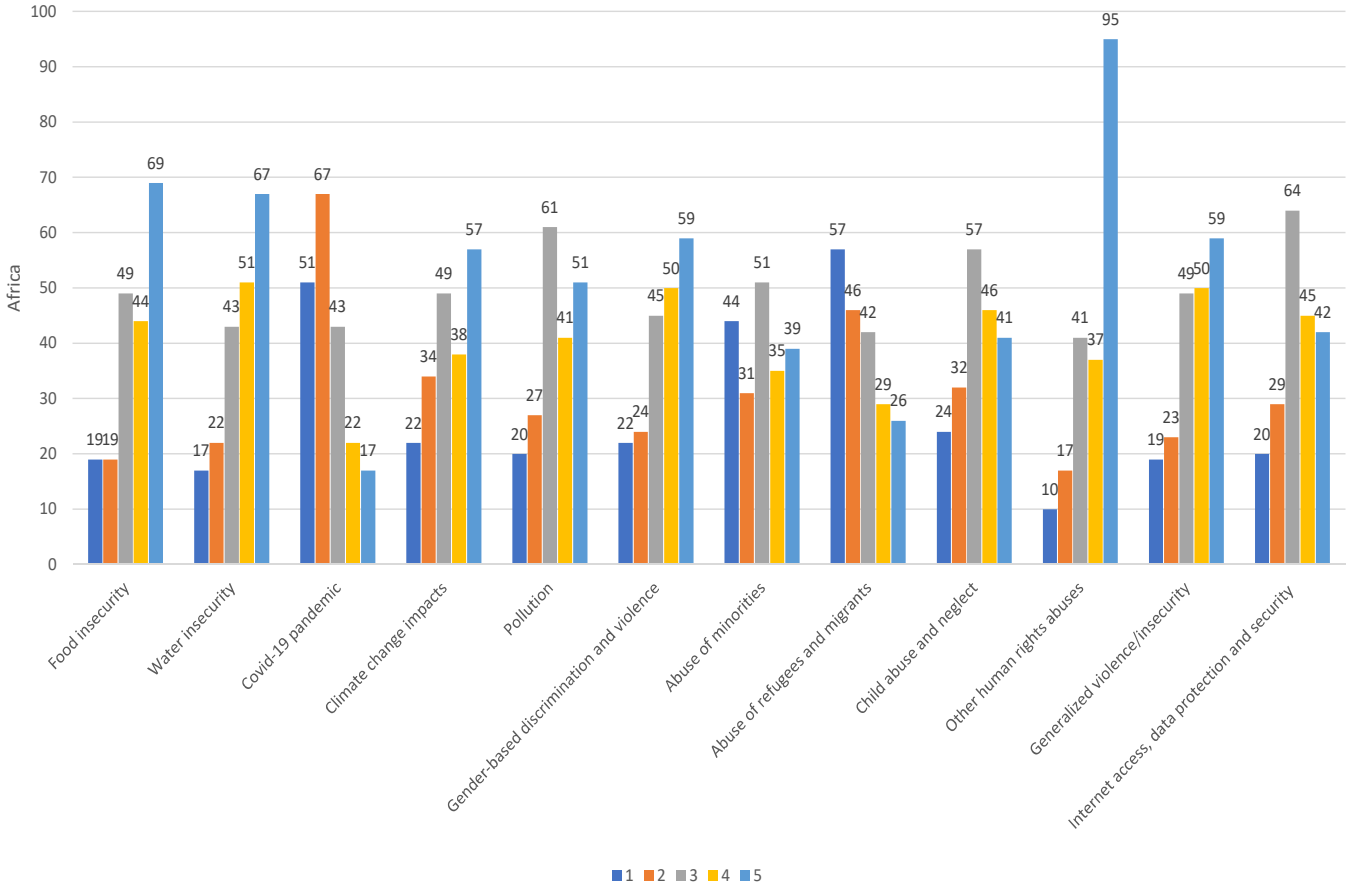
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44 31 51 35 39
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24 32 57 46 41
10 17 41 37 95
19 23 49 50 59
20 29 64 45 42
Food insecurity
Water insecurity
Covid-19 pandemic
Climate change impacts
Pollution
Gender-based discrimination and violence
Abuse of minorities
Abuse of refugees and migrants
Child abuse and neglect
Other human rights abuses
Generalized violence/insecurity
Internet access, data protection and security
1 2 3 4 5

LATAM

Non-military threats in LATAM

By Malvina Rodriguez, from Argentina, and Carmen Rico, from Uruguay

This analysis focuses on the answers of LATAM respondents to survey questions 10, 11, 12, and 13. These questions aimed to gather respondents' knowledge and opinions about the main non-military threats faced by countries in LATAM, the current response and initiatives undertaken, as well as the specific actions that should be taken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations to address these non-military threats more effectively.

Question 10: Identification of main non-military threats faced by countries in LATAM

The non-military threats with most responses as "extremely significant" and "significant" were "climate change" and "gender discrimination and violence", both with 62%, followed by "other human rights abuses" (60%) and "pollution" that reached almost that value (58%). More than half of respondents considered generalized insecurity and violence significant (51%) and almost half (49%) qualified water insecurity as such and a similar percentage (48%) placed child abuse and maltreatment in the significance range. Food insecurity appears on this scale with 47% of the responses. Internet access, data protection and security obtain 37% of the responses on the aforementioned scale. The COVID-19 pandemic is considered less relevant as a current threat (18%). It should be noted that few people assessedany of the mentioned problems as of no relevance, with the exception of the "abuse of migrants and refugees", where 16% denied that it is a significant threat to Latin American countries. In other words, most respondents recognize these non-military threats as problematic for the region, with different levels of significance.

Question 11: Relevance of non-military threats faced by countries in LATAM

Consistent with the previous question, the majority of responses that rated the pressure exerted by non-military threats on countries found human rights abuses to be the most worrisome (28%). Next, the results of the previous question are confirmed, regarding the problems of generalized violence and water insecurity (16%), and to a lesser extent food insecurity (11%), climate change (10%), child abuse and neglect (9%) appears in the survey as the most important concerns facing Latin American countries. However, other problems classified as significant in the previous question do not appear to be the most pressing for the region. Thus, discrimination and gender violence and pollution (both with 3%), abuse of minorities as well as Internet access, data protection and security (both with 1%), and violence against migrants with only one response were rated as less relevant within the emergencies faced by the LATAM countries.

Question 12: Evaluation of current response and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations in addressing these non-military threats

The respondents show a general consensus about the measures and initiatives carried out by the United Nations and its related multilateral organizations, which are considered moderately effective in addressing problems such as food insecurity, the Covid-19 pandemic, discrimination and gender violence, abuse

towards minorities, refugees and migrants, as well as against child neglect and abuse. Very few responses evaluate the actions of the UN and its agencies as highly effective, reaching the highest positive value of 14% in relation to the measures towards the pandemic. However, if the values of high and moderate effectiveness are added, on average 50% of the respondents consider the UN action effective on these issues. On the contrary, more than half of the responses on violence and generalized insecurity, as well as against human rights abuses, consider the UN action inefficient. Also critical, for the most part, are the ratings on the actions of the UN regarding climate change (44%), water insecurity (43%) and pollution (45%). Regarding the problem of Internet access, data protection and security, the answers are divided between moderately efficient and inefficient. On this last point, the responses without opinion (25%) are significant, which may show a lower level of knowledge on the subject.

Question 13: Recommendations of specific actions that should be taken by the United Nations and related multilateral organizations to address these non-military threats faced by countries from the Global South more effectively

Regarding the proposals, and on a scale of 1 to 5 from least to most effective, if we take the responses of values 4 and 5, we find that almost 80% of respondents highlight the need for the United Nations to ensure the broader involvement of civil society. Measures such as expanding technological innovation and capacity development (71%), as well as promoting dialogue and cooperation with greater effectiveness (72%) are also recommended as significant. Moreover, the majority finds it significant to strengthen existing financing mechanisms (63%) and in a similar percentage to strengthen the creation of new financing mechanisms (61%). Regarding international agreements, almost 60% of respondents prioritize strengthening existing ones over the creation of new agreements (54%), which also receive considerable support from more than half of the responses. Final considerations

The analysis of the questions on non-military threats in Latin America, the evaluation of the actions of the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the proposals to achieve greater effectiveness in combating them, shows, on the one hand, that those surveyed in Latin America emphasize protection of human rights, gender diversities, childhoods and the fight against all kinds of violence as relevant. In this sense, they find that the actions of the United Nations and its associated organizations in these matters could be more efficient. On the other hand, other non-military threats that Latin American nations face, such as the impacts of climate change, water and food insecurity, or pollution, are not effectively dealt with by the international cooperation that the UN represents. In this sense, the proposals highlighted by LATAM respondents in the survey show the need to strengthen the role of civil society, technological innovation, capacity building, financing, international cooperation and the reform of existing intergovernmental organizations, which is considered more effective than the creation of new mechanisms, agreements or organizations.

4. Global governance

In this section, we delve into a critical aspect of our analysis, focusing on questions 14 to 17 of the survey. These questions revolve around the theme of global governance and

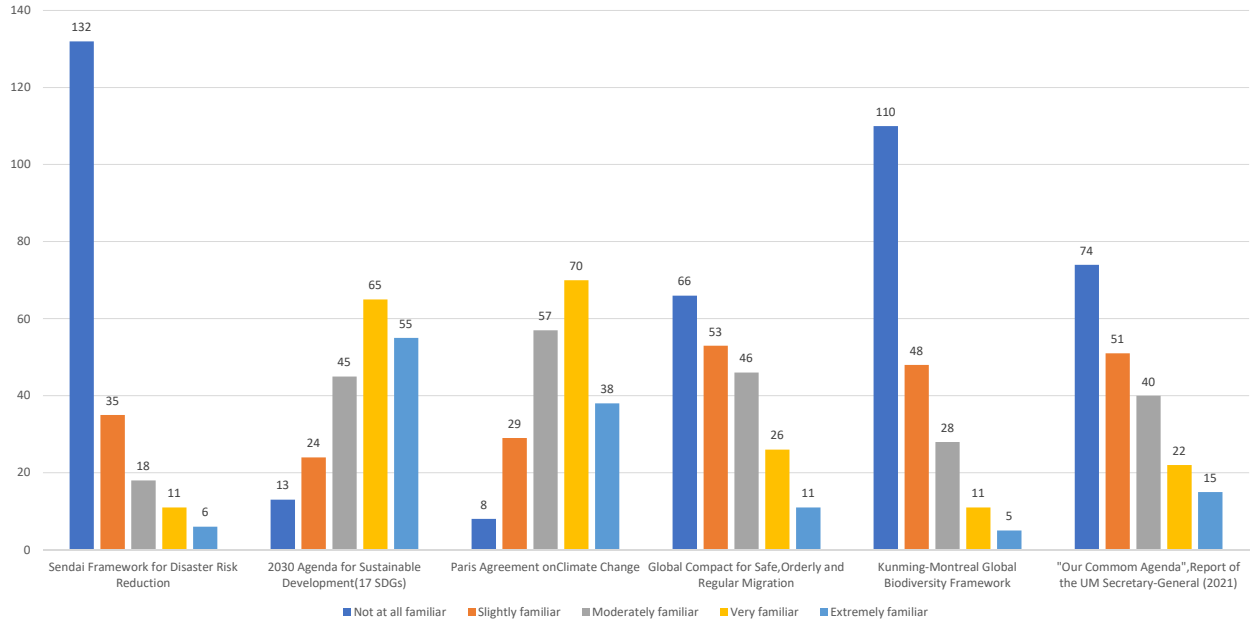
serve as the cornerstone of our research, offering insights into the awareness of international agreements, the necessity of United Nations reform, the desire for increased Global South influence, and the appetite for novel multilateral solutions in addressing non-military threats.

> ***Question 14:*** *Which of the following international deals, agreements, protocols and reports are you familiar with? Please, select only the ones you have heard about and rate how familiar they are to you.*
> ***Question 15:*** *On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not necessary" and 5 being "absolutely necessary," how important do you think it is to reform the United Nations and multilateralism to address the challenges faced by the Global South and your country?*
> ***Question 16:*** *Do you think the Global South should have a stronger voice and influence in shaping global policies and decision-making processes?*
> **Question 17:** *Would you support establishing new multilateral institutions or mechanisms specifically focused on addressing the non-military threats the Global South faces?*

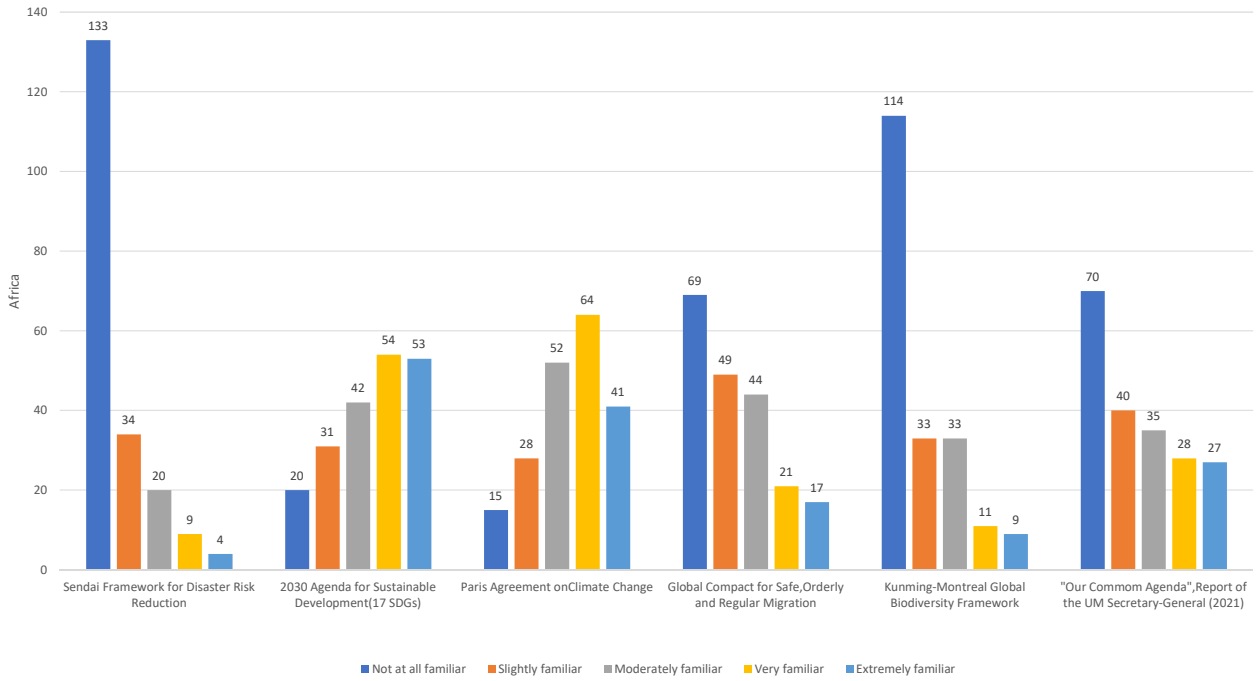
Given the significance of this section to the central focus of our research, we will have an article, authored by researcher Mohammad Taher, which will be preceded by comparative analyses of responses to these questions.

14. Which of the following international deals, agreements, protocols and reports are you familiar with? Please, select only the ones you have heard about and rate how familiar they are to you.

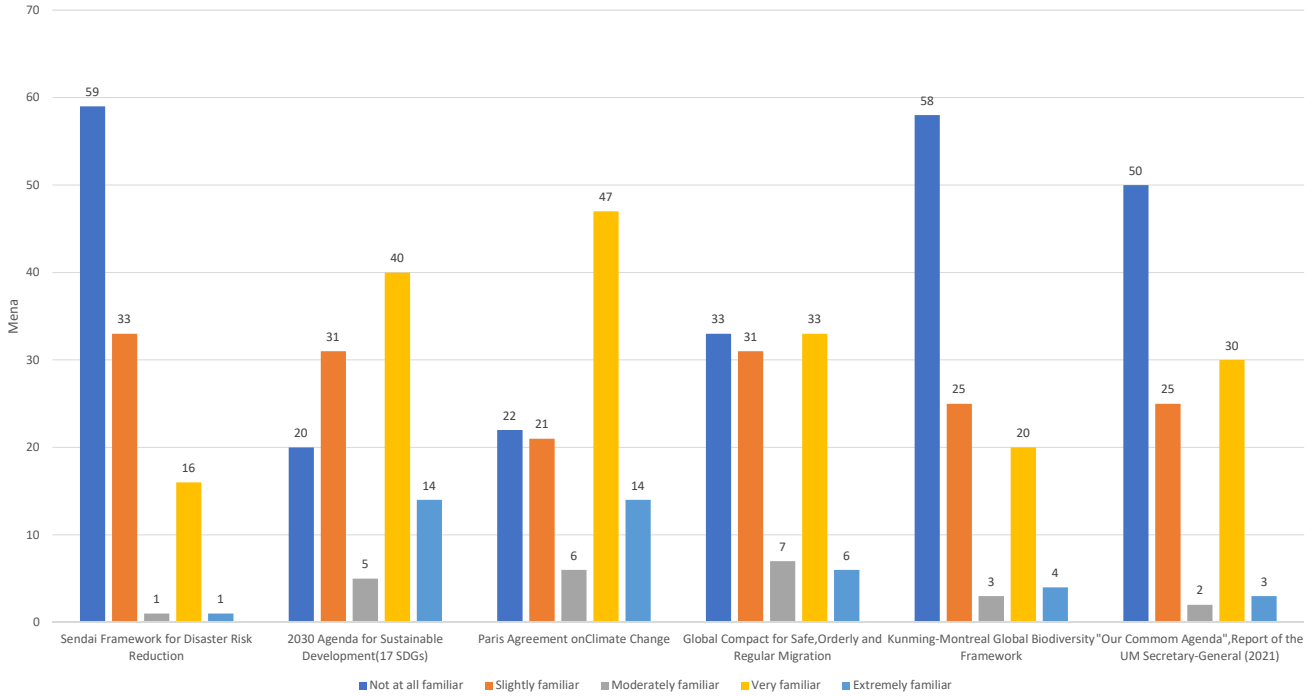
LATAM



AFRICA



MENA



It is noteworthy in the responses to question 14 that three documents appear to be relatively unfamiliar across all three regions: the Sendai Framework, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and Our Common Agenda, proposed by the UN Secretary-General.

The Sendai Framework is unknown to 132 out of a total of 202 respondents in LATAM, 133 out of 200 in Africa, and 59 out of 110 in MENA. The Global Biodiversity Framework is not well-known in LATAM (110 respondents), Africa (113 respondents), and 58 in MENA. Our Common Agenda is unfamiliar to 74 respondents in LATAM, 70 in Africa, and 50 in MENA.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is an international agreement adopted in 2015, aiming to reduce disaster risk and disaster-related losses. It outlines seven global targets to be achieved by 2030. The fact that a considerable number of respondents in all three regions (LATAM, Africa, and MENA) are unfamiliar with this framework suggests a potential lack of awareness about disaster risk reduction strategies. This could indicate a need for more extensive awareness campaigns and education on disaster preparedness and risk reduction in these regions, especially given the vulnerability of many areas to natural disasters.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is a significant international agreement designed to combat the loss of biodiversity. It sets ambitious goals to protect ecosystems and species worldwide. The low levels of awareness among respondents in LATAM, Africa, and MENA suggest a potential gap in understanding the importance of biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity loss has far-reaching ecological

and economic consequences, making it crucial for global sustainability. These findings highlight the need for more effective communication and education regarding biodiversity and conservation efforts.

Our Common Agenda is a report by the UN Secretary-General that outlines proposals for strengthening global governance and addressing current global challenges. The fact that a notable portion of respondents in all three regions are unaware of this document suggests limited engagement with or awareness of global governance issues. Given the importance of global governance in addressing complex global challenges, such as climate change and pandemics, these findings underline the need for enhanced public awareness and participation in global governance discussions.

In this section, one of the pivotal questions is question 15.

It is asking respondents to assess the level of importance they place on reforming the United Nations and the system of multilateral cooperation to effectively tackle the specific challenges experienced by the Global South and their individual countries.

The provided statistics reveal a notable trend across the three regions (LATAM, Africa, and MENA):

In LATAM, 120 respondents expressed that such reform is absolutely necessary, while only 7 respondents indicated that it is not necessary.

In Africa, a similar sentiment is observed with 119 respondents advocating for it to be absolutely necessary and only 9 respondents stating that it's not necessary.

In MENA, 52 respondents considered it absolutely necessary, while 13 respondents believed it's not required.

These statistics underscore a strong consensus among the survey participants in all three regions. The overwhelming majority of respondents in each region expressed a clear and urgent need for reforming both the United Nations and the framework of multilateral cooperation. This collective perspective highlights the critical importance attached to addressing the unique challenges faced by the Global South and their respective nations on a global scale through meaningful global governance reform.

Analysis - Threats and global governance reform – MENA

By Mohammad Taher Gholi Tabar, from Iran

This analysis focuses on questions 14, 15, 16, and 17 from the Global South survey on UN reform. These questions aimed to gather insights into respondents' familiarity with international agreements and protocols, the importance of UN reform, the desire for a stronger voice for the Global South, and support for new multilateral institutions.

Question 14: Familiarity with International Agreements

In response to this question, it is evident that respondents from the Global South vary in their familiarity with key international agreements and protocols. The "*Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*", "*Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*", and "*Our Common Agenda*" are among the least known across the three regions. However, in the MENA region, the "*Paris Agreement on Climate Change*" and the "*2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (17 SDGs)*" are less familiar when compared to the level of awareness of these two protocols in the other two regions.

Question 15: Importance of UN Reform

Question 15 sought to gauge respondents' perspectives on the importance of UN reform in addressing challenges faced by the Global South and their respective countries. The responses indicate that a majority across the surveyed regions consider UN reform highly important. In the Farsi survey, nearly 76.5% rated it as a 4 or 5 out of 5 on the scale of importance. Similarly, the Arabic survey showed that 65.4% consider it highly important. While the Turkish survey had a lower percentage, 42.9% still rated it as 4 or 5. This suggests a shared recognition among respondents of the crucial role UN reform is expected to play in addressing the unique challenges of the Global South.

Question 16: Global South's Influence in Shaping Global Policies

Question 16 aimed to understand whether respondents believe the Global South should have a stronger voice and influence in shaping global policies and decision-making processes. Across all regions, a significant majority of respondents express support for a stronger Global South voice. The Farsi survey shows 91.1% in favour, the Arabic survey indicates 90.9%, and the Turkish survey records 81%. These responses underscore the widespread belief that greater Global South involvement is essential for more equitable global governance.

Question 17: Support for New Multilateral Institutions

In question 17, respondents were asked whether they support the establishment of new multilateral institutions or mechanisms focused on addressing non-military threats faced by the Global South. Here again, a substantial majority of respondents express support. The Farsi survey shows 82.3% in favour, the Arabic survey indicates 90.9%, and the Turkish survey records 80.7%. These responses highlight the willingness of respondents to explore alternative mechanisms for addressing these challenges.

5. Global resilience council

This section is dedicated to exploring the respondents' opinions regarding the establishment of a Global Resilience Council (GRC) in the context of United Nations reform. The GRC is envisioned as a body focused on addressing non-military threats and global challenges particularly affecting the Global South. The questions aim to gauge the level of support for such an institution and to understand the perceived benefits and drawbacks associated with its creation.

The responses to questions 18 and 19 of the survey provide insights into whether respondents view the GRC as a potentially effective and inclusive solution for addressing non-military threats on a global scale or if they have reservations about its implementation.

Question 18: *In the context of UN reform, would you support the establishment of a Global Resilience Council (GRC), akin to a 'UN Security Council for non-military threats'?*

LATAM: 101 respondents out of 202 from LATAM strongly support the idea of a GRC, 30 somewhat support the idea, 31 have no strong opinion, and 34 said they need more information.

Africa: 92 respondents out of 200 from Africa strongly support the idea of a GRC, 43 somewhat support the idea, 30 have no strong opinion, and 21 said they need more information.

MENA: 49 respondents out of 110 from MENA strongly support the idea of a GRC, 4 strongly disagree, 2 somewhat support the idea, and 53 said they need more information.

Question 19: *Considering the challenges of non-military threats and the need for a more effective and inclusive multilateralism, how do you perceive the potential benefits and drawbacks of establishing a Global Resilience Council?*

LATAM: 122 respondents out of 202 from LATAM said the potential benefits outweigh the drawbacks, 16 said the potential drawbacks outweigh the benefits, and 61 are not sure/undecided.

Africa: 85 respondents out of 200 from Africa said the potential benefits outweigh the drawbacks, 24 said the potential drawbacks outweigh the benefits, and 67 are not sure/undecided.

MENA: 16 respondents out of 110 from MENA said the potential benefits outweigh the drawbacks, 54 said the potential drawbacks outweigh the benefits, 23 said the potential benefits and drawbacks are balanced, and 17 are not sure/undecided.

6. What the respondents suggest

by Cilene Victor

The following analysis pertains to the open-ended responses and suggestions provided by survey respondents for questions 23, 24, and 25. The aim of these open-ended questions was to gather additional insights, perceptions, opinions, suggestions, and criticisms from participants in each of the focus regions outlined in this document.

This section is divided into three parts. The first, referred to as subsection 6.1, presents the analysis of responses to question 23, starting with Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Africa, and then MENA. The same order will be followed in subsections 6.2, corresponding to question 24, and 6.3, corresponding to question 25.

As previously mentioned, out of a total of 512 participants, 202 were from LATAM, 200 from Africa, and 110 from MENA. From this pool, we analyzed the open responses to question 23: "*What specific areas or aspects of the United Nations and multilateralism do you believe need reform to better represent the interests and concerns of the Global South?*" We analyzed responses that came from **287 participants**, being 122 from LATAM, 133 from Africa, and 32 from MENA.

Regarding question 24: "*What specific reforms would you suggest to the UN and multilateralism to ensure that your country or the Global South more broadly has a more significant role in shaping global policies and decision-making processes?*", we analyzed **258 responses**, comprising 103 from LATAM, 125 from Africa, and 30 from MENA.

As for the final closed question, question 25: "*From your perspective, what role should your country and the Global South more broadly play in the reform process of the United Nations and multilateralism?*" the analysis was based on **255 responses**, with 100 from LATAM, 127 from Africa, and 28 from MENA.

In subsections 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, we present the main ideas of the respondents, guided by the three questions. We have endeavoured to encapsulate the central ideas, criticisms, suggestions, and recommendations of the respondents, offering insights for the development of a more inclusive and pluralistic multilateralism.

6.1 Global South representation in the United Nations and multilateralism

In this subsection, we share perceptions regarding the necessity of reform in specific areas within the United Nations and the multilateral system. The focus centres on the call for changes aimed at more effectively representing the interests and concerns of the Global South.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, 122 who responded to this question, provided a wide range of insights into the critical areas and aspects of the United Nations and multilateralism that require reform to enhance the representation of their region's interests and concerns. Their responses reflect the multifaceted challenges faced by this region within the current international system and offer valuable perspectives on how to address them effectively.

A recurring theme in the responses was the need for greater participation and influence in global decision-making. Respondents emphasized the importance of empowering the region at the regional level, regulating global public goods, and addressing spaces not subject to state jurisdiction, including issues related to artificial intelligence and the exploration of outer space. They stressed the necessity of strengthening the capacity to implement decisions made by new institutions and improving communication and the narrative of the UN's work to reach those who are not currently engaged.

Participants recognized that pressing global issues such as climate change and organized crime require increased action that takes into account and benefits the Global South. They called for mobilizing agreements to address climate action debt and addressing climate change in the context of development models.

Concerns about bureaucracy and unnecessary expenses within the UN were also highlighted. Participants stressed the need for structural changes and action plans rather than theoretical speeches to make the UN and multilateral institutions more efficient and responsive.

Many respondents advocated for the formation of councils with experts in science, indigenous communities, and civil society organizations rather than representatives of political elites. They emphasized the importance of tailoring solutions to the specific circumstances and needs of individual countries in the region.

Additionally, there was a call for robust anti-corruption measures to ensure transparent and responsible practices within international organizations, thus building trust and ensuring fair resource allocation.

Participants expressed the need for the UN to better understand the realities of each country and adapt its policies accordingly. They pointed out the importance of addressing issues related to trade, culture, and the economy, as well as fostering technology exchange, financing, and information transfer.

The influence of certain states in the governing bodies of the UN system, such as the Security Council, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was identified as an area of concern.

Respondents stressed the importance of citizen participation, effective communication, and multicultural dialogue. They called for efforts to bridge the gap between ideas and concrete actions.

Overall, the responses underscored the demand for more equitable and inclusive multilateralism, emphasizing the need for a UN system that empowers both the Global North and the Global South in global policy

formulation and decision-making. This would lead to a more balanced and just international order, where the interests and concerns of Latin America and the Caribbean are effectively represented and addressed.

Africa

The analysis of responses from 133 African participants to question 23 regarding their opinions on the UN and multilateralism reveals that many participants expressed concerns about representation in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). They believe that the UNSC should more democratically represent the world's population, and there were calls to include Africa in the UNSC with greater significance.

Transparency, the rule of law, and international judicial institutions were mentioned by several participants. They called for greater adherence to these principles in international affairs. Corruption was highlighted as a major issue, both at the national and international levels. Respondents emphasized the need to combat corruption within international organizations and among member states.

There was a consistent desire for more power for the Global South within the UN system. Respondents called for reforms that would give more voice and influence to Global South countries. Some participants mentioned specific concerns such as poverty, climate change, workers' rights, and economic development policies that reduce the North-South divide.

The importance of inclusivity was emphasized, not only in terms of Global South states but also civil society and minority groups. Inclusion of youth and minorities in decision-making processes was highlighted. There was a desire for a more equitable distribution of power among all stakeholders, with particular emphasis on developing countries. Solidarity and cooperation among countries, especially in the Global South, were suggested as ways to promote their collective interests.

Some participants emphasized the importance of education on topics such as good governance, human rights, and international relations to empower individuals and communities. The functioning and reform of various multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, IMF, and WTO, were mentioned as areas in need of attention.

There was a call for the UN to be more aware of the local context in the Global South and to consult more with affected populations. Human rights, including the right to life, dignity, education, and access to clean food and water, were highlighted as fundamental areas of concern.

Communication and the need for more integrative communication that takes into account Global South perspectives were recommended. Security-related concerns were mentioned, including terrorism, violence, and drug-related issues. Some participants advocated for more attention to security in global policy formulation.

Trade, economic development, and reducing economic inequality were raised as important areas for reform. Many participants specifically mentioned the need to empower African countries more and give greater consideration to their views in international decisions. Empowering youth and minority groups, both in terms of political representation and participation, was a recurring theme.

The Middle East and North Africa

Participants, 32 in total, offered a diverse range of insights into the critical areas and aspects within the United Nations and the concept of multilateralism that require reform to enhance the representation of the Global South's interests and concerns. Their responses underscore the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by the Global South in the current international system and offer valuable perspectives on how these issues can be addressed.

A prominent theme in the responses was the need for greater equity in global representation. Participants emphasized that the UN should adopt an approach that treats all nations on the global stage equally, ensuring that every country, regardless of its size or economic strength, feels that the organization advocates for its interests. This entails addressing imbalances in decision-making power and increasing the involvement of Global South countries in shaping international policies.

The importance of promoting transparency, ethics, and human rights within the UN framework received significant attention. Participants stressed that policies and initiatives should be firmly grounded in responsible principles and a strong commitment to upholding fundamental rights. By fostering a culture of transparency and ethical conduct, the UN can build trust among member states and better address the concerns of the Global South.

The active engagement of youth and the encouragement of innovative approaches emerged as critical factors in reforming the UN to better represent the Global South. Participants highlighted that the youth population constitutes a significant demographic in many Global South countries, and their voices must be integrated into decision-making processes. Embracing innovative solutions and leveraging technology can lead to more effective responses to global challenges.

The respondents recognized the importance of South-South cooperation and the establishment of effective partnerships. They stressed that collaboration between Global South countries and international financial institutions is essential to bolster their negotiation positions and enhance their collective influence on global issues.

A common thread in the responses was the call for profound structural reform within the UN and associated multilateral institutions. Many participants expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of these organizations and called for substantial changes to make them more agile, responsive, and representative of the evolving global landscape.

The need for reforming the UN Security Council was a recurring theme. Participants highlighted the desire for a more balanced composition of the Security Council, with increased representation from the Global South. This, they argued, would lead to more equitable decision-making in matters of international peace and security.

Another critical aspect identified by participants was the role of education, awareness, and effective communication. They emphasized the importance of educating citizens about global policies and raising awareness, particularly through platforms like social media, to foster greater engagement and informed participation in international affairs.

The respondents underscored the need for robust anti-corruption measures to ensure transparent and responsible practices within international organizations. Combatting corruption is seen as essential for building trust and ensuring that resources are allocated fairly.

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by each nation in the Global South, participants advocated for tailored solutions. They emphasized that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient and that international policies should account for the specific circumstances and needs of individual countries.

Addressing pressing socioeconomic issues, including poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity, was highlighted as a crucial aspect of representing the Global South's concerns. Participants stressed that multilateral efforts should prioritize these challenges to improve the well-being of populations in the Global South.

Respondents pointed to global challenges such as climate change and sustainability as areas where international cooperation is imperative. They called for coordinated global policies to address these issues effectively, recognizing their far-reaching implications.

Several participants emphasized the potential for leadership from Global South nations in driving significant reforms within the UN and multilateralism. They argued that these countries have unique perspectives and experiences that can contribute to shaping a more equitable global order.

Finally, the responses collectively expressed the aspiration for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to multilateralism. They envisioned a multilateral system that equally empowers both South and North countries in global policy formulation and decision-making, ultimately fostering a more balanced and just international order.

6.2 The UN reform that the Global South expects to happen

In this second subsection, we outline the recommendations put forward by respondents focused on reforms that aim to enhance the participation of their countries and the broader Global South in shaping global policies and influencing decision-making processes.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The analysis of responses to the question about suggested reforms to the UN and multilateralism to enhance the participation of the Global South in shaping global policies and decision-making processes reveals a rich tapestry of ideas and perspectives. Participants, 103 in total, from various countries and backgrounds provided insights into potential changes that could lead to a fairer and more inclusive global governance system in Latin America and the Caribbean.

One recurring theme in these responses is the call for reforming the UN Security Council. Many participants argued that the current structure, which grants veto power to a select few nations, does not adequately represent the interests and needs of the Global South. Suggestions included expanding the Security

Council to include more permanent seats for countries from the Global South, abolishing or reforming the veto power, and ensuring greater transparency in its decision-making processes.

Another significant point raised was the need to involve civil society and grassroots organizations in global policymaking. Respondents highlighted the importance of creating mechanisms within the UN that allow for the active participation of non-governmental entities, indigenous groups, and marginalized communities. This involvement would ensure that a broader spectrum of voices is considered when shaping policies.

Furthermore, there was a strong emphasis on addressing social inequalities and environmental challenges. Many participants suggested that global policies should prioritize issues such as poverty alleviation, access to education and healthcare, environmental sustainability, and climate change mitigation. Some proposed the establishment of specific UN agendas to address these pressing concerns comprehensively.

Additionally, several responses touched on the importance of transparency and effective communication. To engage the Global South more actively, the UN should make its activities and decisions more accessible and understandable to a wider audience. Clearer communication channels and a commitment to sharing information were seen as vital.

Africa

In the analysis of responses from Africa regarding suggested reforms to the UN and multilateralism for greater Global South participation, it is noteworthy that many respondents, out of the total 125, emphasized the importance of effective communication and education. They believe that citizens need to be well-informed about global policies and issues. Education can empower people to participate actively and hold their governments accountable.

Some respondents suggested that the Global South needs to coordinate its voices better within international forums. This coordination would help them collectively advocate for their interests and priorities.

Transparency and easy access to information were highlighted. Participants expressed the need for transparent decision-making processes within international organizations like the UN. They also stressed the importance of making information readily accessible to all.

There were calls for a stronger commitment to human rights and the active involvement of the youth in defining global issues and solutions. Youth engagement is seen as vital for shaping the future.

Several respondents advocated for governance based on evidence and data rather than ideology. Pragmatism, innovation, and a focus on results were encouraged over populism and ideology.

The reform of the UN Security Council was a recurring theme. Suggestions included abolishing or limiting veto powers, expanding the Security Council to include more countries from the Global South, and revisiting the composition of both permanent and non-permanent members.

Respondents recommended using media and social media platforms to raise awareness about global issues and policies. Social media was seen as a powerful tool for increasing public engagement.

Addressing corruption was another point of concern. Participants stressed the need to tackle corruption both within countries and within international institutions.

Some respondents highlighted the importance of Global South countries proving themselves worthy of respect and not relying on others to advocate for them. They emphasized self-reliance and taking ownership of their interests.

Many respondents called for equitable representation of the Global South in international decision-making bodies. They believe that all countries, regardless of their economic or military power, should have an equal voice in shaping global policies.

Financial reform and more substantial financing for development were suggested. Cooperation between the UN and international financial institutions was encouraged to support global development initiatives effectively.

Capacity building within Global South countries, particularly in terms of skills and knowledge about the UN, was recommended to enable more effective participation.

There were appeals for more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, including broader involvement of vulnerable groups and civil society.

Several respondents stressed the importance of unity among Global South countries to collectively advance their interests and overcome challenges.

The responses from Africa underscore the importance of reforms that enhance representation, transparency, and the active engagement of all stakeholders, especially those from the Global South, in shaping global policies and decision-making processes.

Middle East and North Africa

First and foremost, security emerged as a paramount issue, with respondents, 30 in total, emphasizing the necessity for international cooperation to address both military and non-military security challenges. Some participants specifically pointed to the significance of agreements for regional stability.

Political reforms were a recurring theme, with a call to strengthen the independence of countries that have been under foreign influence or guardianship. Many respondents stressed the importance of human rights and the need to combat discrimination, especially ethnic or racial discrimination, alongside measures to safeguard minority rights.

United Nations reform was a prevalent topic, with demands for reforms that ensure equal political rights for all countries and the elimination of veto power held by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Economic development concerns were also voiced, with appeals for support for economic growth in the MENA region, including assistance from major countries and international organizations. There were mentions of the necessity for fair trade agreements.

Inclusivity was emphasized, with several participants highlighting the importance of involving civil society and minority groups in decision-making processes as a means to broaden perspectives and promote more equitable decisions.

Education and cultural exchange were underscored as vital in fostering understanding and cooperation between nations. Empowering youth and involving them in decision-making processes were viewed as pivotal steps toward a better future.

Calls to reduce the dominance of Western nations in global affairs and decision-making processes were prevalent. Combatting corruption was also a recurring theme, with an emphasis on holding multinational companies accountable.

Public health concerns were voiced, with some respondents highlighting the importance of providing free medicines to impoverished countries and supporting their healthcare systems, especially in the face of global health crises.

Although not the primary focus, environmental issues, such as climate change, were mentioned as important areas necessitating international attention. These responses collectively reveal a multifaceted landscape of concerns and recommendations from the MENA region, underscoring the complexity of issues encompassing security, governance, economic development, and global cooperation in this region.

6.3 The Role of the Global South in the Reform Process of the United Nations

In this third and last subsection, we present the recommendations made by respondents from the Global South focusing on the question: *From your perspective, what role should your country and the Global South more broadly play in the reform process of the United Nations and multilateralism?*

Latin America and the Caribbean

One prevalent theme is the call for leadership and active engagement. Many respondents, out of the 100 who answered this question, emphasized that Global South countries, due to their size, abundant natural resources, and unique experiences, should play a leading role in propelling United Nations reform. This includes advocating for fairer representation in the UN Security Council and having a stronger voice in global decisions.

Another key aspect is the need for reform and change. Respondents express a strong desire for Global South countries to leverage their influence to push for United Nations reform actively. This encompasses pursuing a more equitable representation within the UN, especially in the Security Council, and seeking a more substantial say in global affairs.

Several respondents stress the importance of addressing local and regional issues. They argue that Global South countries should first focus on solving their internal problems, such as inequality, poverty, and environmental concerns, before taking on a more prominent global role.

Cooperation and collaboration are also highly emphasized. Many respondents believe that Global South nations should work together to promote a shared agenda and address common issues like climate change and human rights. Furthermore, respondents highlight the need to act on environmental and social matters. These include biodiversity preservation, climate change mitigation, and gender equality.

Some respondents point out the significance of combating corruption and strengthening institutions within their countries as a fundamental step toward effectively participating in multilateral reform. Increasing both internal and external awareness of the challenges and contributions of Global South countries is deemed essential by many.

Additionally, there is a call for greater involvement of civil society and community groups to shape the stance and actions of Global South nations in UN reform. Lastly, some respondents advocate for specific actions, such as military reform, peace promotion, and conflict resolution.

Responses reflect a strong desire for Global South countries, including Brazil, to play a more prominent and active role in United Nations reform and in strengthening multilateralism. They should also tackle critical issues within their own territories. Regional cooperation and the promotion of joint solutions for global challenges are seen as crucial elements in this process.

Africa

Here, we present the analysis on the feedback from 127 respondents in Africa regarding the role their countries and the Global South should play in the reform process of the United Nations and multilateralism.

A recurring theme in these responses is the call for active participation and leadership. African nations are urged to be more than just passive observers in the global arena. Instead, they should take on active roles in shaping the future of multilateralism. This involves participating in discussions and decisions on policy formulation, strategy development, and the implementation of solutions. By actively engaging in these processes, African countries can contribute their unique perspectives and experiences to the global dialogue, thereby ensuring that their voices are heard and their interests are represented.

Another crucial aspect highlighted in these responses is the need for equitable representation. Many respondents stress that African nations should work collectively to advocate for reforms that ensure fair and inclusive representation in international bodies, particularly in the United Nations Security Council. This push for equitable representation is seen as a fundamental step towards rectifying historical imbalances in global governance and ensuring that the Global South has a meaningful role in shaping international policies.

Furthermore, African countries are encouraged to champion democratic values, human rights, and ethical governance on the global stage. By doing so, they can promote just and equitable international policies

that address issues like economic inequality, social development, and citizenship rights. This advocacy for ethical governance is seen as crucial for creating a more just and equitable global order.

Collaboration among Global South countries, including those in Africa, is emphasized as well. Respondents believe that these nations should work together to strengthen their collective influence in multilateral organizations. This collaboration can take various forms, including sharing best practices, supporting each other's initiatives, and presenting a unified voice in international forums. By working together, the Global South can amplify its impact and push for meaningful reforms.

Specific issues are also highlighted in these responses. Some mention the need to reform global financial institutions and trade agreements to better serve the interests of the Global South. Additionally, there's an emphasis on addressing historical injustices and wealth redistribution, particularly related to colonial legacies and resource exploitation. African countries are seen as having a role in advocating for policies that rectify these historical wrongs.

Lastly, the responses underscore the importance of transparency and consultation. Leaders in African countries are encouraged to engage with local communities and civil society to ensure that the reform process reflects the needs and aspirations of the people. This participatory approach is seen as vital for creating policies that are responsive to the diverse challenges and opportunities faced by African nations.

The feedback to the question emphasizes that African countries should be proactive, vocal, and collaborative in advocating for reforms within the United Nations and the broader framework of multilateralism. These nations are viewed as having unique insights and experiences that can contribute positively to the reform process and the creation of a more equitable and just global order.

Middle East and North Africa

In this analysis of responses from 28 participants from the MENA region concerning the role of their countries and the broader Global South in the United Nations and multilateralism reform process, a consensus among respondents emphasizes the fundamental importance of national political and economic reforms. They believe that meaningful participation in global affairs starts with addressing internal issues. These reforms are seen as essential prerequisites for their nations to play a more significant role on the international stage.

UN General Assembly is viewed as crucial platforms for pressuring for reform and discussing critical issues. Many respondents highlighted the importance of utilizing these meetings to activate the UN's role in addressing regional concerns. One specific concern raised is water security in countries like Egypt, emphasizing the need for international attention and cooperation on such matters.

Another overarching theme is the call to give more importance to the work of the United Nations. Respondents stress the need for the UN to take centre stage in addressing global challenges and conflicts.

A consistent recommendation is the pressing need for reform within the UN and other international organizations. Respondents argue that these organizations should operate on principles of equality and prioritize sustainable development over the interests of major powers.

Increasing awareness campaigns and getting closer to the issues faced by the population are emphasized. Respondents believe that addressing the concerns of their citizens and engaging with local communities is essential for more effective global participation.

Equal treatment of security and economic interests is proposed, with respondents asserting that these interests, particularly in the Global South, should take precedence over those of major powers. They suggest that organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should treat all countries equally to achieve sustainable development.

The activation of peaceful means to resolve international disputes and conflicts is a recurring recommendation. Many respondents believe that these approaches would enhance global peace and security.

A common thread is the belief that water security is an international responsibility, not to be controlled solely by source countries at the expense of downstream nations. Respondents call for equal partnerships based on population size to address such critical issues.

Respondents also propose forming alliances among Global South countries to influence structural reforms in international organizations, addressing the perception that major powers dominate international decision-making. Cooperation and coordination are deemed essential, with respondents suggesting that countries should work together transparently to support shared proposals. The importance of coordination among neighbouring countries and nations in the Global South to advocate for common interests effectively is highlighted.

Additionally, there's a focus on economic development, entrepreneurship, and social development to alleviate poverty and address the root causes of issues such as refuge and migration. In this sense, ethical governance, respect for human rights, and responsible international relations are stressed as values that should guide global policymaking.

Respondents from the MENA region emphasize the importance of both internal reforms within their countries and external reforms within international organizations to ensure a more substantial role for their nations and the broader Global South in shaping global policies and decision-making processes. These recommendations reflect their commitment to achieving greater equity and justice in international affairs.

Brief overall considerations

In the analysis of responses from the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa to the three questions related to the reform of the United Nations and multilateralism, several clear trends emerge.

Firstly, the need for significant reforms in the structures and processes of the UN is a shared concern across all three regions. This includes a call for a more just and inclusive representation of Global South countries, recognizing their vital role on the international stage.

Secondly, education and communication are identified as crucial tools for promoting understanding and engagement with multilateral issues. Respondents emphasize the importance of raising awareness among their populations about global challenges and proposed solutions, thereby creating a solid support base for reforms.

Thirdly, there is a widespread desire for countries in the Global South to take on a more prominent leadership role in global discussions and decisions. This is driven by the belief that these countries, due to their size, rich natural resources, and unique experiences, have a valuable contribution to make to the reform of the United Nations and the construction of a more inclusive and fair multilateralism.

PART II – FOCUS GROUPS

1. What do opinion leaders and policymakers think?

In this section of the report, we present the results of three focus groups, one focused on participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, another dedicated to Africa, and a third to the Middle East and North Africa.

As mentioned in the methodology for this research, the focus groups were conducted by members of the Global South Perspectives Network and resulted in articles authored by a representative from each of the three regions.

These articles are original and analytical in nature, blending the recorded statements of the focus group participants, all kept anonymous, with the insights of the respective article author

To follow the order in which the focus groups were conducted, we begin with the article on the Africa focus group, followed by that of LATAM, and conclude with the MENA focus group.

Africa - Focus Group
Institutional reform needed to deal with global challenges

By Daryl Swanepoel, from South Africa

1. Introduction

The focus group was held on 27 July 2023 via Zoom. The agenda was structured to mirror the design of the Global South Perspectives survey by dividing the session into three thematic discussions, namely on Peace and Security, the Non-Military Threats faced by the African continent, and Global Governance Innovation. The concept of a Global Resilience Council was also introduced and tested with the group.

Nineteen experts, drawn from Southern Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Central Africa and West Africa, attended the focus group deliberations. Approximately one third were women and two thirds, men.

Given the objective of the focus group to assess the opinions related to the subject matter of informed policy experts, the participants were drawn from the political, academic, diplomatic and government establishments. Policy, media and civil society experts also formed part of the group.

2. Thematic discussions

What follows hereunder is a synopsis of the views and opinions that were canvassed during the focus group deliberations. It does not purport to be scientifically or empirically tested, but it represents the real-world perceptions that multilateral organizations will need to contend with.

2.1. On peace and security threats

Three main topics emerged under this theme: AU/UN relational dynamics; who should lead the peacebuilding processes in Africa; and the continued militarization of the continent.

AU/UN dynamics

The starting point is to assess the commitment of African States to the African Union (AU) as a key partner, albeit not always an equal partner, to the United Nations (UN).

The sense is that over the last couple of years an increasing sense of unity and commitment to the African Union has developed. For example, on issues such as climate change and migration, common positions have emerged within the AU.

As to peace and security, the sub-regional organizations make it "a little bit more tricky", since the resource concentration within these sub-regional organizations results in the AU not having the capacity or funding required to effectively deal with the conflicts on the continent. This necessitates the AU to increasingly

ask the UN to provide support, the success of which is questionable and often leads to divisions as to who should actually take charge of the crises.

This within an environment riddled with military coups and terrorist threats. The recent crises in Sudan and Niger serve as examples of its severity. It has become clear that the AU is struggling to weigh the situation, which, admittedly, is very complex. Its dependency on external resources has diminished trust and faith in the AU's ability to effectively deal with the crises, with increased doubt as to its capacity to independently manage peace and security on the continent.

It brings into question a secondary, yet equally important, concern: Whether the AU, as a collective, can lead globally. Whether it can assert its agency. The Russia-Africa Summit is a good case in point: It was attended by a large number of African heads of state, but a significant number also abstained. This is because the continent is divided on the Russia-Ukraine War. Similarly, it doesn't have a clear foreign policy on many of the global foreign policy challenges.

Whilst doubt prevails, it appears that apropos peace and security, the greater coordination by African countries through the AU – which makes up the biggest bloc within the UN General Assembly – is changing the way in which Africa is viewed within the UN. And there is growing regard for the positions taken by African states.

The AU, as an inter-governmental organization, has, however, still to find its place within the new UN configuration, which is member state driven.

Leading the peacebuilding process

In assessing the approach taken by the UN with regard to peace and security, one must consider the outcomes of some 140 peace agreements facilitated by the UN, 80 percent of which relate to the African continent. The majority of them have failed. Why?

There was a sense within the focus group that countries were essentially forced into peace agreements. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of Sudan was raised as an example. The agreement required a string of actions, such as establishing a viable state, establishing peace and bringing about economic prosperity, all within a five-year period – impossible to achieve against the backdrop of 28 years of war that also led to South Sudan splitting from the rest of the country.

Equally important was the whole peacebuilding exercise itself, and in particular as to who should be implementing the provisions of the agreement. It appears that it was the Western countries that took the lead, despite the many well-trained peacebuilders available on the continent. There needs to be greater use made of African peacebuilders, who are often sidelined from taking the lead.

Continued militarization of Africa

Another critical issue requiring intervention is the continued militarization of Africa. In the opinion of one participant, the "scramble for Africa is very much alive". A quick review of literature underscores this view.

A lack of financial resources, for example, makes the African Union dependent on external funding for military support and peacebuilding.

To illustrate: The AU has been stepping up its institutions and instruments. Examples here include the creation of the African Standby Force (ASF), the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), and various ad-hoc military arrangements, such as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) (Eriksson, 2018). The ASF has received funding from the European Union (EU) to enable field exercises (Fabricius, 2015). The EU has also been a longstanding funder of AMISOM (Williams, 2017). And the AU and UN are in partnership in the ACIRC (Brosig & Sempijja, 2015).

Foreign involvement in the militarization of Africa extends beyond just funding. The United States, for example, have a network of at least 29 military bases across Africa and have in recent years carried out no fewer than 36 named operations and activities in Africa (Turse, 2020).

France are also active militarily in Africa. Although they are committed to reducing the number of French troops in Africa, they still have around 3000 troops stationed on the continent, where they have been involved in military operations across West Africa, in countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali and the Sahel region. There are also other countries from outside the continent – such as China and Russia – involved in military excursions in Africa (Chrisafis, 2023).

More disturbing is the presence of non-state actors, such as the Wagner Group, that are sponsored to carry out military operations on behalf of others, often acting as a front for criminal activity (Chrisafis, 2023).

This therefore confirms the assertion made by the focus group. There is a myriad of foreign powers militarily active of the African continent. The lack of financial resources obliges Africa to surrender its autonomy to powers outside of the continent. This means they lose control over determining their own destiny; a predicament often used by more powerful nations to advance their own global objectives.

2.2. On non-military threats

Two main topics emerged under this theme: Global inequality and its impact on Africa's ability to deal with its urgent developmental needs; and the crisis of the UN system, which perpetuates the unequal power relationship between the West and the Global South.

Inequality and the impact of colonialism and racialzsed capitalism

One of the striking features across Africa is the extraordinary inequality that has all kinds of ripple effects throughout the region, weighing most heavily on the young people of the continent. What is also striking about that, is the source of that inequality in our society. It is in no way unrelated to a long- and well-established history of racialized capitalism – which is inevitably colonial and inevitably related to global dynamics. Of course, there are also domestic dynamics that fuel it.

The immense economic inequality in the world today didn't happen overnight, or even in the past century. "It is the path-dependent outcome of a multitude of historical processes, one of the most important of

which has been European colonialism" and "it has shaped modern inequality in several fundamental, but heterogeneous, ways" (Acemoglu, 2017). Chiefly, because whilst the process led to the economic prosperity of the countries who colonized, typically those that faced the effects thereof, were impoverished. They were depleted of resources with no profit for themselves, and the indigenous peoples were forced to adopt the cultural practices of their colonial rulers. This ran for hundreds of years, only coming to an end in the middle of the 20th century (Greenwood, 2021).

Therefore, when considering the current precipice – the impending effects of climate change and the low carbon transition – it appears there is yet another rush on Africa unfolding in very much the same pattern. One where Africa's resources are being exploited through very similar North-South global dynamics and with very little participation from those on the continent. The same patterns of 'racial' and 'colonial' capitalism are being repeated, albeit that the mineral wealth might be used for cleaner energy systems.

The vaccine nationalism during the COVID-19 pandemic is another case in point. The entire global vaccine value chain was disrupted at the expense of the developing world, which damaged relationships and trust. The Global South was left to muddle their way through the crisis, which to their credit they did. Assurances were given that the global community would better prepare itself for future such events. As we stand, there are no actual plans should another COVID wave, or another pandemic, occur. The world actually still doesn't have mechanisms for handling such global pandemics.

Then there is the continued domination of Europe and the United States of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These institutions are crucial to the financing of projects to reduce global inequality, and to fund the mechanisms to address global sustainability challenges. Yet, those countries most in need of assistance – the Global South – cannot be represented in the leadership of the institutions due to the institutional arrangements that 'guarantee' US or European leadership. Beyond the question of leadership, the view was also expressed that these institutions lack a real understanding of and commitment to the development priorities of the developing world.

And then to ask, who is the UN for? The establishment of the UN in 1945, at the end of World War II, was supposed to be a 'never again moment'. Africa has not yet had its 'never again moment' in relation to colonialism; it is ongoing in different forms.

This is the difficult context in which the role of the UN, whom most in Africa perceive to represent a Western power structure, needs to be reimagined. The international community needs to earnestly grapple with this ethical premise, and decide on what conceptual premise the reforms should happen for them to be substantive and meaningful.

Crisis of the UN system

The picture sketched of the post-1945 world order is not good. The UN system lacks legitimacy, because it has failed time and time again to fulfil its own agreements. It has failed to deliver on a global scale. A case in point is the Paris Agreement on climate change. Despite all the talk and all the hype around climate change, and despite everyone being able to see the impacts thereof on changing weather patterns with disastrous consequences, UN agencies have not been able to ensure countries live up to their commitments.

Moreover, it appears to many in Africa that those who do the preaching are (or historically, were) the biggest violators of climate and the environment. They now wish to impose difficult-to-meet obligations on the developing world, without providing a just and equitable mechanism to assist the developing nations in addressing the consequences of the damages caused by them in the first place. Even more disheartening is their own inability to meet their obligations under the agreements and their failure to agree on compensating or providing resources to the Global South.

What is now occurring as a result is deglobalization. The UN was supposed to have brought the world together, and it claims we are one humanity. But in reality, these crises, the lack of UN legitimacy and the sense of exclusion resulting from the Permanent Five (P5 – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) stranglehold, are causing the establishment of groupings outside of the UN system, the expanding mandate of BRICS being a prime example.

That said, self-criticism by Africa would show that the continent does not always have structured and coordinated responses to the critical issues confronting the continent, which hinders progress and disenfranchises the continent from lobbying from a united position in favour of the Global South. This is an area that needs more attention.

2.3. On global governance innovation

Under this theme the urgent need for UN reform as a safeguard against multilateral fragmentation, and the consideration of mechanisms to ensure greater resilience, was canvassed.

UN reform

The underlying sense is that UN reform would be no easy feat to achieve. Yet, African leaders are insistent that the institution be reformed lest it were to lose its legitimacy, the loss of which could well undermine the UN's ability to perform fairly and equitably. Failure to reform would, in the view of the group, promote geopolitical polarization.

There is a high level of scepticism as to whether meaningful reform is even possible. Central to this cynicism is a real doubt that the P5 will agree to comprehensive reform, and certainly not to the relinquishment of their veto power. In terms of the reform discussion, it is the veto power that presents itself as the main stumbling block on the path to consensus.

The lacklustre pace at which the reform process is proceeding feeds the doubt and scepticism. The African continent's reform proposal – the Ezulwini Consensus (AU, 2005) – has been on the table for over 15 years and has not moved an inch forward. There also seems to be growing frustration as to rule setting within the UN. As one participant put it: "When it comes to the rules-based order, by whose rules, and for whom?" The Global South is often not only excluded from setting the rules, but also through the rules.

Consider, for example, the conditions set to combat climate change, the digital divide and innovation. They were developed through an exclusionary process, resulting in provisions that are not feasible in the Global South. Part of the problem is that the Global South, in general, and Africa in particular, is not equitably represented in the staffing of the UN organization.

Concern was also raised about what appears to be a growing perception that there is a need from the developed countries for a piecemeal kind of reform. A process that will hand-pick a few reforms to appease the reformists, but in essence, move forward unabated. This should be rejected in favour of more holistic reforms that address the core of the problem, namely, to create a more democratic institution. The principal concerns that the group had, were with regard to the structure and powers of the UN Security Council (UNSC). Consideration has to be given to its expansion and as to whether the veto power should remain.

Apropos the Security Council and Africa, Africa needs to, in the first instance, be fairly accommodated on the UNSC. It remains to be determined whether Africa should get a collective voice, or whether two or three countries should be earmarked to serve on the Council as permanent members. In the second instance, Africa's accommodation needs to be agreed upon within the context of other geopolitical regions, for example, Europe [and Latin America], feeling that they too need to be accommodated. Could this lead to an unwieldly arrangement that will serve to further complicate an unsatisfactory decision-making process?

The current composition of the UNSC defies the definition of multilateralism, in which no single country, no matter how powerful and wealthy, can seek to assume for itself a global unilateral monopoly on seeking solutions to all the world's problems. The multilateral system should be based on common and shared values and should be a set of norms and standards capable of finding universal application – it should be at the service of humanity, and not the narrow interests of the few. Thus, the outcome of the multilateral negotiation process should be fair and balanced and benefit all.

The participants in the focus group held the strong view that under the current arrangements, there are countries who believe that the multilateral system should be at their executive service, especially during times of conflict and hardship, often to the benefit of their own geopolitical considerations. These countries often display little flexibility on issues that affect their primary security interest. It therefore becomes vital to bring about reforms that ensure that the voices of the Global South can also be heard on global peace and security issues.

The participants also felt that Africa was not yet fully geared to effectively drive their reform proposals. Whereas effectivity relied on them taking a united position – speaking with one voice – there remained divisions between African countries.

In addition, Africa need to reach out more proactively to other regional groupings in the Global South that share their determination to reform the UN into a more just, equitable and fair organization. This will ensure a stronger institutional response through a more systemic approach.

Global Governance Innovation

Weighing the slow pace (and even doubt) of UN reform, as displayed in the focus group deliberations, against the immediate need for global resilience during times of crisis, the question arises of how to ensure a more rapid and resilient response by the UN in the state of polycrisis.

To this end, the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS, N.d.) is suggesting the establishment of a Global Resilience Council (GRC) to spearhead the UN's response to the multitude of non-military existential threats for humanity. The COVID-19 pandemic, the occurrence of one crisis after the other, such as climate change and inequality, suggests that a convening power of this nature is needed. It suggests a more strategic approach to dealing with issues outside of the dysfunctional UNSC, empowering a broader response to the global non-military challenges.

Whilst no firm proposals are yet on the table, such a body could, illustratively speaking, be an expansion of the current 15-member UNSC to, say, 25 members, thereby enabling broader regional representation without any veto powers. This could show the way to working constructively to advance the human response, beyond the current fragmented global system. The new council could be a subsidiary body of the General Assembly of the UN that brings everything together; and it can be created without UN Charter amendment. An executive council of the Assembly, so to speak, eventually reporting to the Assembly.

In addition, the workings of the GRC should include non-state actors, such as civil society, the private sector, and religious and indigenous groups. These actors would take on an advisory role, ensuring a greater emphasis on scientific and empirically based decision-making. The objective of introducing this GRC proposal to the focus group was to test whether such a concept might find favour amongst the African leaders, and policymakers – and it did.

The concept found favour on the basis that it could break the reform deadlock, at least to the extent that it could deal more effectively with the non-military challenges facing the world. And it would, in so doing, ensure a broader and more inclusive process. It could assist in finding a common understanding as to what the future of multilateralism and the UN could look like.

3. Summing up

The Global South Perspectives on Global Governance Reform Network's research aims to measure the level of awareness of Global South societies with regard to the peace and security and non-military threats challenging their societies, and to canvass their views on what is required apropos global governance

reform. An important part of the research was to organize regional focus groups comprising informed international and policy experts, to gather their views on the topic at hand. The Africa Focus Group was held on 27 July 2023.

On global peace and security threats, the view was that although there is a growing sense of unity amongst AU member states on issues such as climate change and migration, dealing with the continent's peace and security issues was more complicated. Whilst there is greater regard for the positions put forward by the AU in the UN, the relationship remains dysfunctional. The lack of resources requires the AU to seek external funding, principally from the UN and Western powers, the dynamics of which creates its own set of quandaries: Often African leadership and military operations are yielded to the external forces, which raises questions as to the AU's ability to lead globally; and to what extent Africa can manage its own destiny outside of the prescripts of P5-dominated UNSC and Western agendas.

On non-military threats, a number of global challenges that also affect Africa were identified. These included, amongst others, acute inequality, climate change, health pandemics, the digital divide and innovation. There was, however, a high level of doubt as to whether the global collective could resolve the challenges with the urgency required, given the crisis of the UN system, which is failing to deliver on its own commitments. Moreover, the burden of colonialism lingers, causing unrealistic obligations to be placed on African countries. Even though they are on the backfoot due to centuries of exploitation by Western powers, they are expected to deal with matters such as climate change and inequality – principally consequences of colonialism – with little assistance and/or compensation from the former colonial powers.

On global governance innovation, there was a high level of cynicism as to the ability of the UN to reform itself into a more democratic and effective institution. The current exclusionary processes and the stronghold of the P5 are unacceptable and have resulted in a crisis of legitimacy for the UN, and a more polarized world. The stranglehold needs to be urgently broken, therefore, the concept of a more inclusive and democratic Global Resilience Council, eliminating the veto power, ought to be explored in order to deal more inclusively and ably with the non-military crises facing the world.

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Latin America and Caribbean – Focus Group

The UN reform from the perspectives of strategic actors in LATAM

By Roberto Chiachiri, from Brazil

1. Introduction

The focus group discussion was conducted on 9 August 2023 via Zoom and involved the participation of five out of the 19 invited individuals. Among the attendees, there was one representative from Argentina and four from Brazil, encompassing a diverse range of professions, including a politician, a professor, a researcher, a geologist, and a journalist. In terms of gender composition, the group consisted of two females and three males.

As for the Africa Focus Group, the focus group agenda was structured to align with the design of the Global South Perspectives survey, dividing the discussion into three key themes: Peace and Security, Non-Military Threats, and Global Governance Innovation. Additionally, a novel concept known as the Global Resilience Council was introduced and explored during the session.

The introductory segment featured Georgios Kostakos, who provided valuable insights into the dynamics within the United Nations (UN). He shed light on the prevailing dominance of powerful Northern nations in the UN's decision-making processes, emphasizing their direct access to the Secretary-General, UN commissions, and the ability to engage with experts in New York. This often resulted in decisions that prioritized the interests of these influential nations. Kostakos also referenced pivotal events such as the 2005 World Summit, during which new intergovernmental bodies like the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission were established.

Highlighting the urgency of initiatives aimed at catalyzing meaningful changes within the UN system's operational framework, Georgios Kostakos underscored the importance of the Global South Perspectives Network. This network served as a vital connection linking experts from the three world regions currently covered: MENA, LATAM, and Africa. Its primary goal was to solicit suggestions on harnessing this collective knowledge to influence UN decisions in a way that benefited all nations and individuals, rather than disproportionately favouring the influential nations and Northern non-state actors.

Following Kostakos' address, Professor Cilene Victor assumed the role of moderator and initiated the first round of discussion questions. The initial focus centered on identifying the primary threats to peace and security within the respective sub-regions or countries represented by the attendees, with a specific focus on Argentina and Brazil. Key questions encouraged participants to delve into the roles played by various sectors, such as politics, academia, and government, in addressing these threats. Furthermore, the discussion aimed to gauge the significance of different professional domains in effectively tackling these challenges.

2. Thematic discussions

Here is a summary of the viewpoints and opinions exchanged during the focus group discussions. While it doesn't claim to be scientifically or empirically tested, it reflects real-world perceptions that multilateral organizations must deal with.

3.1. On peace and security threats

The politician of the group began with a striking statement: "The theme of peace is about safeguarding this zone where we live, a zone of peace." She emphasized the daily effort required to preserve peace and highlighted the monitoring of regional resources, such as oil and lithium, by U.S. representatives, expressing concerns about their significant presence. She called for a more active UN role in protecting the peaceful zone and addressing modern challenges like climate change. She expressed dissatisfaction with the UN's current role in this context and advocated for broader global collaboration to tackle urgent issues that transcend borders.

The professor, specializing in public policies, voiced concern about the neglect of community foundations and stressed the need for a specialized approach. She lamented threats to the school environment due to violence and lack of support, which contributed to broader economic and social issues.

The physicist of the group argued for the evident necessity of a new governance system to replace the present UN. He found continued debate on this matter redundant and unproductive, emphasizing the urgent need for change in addressing military matters, climate change, and inequalities. He acknowledged the challenges posed by the resistance of countries that controlled the UN and called for a method to effect this transformation, highlighting the significance of addressing climate change and sustainability.

The geologist and specialist in natural disaster risk management highlighted the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, demanding a distinct approach. He addressed the ideological and political polarization in Brazil, describing it as a "Brazilian war of polarization" that impeded objective issue treatment. He emphasized economic inequality and advocated for structural projects to address it, highlighting positive examples of sustainable development in the Amazon. He stressed the importance of hosting COP 30 in Brazil, in the Amazon, and the need to seize the favourable political moment for positive initiatives. He underscored the importance of structuring and disseminating Brazilian knowledge to promote a positive standard of development.

The journalist and communication professor explored the connection between journalism and the sociology of communication. He emphasized that Brazil faced serious internal challenges rather than external military threats. He pointed to the politicization of the Armed Forces and expressed concerns about the continuity of Bolsonarism. He highlighted damaging polarization across Brazilian society and underscored the need for political pacification and reducing hatred sown by the far right.

In the realm of journalism, he addressed the issue of fake news, which impacted the socio-political fabric of Brazil, particularly through platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp. He advocated for regulating big tech

to combat misinformation. He identified inequality as Brazil's most urgent problem, surpassing corruption, and called for projects addressing historical inequality. He critiqued the UN's efficacy in resolving major global issues and reaffirmed that Brazil's internal challenges revolved around the politicization of the Armed Forces, inequality, and the influence of fake news and big tech.

Despite their diverse perspectives and expertise, the interventions from different representatives collectively underscored the need for proactive efforts to address pressing issues in their respective countries.

Peace and Security

The Argentine representative emphasized the importance of safeguarding a zone of peace and the necessity for active protection against external influences.

The Brazilian geologist also acknowledged the presence of internal warlike situations, emphasizing the impact of polarization on the objective treatment of issues.

The physicist and the journalist both addressed the need for new systems of governance to navigate global challenges more effectively.

Global Collaboration

The politician from Argentina called for broader global responses to contemporary challenges like climate change and expressed dissatisfaction with the UN's then-current role.

The physicist emphasized the importance of international movement and collaboration to transform global governance.

The journalist underscored the importance of regulating big tech and global collaboration in addressing fake news and inequality.

Internal Challenges and Inequality

The Brazilian professor criticized the lack of attention given to community foundations, emphasizing the broader implications of governance conflicts on education and social issues. The geologist pointed to economic inequality and stressed the need for structural projects to address internal problems. The journalist underscored the prevalence of significant internal challenges, including polarization, the influence of fake news, and the impact of the far right.

Climate Change and Sustainable Development

The Brazilian geologist linked his expertise to climate change, advocating for new approaches to address extreme weather events and highlighting sustainable development initiatives.

The physicist emphasized the importance of altering governance

3.2 On non-military threats

Cilene Victor posed a question to the participants, inquiring about their perceptions of the most prevalent non-military threats in Latin America at this time. The threats under consideration included:

- Food insecurity
- Water insecurity
- The COVID-19 pandemic crisis and its associated consequences
- Impacts of climate change, encompassing natural disasters, flooding, landslides, marine and air pollution, and soil pollution
- Discrimination
- Gender-based violence
- Abuse of minorities
- Issues related to refugees and immigrants
- Child abuse and neglect
- Other human rights abuses
- Widespread violence

- Internet access problems
- Data protection

The discussion centered on identifying which of these threats were more pronounced and impactful in the region.

Climate change emerged as a significant concern, encompassing migration flows driven by climate-related issues, and water scarcity as a challenge. Universal access to water was an ideal that contrasted with reality, where conflicts over resources like oil could escalate into water disputes. It was inconceivable, "... it was not correct for people to lack access to water." The need for governments to take measures to protect this essential resource was emphasized, aiming for the well-being and security of populations. "Water as a human right."

For some participants all of the above challenges were important and should be discussed in governance. Resources were available, but public policies were often poorly monitored, and their implementation at the municipal level could face difficulties. The qualification and approach of governance should be adapted to Brazil's diversity. What worked successfully in one municipality might not work in another. An example was the pandemic, which exposed an ailing population without a defined care plan. "We had a sick population, and we still didn't know how we were going to take care of these people."

There were various educational issues that had been stagnant, along with food insecurity. This led to concerns about violence and other conflicts that needed mediation. The challenge of climate change was

also pressing. It was no use to just create reports and then come back to discuss whether they succeeded or not.

UN governance included many positive aspects, but the community often struggled to access it. It was the larger institutes and groups that tended to benefit from it. Even when it reached the community, sometimes one wondered whether the outcomes were aligned with what was reported. It was interesting to see where and how it happened, whether it was applicable in the specific community or not.

Development discussions without equitable distribution of resources led nowhere. the point was addressing those who suffered the most, regardless of the source – be it a pandemic, environmental challenges, or economic crisis. As always, it was the communities and individuals in extreme, severe, and very severe socio-environmental vulnerability.

Climate change posed as a central challenge, influencing other interconnected issues. For instance, it could exacerbate food insecurity and have ripple effects across various aspects.

This concern weighed heavily, especially within the context of a country like Brazil. The underlying factor that was deeply troubling was the inequality witnessed. This inequality was intentionally constructed, a product of conscious decisions made year after year.

Summing up

Each participant offered their viewpoint on these threats, shedding light on distinct aspects and emphasizing the importance of addressing them. However, climate change appeared to be a central concern among the participants, with its far-reaching effects on various issues such as migration, water scarcity, and socio-environmental vulnerability. Additionally, the need for equitable resource distribution, effective policy implementation, and attention to vulnerable populations also emerged as shared concerns across all the perspectives presented.

The Middle East and North Africa - Focus Group Global Governance Reform from MENA Perspectives

By Adel Abdel-Sadek, from Egypt

The world, including the Middle East and North Africa region, is currently facing a rising tide of non-military threats. These challenges demand a comprehensive vision from Global South countries to actively engage in global policymaking and drive reforms within the United Nations. In particular, the Middle East and North Africa region are grappling with a range of issues, including civil conflicts, organized crime, forced migration, and the pressing concerns of food security and climate change.

These challenges have the potential to significantly impact conflicts and migration in the region, especially given its proximity to the European Union and its strategic importance in global trade. To effectively address these multifaceted threats, a holistic approach is required, one that emphasizes cooperation, sound policy implementation, and a proactive role in international forums like the United Nations.

In an effort to highlight these emerging challenges in the Middle East and North Africa region, the Arab Center for Cyberspace Research (ACCR) hosted the regional focus group in collaboration with the Global South Perspectives Network, an initiative co-convened by Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS) and the research group Journalism Humanitarian and Media Intervention (HumanizaCom). The focus group discussed the key themes of the survey, such as the issue of international security and peace, non-military threats and the future of the global project to reform the United Nations and the Security Council.

What are the primary concerns of the countries in the region, and how do military and non-military threats manifest in terms of their similarities and differences? How do regional actors respond to these challenges? What role does cooperation among Global South countries play in the reform efforts within the United Nations? What specific proposals have been put forward for UN reform? What is the likelihood of success for international initiatives aimed at reforming the United Nations? What challenges might Global South countries encounter in their quest for global governance reform? What does the future hold for the United Nations reform process?

The responses to these and many other questions materialize from the remarks of the MENA focus group participants. In the following pages, there is a synthesis of the main subjects, approaches, and viewpoints shared by the focus group participants, highlighting the complexity of the topic and the urgency of effective actions to address the threats in MENA and the future of global governance.

1- The Middle East and North Africa region and the future of the changing international system

The international system is currently undergoing a significant phase of transformation and evolution. This transformation carries profound implications for the Arab and Middle Eastern region, as it marks a shift from the unipolar system that predominated over the past three decades, primarily led by the United States, to a multipolar system. This multipolar system encompasses not only the United States but also major players like Russia and China. Consequently, this transformation has resulted in an intensification of strategic conflicts among these three major powers, centered on defining the structure and direction of the international system.

America aims to maintain its global dominance and counter the rise of Russia and China through strategic alliances and partnerships with friendly nations. These alliances include the military focused AUKUS partnership, consisting of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, as well as the Quad security coalition, comprising the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. These efforts are designed to constrain China's influence, bolster military presence in East Asia, and intensify tensions in regions like Taiwan and North Korea.

Simultaneously, America seeks to curtail Russia by revitalizing NATO's role and employing it as a means to confront Russia, particularly in the context of the conflict in Ukraine initiated by the United States. This conflict serves the purpose of depleting Russian military, economic, and human resources. Additionally, America looks to strengthen its partnership with the European Union and utilizes sanctions as a tool to counter Russian actions.

In contrast, China and Russia are focused on enhancing their comprehensive capabilities. China has emerged as the world's second-largest military power, boasting a budget of $225 billion. Their goal is to transition towards a multi-polar international system, ending the prevailing unipolarity, which they perceive as a source of international instability due to increased American interventions in critical areas such as Ukraine, Taiwan, and the South China Sea.

This international conflict has also taken on economic dimensions, along with a competition that spans various global arenas, resulting in both positive and negative effects on the MENA region.

Firstly, the region has become a significant battleground for international power competition. Over the past decade, China and Russia have notably increased their influence in the region, particularly in economic and military spheres. They've also forged political partnerships with regional countries. The polarization between the United States and Russia has fueled proxy conflicts within Arab crises, leading to both direct and indirect interventions. This has further complicated the resolution of ongoing political crises in places like Yemen, Syria, and Libya.

Secondly, the strategic rivalry among major powers has elevated the Middle East's importance. The war in Ukraine and the subsequent polarization between the United States and Russia, as well as the American-Chinese tensions related to Taiwan, have heightened the significance of oil-rich Arab nations like Saudi

Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This increased importance is primarily due to their role in global energy security, which has become more pronounced as oil prices rise. Consequently, major powers are vying for a stronger presence in the region, establishing economic, political, and security partnerships. This dynamic was evident in the Arab-American and Arab-Gulf summits held in Saudi Arabia in June 2022, as well as the Arab-Chinese summit that took place in Riyadh in December 2022. Additionally, Russia is actively working to bolster its strategic ties with Arab nations.

Thirdly, the transition to a multipolar international system presents a significant opportunity for Arab states to enhance their active role and influence within it. Achieving this goal necessitates greater Arab coordination and cooperation, particularly in economic and developmental initiatives, food security, and actively mediating to resolve conflicts and wars in regions such as Syria, Libya, and Yemen. Such efforts are essential for the Arab region to secure its prominent position within the evolving international landscape.

Fourthly, the emergence of new economic dynamics within the global system is noteworthy, with the rise of economic institutions and organizations like BRICS (comprising Russia, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. These entities operate in parallel with established institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Notably, many nations are reducing their reliance on the U.S. dollar as the dominant global currency and opting for local currencies, such as the Chinese yuan, Russian ruble, and Indian rupee, in their international trade transactions.

Fifthly, there is a pressing need for reforming the global economic and financial system. This reform should aim to promote economic and financial equity between affluent, developed countries and less developed nations. It should also facilitate access to financing for developing countries to boost their development and address various challenges, particularly debt crises. Furthermore, affluent nations, primarily responsible for environmental damage and carbon emissions, must honor their financial commitments to assist poorer and developing countries. This support should enable these nations to access modern technology and knowledge to combat the effects of climate change. It should also facilitate the expansion of green and hydrogen economies, along with clean and renewable energy sources like solar and wind power.

Sixthly, the escalating risks and threats to international peace require a comprehensive reassessment of the United Nations Charter and the concept of collective international security. Historically, this concept has predominantly focused on armed conflicts and acts of aggression between states. Such acts trigger collective responses under Chapter VII of the Charter, which authorize various economic and military measures against the aggressor. However, it is crucial to adapt this framework to address emerging threats to international peace effectively.

2- The emerging military and non-military issues in MENA

The emerging non-military issues were deliberated upon by the speakers within the working group. This discussion shed light on the increasing priorities within the region's countries. Notably, these priorities varied among nations, particularly between high-income regions like the Gulf states and relatively stable areas such as Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan. Simultaneously, other regions grappled with security instability, including Yemen, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and notably, Sudan, which faced the outbreak of a civil war.

- Conflict and instability present a complex web of challenges and opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This region finds itself intricately entwined with local conflicts, particularly during transitional phases and state-building endeavours. Simultaneously, it faces the direct repercussions of conflict and instability in neighboring countries such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. These dynamics give rise to a spectrum of security, demographic, economic, and political challenges.

Moreover, there is a growing concern regarding the proliferation of armed groups and the surge of terrorist and extremist movements. These concerns are compounded by the economic issues plaguing MENA countries, exacerbated by global economic inflation and the far-reaching implications of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

- The challenges of terrorism and organized crime in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region represent a significant menace to regional stability. These threats are particularly potent when exacerbated by factors such as security vacuums in neighboring countries, weak state institutions, or the exploitation of local conflicts. Of utmost concern is the troubling convergence of terrorist groups and organized criminal enterprises. Additionally, the emergence of non-state actors, such as private security firms, has further complicated the security landscape.

Terrorism, in particular, has taken center stage on the global agenda. The international community, including entities like the United Nations and the European Union, has made concerted efforts to address the underlying conditions that foster terrorism's proliferation.

- Nuclear security and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pose significant concerns in the region. There exists a notable imbalance in nuclear capabilities, particularly in the military context. Tensions between Iran and Israel, in addition to the risk of non-state actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction, including chemical or biological weapons, heighten the region's vulnerability.

Compounding these issues is the lack of robust international oversight over nuclear activities in the region, further exacerbating the situation and underscoring the urgency of addressing these critical security challenges.

- Maritime security has emerged as a significant threat in the region. The rise of the Houthis in Yemen poses a threat to navigation in vital waterways like the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. Furthermore, tensions between Iran and the United States have repercussions on the security of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. These developments underscore the growing importance of addressing maritime security concerns in the Middle East and North Africa region.
- Energy security is a pressing concern in the region. The growing population, coupled with deteriorating infrastructure, particularly in conflict-affected nations, has strained the availability and distribution of oil and gas resources, significantly impacting energy

security. Furthermore, the control of these resources by militias and instances of fuel smuggling abroad, as observed in Syria, have compounded the energy security challenges faced by the Middle East and North Africa region.

- Climate change is posing significant challenges to the Middle East and North Africa region. The area is experiencing water and food scarcity, and the effects of climate change are exacerbating these issues. Agriculture is particularly affected, with changing climate patterns, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and rising sea levels all threatening the region. This is a major concern for countries in the region, especially those situated along coastlines. Additionally, climate change is contributing to migration and internal displacement, placing additional economic and security pressures on governments in the region.
- Cybersecurity is a growing concern in the Middle East and North Africa region. It faces a range of cyber threats, including attacks on critical infrastructure and the use of cyberspace and artificial intelligence for psychological warfare, espionage, and the dissemination of false information. These activities can fuel hatred, incite violence, and exacerbate internal conflicts in the region. With the increasing digital transformation in regional countries and a lack of cybersecurity capabilities, addressing these threats has become a pressing issue.
- Migration is a significant concern in the Middle East and North Africa region, driven by a combination of security and economic challenges. Limited employment opportunities push many young individuals to seek better prospects through "illegal migration" to the European Union. They often use illicit routes, either originating from within the region or turning it into a transit area for illegal migration, particularly from regions like the Sahel, the desert, or the Horn of Africa. Additionally, the region has seen a rising number of refugees, particularly those fleeing civil wars in countries such as Syria, Sudan, and Yemen.

Addressing these challenges necessitates international cooperation to facilitate the repatriation of refugees, create employment opportunities for them, and prevent their illegal migration to the European Union. It's crucial to shift the focus from security-centric approaches to emphasizing economic and developmental dimensions as part of a holistic solution to these complex issues.

- Food security in the Middle East and North Africa region is subject to various factors, including population dynamics, natural resource availability, and population density. These factors interact differently in oil-producing and non-oil-producing countries, contributing to disparities in food security. Furthermore, disruptions to supply chains have added complexity to the situation, largely attributed to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war.

3- Towards the reform of global governance and building a flexible regional system

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is grappling with a growing array of non-military threats alongside traditional security challenges. These non-military threats are intricately connected with other security and economic issues, both directly and indirectly. In response, countries within the region are collaborating to confront these emerging challenges. This cooperation takes the form of strengthening bilateral relationships, regional collaborations, and broader global initiatives, particularly among Southern countries.

The MENA region faces a pressing need to establish a new regional structure to address these challenges effectively. Regional organizations, such as the Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, though active, have encountered difficulties in addressing transboundary non-military security threats. These threats often intersect with significant conflicts of interest and external interference, underscoring the necessity for reform within these frameworks.

Moreover, addressing peace and security threats requires comprehensive reform on a global scale, including the United Nations and the Security Council. There must be legal recognition that these threats represent explicit dangers to international peace. Developing specific mechanisms to respond to these challenges, particularly natural disasters, is crucial.

Efforts to promote global peace should prioritize diplomacy and dialogue as means of resolving armed conflicts and disputes. The massive resources expended on arms races, wars, casualties, and destruction could be redirected towards achieving development, prosperity, and global cooperation to combat the new threats that imperil humanity and the planet.

The concept of collective security must evolve to encompass various dimensions, including human security, food security, health security, economic security, and environmental security. These facets of collective security have a global nature, impacting the entire world rather than being confined to specific states or regions. Global challenges like climate change, disasters, epidemics, and hurricanes affect all nations and regions. Addressing these threats necessitates collective action since no single country, regardless of its capabilities, can tackle them in isolation.

Unfortunately, the concept of international collective action and human solidarity has waned due to heightened polarization among major powers in the international system. This is exacerbated by the politicization of issues and conflicting interests. Consequently, reforming the global governance system, including the United Nations and the Security Council, and exploring new frameworks for addressing these escalating challenges becomes imperative.

PART III – DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Assessing the official perspective of and approach to United Nations reform

By Klaus Kotzé, from South Africa

Introduction

In its Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly Resolution 75/1, 2020), the United Nations (UN) admits that "the world of today is very different from what it was when the United Nations was created 75 years ago" (United Nations, 2020). The Declaration initiates the latest commitment from the organization to upgrade and reform. To "ensure a more agile, effective and accountable organization that can deliver better in the field and adapt to global challenges" (Ibid).

The world is dramatically different to that which spawned the UN in 1945. Today the Global South with the increasing bulk of the world's population also comprises most UN member states. Whereas only four African states were members in 1945, there are now 54 African members. Recently, the states from the Global South have been the nodes of global expansion and development, driving economic and democratic growth. Though constituting the majority of member states, it is broadly held that the Global South remains underrepresented in an unequal global arrangement. The recognition for reform thus represents an opportunity to address this imbalance. Reform, to effect greater representation and ensure greater legitimacy, offers the best chance to mitigate global concerns and ensure that the UN executes its core mandate. Reform initiatives that do not address the concerns of the majority of the world's population and therefore do not address the inequity between the North and South would be inadequate.

This paper assesses recent UN documents produced and commissioned by the UN Secretary-General (UNSG)'s office to ask whether the views and perspectives of the Global South are reflected, and it's interests and priorities served; and whether there is an urgency in serving them. To situate the study, the paper offers a brief review of the ongoing reform process. It then introduces some of the ideas and interests pursued by the Global South before critically analysing the documents. The goal is to assess the conceptual and strategic direction taken by the UN leadership in relation to the expectations of the majority of its member states and people.

Approach

Methodologically, the paper undertakes a qualitative content analysis of the following documents: 1) Our Common Agenda (Report of the Secretary-General); 2) A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future (Report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism); 3) Strengthening the International Response to Complex Global Shocks – An Emergency Platform (Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 2).

Whereas standard content analyses assess documents to "quantify content in terms of predetermined categories" (Bryman, 2016: 177), this study inductively seeks to identify properties ahead of quantity. The interpretative assessment allows for a more germane analysis through a process of identifying concepts and themes (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Such a process serves as a sense-making exercise, identifying and amplifying meaning beyond content; it "allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner" (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009).

UN reform: A review

Shortly after ascending to the position of UNSG in 2017, Antonio Guterres made it clear that reform would be central to his term. He explained that reform would not be an end in itself, but that reform would serve to "best position the United Nations to do the work that Member States ask us to do. To better serve people – people in need; people with hope; and people who look at us to help improve their lives and also to improve our world at a time of spiralling challenges and rapid, dramatic change" (Guterres, 2017). Guterres' message was that reform should urgently attend to the demands of states. To ensure this, he outlined three priorities or tracks for reform.

1. Reform to the peace and security architecture: "ensuring we are stronger in prevention, more agile in mediation, and more effective and cost-effective in peacekeeping operations" (Ibid).
2. Reform to the development system: "becoming much more field-focused, well-coordinated and accountable to better assist countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (Ibid).
3. Reform to the management system: "simplify procedures and decentralize decisions, with greater transparency, efficiency, agility and accountability" (Ibid).

Central to Guterres' mission is improving focus and efficiency; bringing decision-making closer to people, empowering managers and restructuring budgetary procedures. The reform process is thus both structural (operations and management) and ideational (orientation and perspective).

When the UN committed to "upgrade the United Nations" in its resolution 75/1, it recognized that its institutional governance was inadequate. Whereas a small group of committed and dominant states offered strategic leadership to the global body at its inception immediately after WWII, the UN has become a multiplicity of bodies that are broadly spread, loosely coordinated and often offer anecdotal responses.

Some argue that instead of assuming global leadership, the proposed organizational reform will only restructure the body to become more efficient and reduce redundancy (Lieberman, 2018). As a charter

organization that was brought to life to balance the interests of consenting parties, relationships remain central to its operations. Of particular concern to this paper are not the larger, structural changes to the UN, such as UN Security Council reform. These would be difficult as they require consent from the P5 states. Instead, it is the strategic, ideational reform that would ensure greater representation and equity. It is about being an effective and legitimate intergovernmental organization before being efficient.

Responding to crises with reform is not new to the UN. It has an established tradition of doing so. The first reform that took place saw the addition of peacekeeping forces that oversaw ceasefire agreements in the Middle East and Kashmir in 1949. The UN thereby operationally innovated by bringing peacekeeping into its strategic framework. When the UN expanded in the 1960s to double its membership, it expanded its legitimacy as the premier intergovernmental organization.

Reform continues to represent a response to legitimacy concerns. When at the turn of the 21st century, at the Millennium Summit, the UN decided to go beyond its peace, security and humanitarian concerns, to become an instigator of global norms and 'good governance', it again repositioned, to offer ideational leadership. Programmes such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) collectively provide meaning and direction as guided by the UN principles and values. So too did the World Summit of 2005 and the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. These legitimate as they have been collectively substantiated through extensive debate by the member states.

UN reform: A view from the Global South

The Global South is a political term that expresses a marginal, but not inferior position in global relations. The South comprises a diverse arrangement of states that consider the current world order to be dominated by the Norte, the West and the United States in particular. The South sees this world order as unjust, unpeaceful, undemocratic and unfriendly to its interests (Acharya, 2023). Reform has thus been central to the South, which, instead of seeing itself as a hemispherical body, has pursued a global alternative since at least the 1960s. It considers the interconnected realities of the world's people. Unlike the policy vision of the Norte which presents an "equator-less landscape of multi-stakeholder global partnership" (Eyben and Savage in Freeman, 2013: 12), the South sees the world as a holistic whole comprising distinctive sovereign states.

The Global South is aspirational. It wants to correct the imbalance in global political power. It has a global outlook and seeks to overcome (neo-) imperialism and intervention. It has been closely connected to the decolonization movement and continues to advance global emancipation. Moving from subjugation to liberation, the Global South advocates for states to assume their subjectivity and for developing states to be supported and resourced so as to be able to pursue their interests.

The Global South was a key instigator of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) of 1974, which claimed "equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all states, irrespective of their economic and social systems which shall correct inequalities and redress existing injustices", and that "irreversible changes in the relationship of forces in the world necessitate the active,

full and equal participation of the developing countries" (United Nations, 1974). The establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, the G77 in 1964, and more recently the (expanding) BRICS, have created platforms for countries from the South to advance their collective interests.

The Global South recognizes that countries differ in size, structure and access to resources. States must be accordingly capacitated and afforded their agency and cultural sensitivity to assert their own policies, through their own approaches. This does not represent a one-size-fits-all, but a truly multilateral system comprising a plethora of capable members. This bottom-up or many-to-one approach would ensure a global arrangement where everyone is better off. It is, therefore, critical to the Global South that corrective measures, such as support and concessions, be applied so as to assist southern states in achieving parity with their Norteern peers.

The multilateral system should be supportive of the South's demands for direct development assistance, a key enabler of the delivery of commitments made but not followed through by the North towards the South. At the same time, sovereign states should be the responsible parties to enact their own development. The Global South is wary of the involvement of external state and non-state actors in the intergovernmental system and is critical of all forces that intervene in the internal affairs of states. It is deeply and loudly committed to the UN as the premier global body. With its increasing share of political and economic power, expressed via the 134-member G77 and the expanding BRICS, two key Southern groupings, UN legitimacy rests on accommodating the Global South.

Analysis

The following analysis interprets the perspectives and approaches of the three UN documents.

Our Common Agenda

Released in September 2021, Our Common Agenda (OCA) presents an "agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals" (United Nations, 2021). The OCA presents the Secretary-General's vision for reformed global cooperation. It commences from the basis of renewed global solidarity, a new social contract anchored in human rights and better management of global public goods and commons.

All these concepts are charged, they introduce new meaning and territorialize the global arrangement. Solidarity is a central concept in the OCA, it is mentioned 42 times. Whereas solidarity has always been significant to the Global South, it is important to interrogate what it means in this context. The document states that solidarity recognizes "that we are bound to each other and that no community or country can solve its challenges alone" (United Nations, 2021). Here solidarity has a collectivized as opposed to cooperative meaning. The OCA uses the example of COVID-19 to suggest that solidarity is required both within states and between them. To ensure solidarity, the OCA puts forward a new global deal – the expression of a global social contract – to address broader, global issues and manage global public goods.

Looking from the Global South one would ask what are the terms and implications of this deal? Instead of empowering states, the OCA suggests centralizing responsibility for global public goods. Critically, the report does not focus on the UN as an organization of member states. The agenda of OCA is to advance what it terms multi-stakeholder partnerships with a wide range of actors and organizations. It proposes an expansive social contract between divergent actors. Such liberal opening to myriad actors goes against the perspectives of the Global South (and existing precedence) which considers states to be legitimate entities separate from non-state actors.

Very little is meaningfully offered as to how to measure these concepts; how such a system would work and how it could be held accountable. It also disregards the existing and consented structure as detailed in the UN Charter. The OCA proposes several suggestions that could be seen as intervening against states' authority. It proposes the lowering of voting ages and makes determinations on office bearers (United Nations, 2021: 39). The proposed social contract is said to be "anchored in human rights" (Ibid, 14), imposing specific, moral determinations in a Western interpretation, thereby running against the cultural heterogeneity championed by the South.

Whereas the social contract and new global deal are said to ensure improved multilateralism, their planetary approach, bringing all goods and commons into a singular system, over which all state and non-state actors have agency, presents a fundamental rethink of multilateralism. It infringes and fundamentally imposes upon states' authority by forcing them into equal association with non-state actors. 'Partnership' is also a contested term, as governments, businesses and civil society all hold different agencies and undertake different responsibilities. Can they therefore be 'partners'? Such a multilateralism signals the expansion of the networked governance concept, an approach to political decision-making that claims governance without any implicit accountability. There is no authoritative government involvement in the process, nor is it governed by any formal democratic agreement.

Such an approach runs against the state-led, differentiated approach preferred by the Global South. The increased reliance on networked governance or multi-stakeholder partnership and the multiplying influence of non-state actors are indicative of the World Economic Forum's Global Redesign Initiative. A programme that advances a new multilateral system that is corporate-centric and not state-centric. A type of public-private partnership to govern global affairs. This process, which emboldens non-state actors at the expense of established intergovernmental practice opens the door to external interests, particularly business and interest groups.

The increased role and influence of the private sector is an issue for the Global South that sees the corporatist or universalist multi-stakeholder relations approach replacing the intergovernmental one. Analysis of the reform documents indicates increased involvement by non-state actors in the business of the UN. Whereas the involvement of civil society and business may support the work of the UN, the unchecked influence of interest groups, accountable to funders and not to national governments or citizens, detracts from the interests of states and thus curtails the legitimacy of the UN.

Documents such as the OCA generalize and afford agency to non-state agents play a deeply political role. The stakeholderist approach, whereby empowered elites and experts enter networks with state actors

is advocated for in reform documents; "now is the time for a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system, anchored within the United Nations"(Ibid, 4)... "any effort to improve our governance" to be considered, so to create "a form of multilateralism that is more networked, more inclusive and more effective" (Ibid, 66). Critically, the act of networking not only brings non-state actors into the UN, but it also affords commensurate agency. This approach, while enthusiastically advanced by the OCA author(s), offers no clear definition nor are measurable deliverables detailed. The networked approach is open to undue influence. It does not affirm transparent, institutional capacity. It does not have review mechanisms or frameworks for partnership. History suggests that such recommendations, which introduce new concepts and pathways rarely deliver. They shift the goalposts and while there is hype and talk, little action takes place; the marginalized remain marginal.

To the Global South, states must be the norm setters. The OCA instead advances the multi-stakeholder approach where member states are implored "together with other stakeholders, to devise strategies" (Ibid, 18). Such stakeholder relations are vulnerable to influence without checks. They present bridges towards outsourced agency and responsibility. They feign the authoritative agency of states while prescriptively empowering non-state actors with no accountability to drive the work of the body. These structures form and then territorialize new terrains through their conceptual inventions such as new global deals, global commons and global goods.

The introduction of external concepts that do not carry the authority of the intergovernmental process and that package perception on a planetary basis is fraught and distracts from the existing concepts and processes. It shifts the goal-posts away from negotiated consensus and further complicates multilateralism. The bulk of the OCA proposals shows this to be the case. Instead of working closely with states on a path of action, the UNSG developed the OCA primarily with the support of the UN Foundation and Igarapé Institute, as acknowledged in the annex to the OCA.

According to the UN Foundation, the development of the OCA "was supported by the UN Foundation and a network of partners. We helped to catalyse inputs from UN Member States, global thought leaders, young leaders, activists, and a broad spectrum of civil society and private sector voices" (UN Foundation, 2023). The Igarapé Institute claims that it "helped backstop the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in its development of Our Common Agenda. The Institute conducted research, reviewed recommendations, and coordinated a global digital consultation with support from a diverse range of partners" (Igarapé Institute, 2021). Several questions should be raised about why these unaccountable organisations are doing this work for the UNSG's office. Being central to every step of the work ('research', 'review' and 'coordinate') affords these organizations the power to shape not only the direction of the work but to craft the concepts that come to define the work. Outsourcing to others thus puts in jeopardy the entire process, from conceptualization to review.

The recognition and instrumentality of non-state partners indicate that state actors are not executing their responsibilities to ensure that rules and procedures are democratically decided upon. The analysis of reform documents suggests that states do not fulfil their responsibilities and thus do not embody global governance

A Breakthrough for People and Planet

In 2022 the UNSG appointed a High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB) to make proposals towards improving global cooperation. The April 2023 report entitled *A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future* (BPP) presents the HLAB's proposals for reform of the global governance system.

The BPP proposes a strikingly similar strategy to the OCA. It advocates for extensive and central non-state participation in creating a radically new form of multilateralism. It ambitiously produces new meaning as it sets out "ten constituent principles of effective multilateralism" and "six transformative shifts" to a radically new version of multilateralism (High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, 2023). This visionary approach is extremely general and vastly open to interpretation. New principles introduce new meaning which might detract from the set principles of the UN Charter.

New proposals also detract from unfulfilled commitments. Whereas advancing gender equality has merit, the BPP's demand to place "gender equality at the heart of the multilateral architecture" effectively adds another dimension that inevitably further complicates action from being taken. In so doing, the priorities of the Global South are further curtailed; novel concepts are pursued instead of older commitments such as developed states' commitment to 0,7% of gross domestic income to official development assistance. Novel ideas also threaten to derail or place greater conditions on commitments such as the financing of Just Transitions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

Through the 'principles' and 'shifts' the BPP adds yet another consensus-seeking step, its outcomes feed seemingly never-ending deliberations. This long-term approach denies the Global South the urgency and specifics it demands. Not only are the shifts vague, but they are also controversial. The BPP appropriately calls the shifts transformational. Instead of maintaining differentiation between states, the BPP proposes a global governance system based on collectivization. It uses the concepts introduced in the OCA when it calls for a system of global commons and "global public goods, allowing people, everywhere to benefit from our collective resources, knowledge, and security" (ibid, 4). The introduction of collective vis a vis cooperation runs against the views of the Global South. It aligns more to a Western country- and company-led globalist orientation and the prescriptions of the World Economic Forum, than the intergovernmentalism of the UN. The word 'collective' appears 61 times in the document whereas 'cooperation' is used 23 times. The questions around 'collective' abound. Particularly, how will the collective security arrangements of Shift 5 be managed, and by whom? Are these chimeras not only serving to detract from the urgent work needed? Herein is another concept that appears to impose upon member states. A collective approach whereby goods and commons are considered global does not recognize, nor does it mitigate, the disparities between states.

The planetary, collective approach of the BPP presents an existential challenge to the UN at large. If it were to be pursued, it would change the UN completely. In pursuit of this transformational change, the BPP proposes that "multilateralism should extend beyond States to include and obligate a broader range of global and local actors who will be crucial in delivering the breakthrough we need" (ibid, 4). It goes on to suggest that "global governance must evolve into a less hierarchical, more networked system wherein

decision-making is distributed, and where the efforts of a large number of different actors are harnessed towards a collective mission" (Ibid, 6). Proposing an entirely new system of multilateralism whereby states are not the central units of agency, it audaciously suggests that whereas in 1945 the global security response was "based on the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty...the context has evolved significantly over the past 77 years...this goal requires a paradigm shift...The Summit of the Future is a rare opportunity to collectively reaffirm and recommit to inclusive, effective multilateralism as the only means to deliver this vision" (Ibid, 4).

The increasing involvement of private stakeholder partnerships imposes upon the legally binding intergovernmental agreements. Neither the voices nor the targets of the BPP (and other recent reform-oriented documents) are states. This practice challenges and delegitimizes the state-centric model upon which the UN is founded, which has sustained multilateralism since its inception, but which has proved cumbersome. While possibly inefficient, it is the very nature of the body to function through consensus and compromise. A bias toward efficient management represents a de-politization of the UN and a failure of leadership and legitimacy.

The promoted comprehensive involvement of non-state partners suggests that in the future the nation-state will not play a primary role in multilateralism, but as one among many stakeholders. This assessment thus suggests that the proposed reform amounts to a revolution, the creation of an entirely new global arrangement. This is the revolutionary thinking of the recent reform agenda, instigated by the relevant Foundations and Institutes.

A planetary system that does not attend to addressing the inherent biases but seeks to creatively "obligate a broader range of global and local actors who will be crucial to delivering the breakthrough we need" (Ibid,4). It is these Foundations and Institutes that play an instrumental role in how the advisory councils steer the reform process, how performance is assessed and how funding is influenced. While the inclusion of global elders in the HLAB advances its authority, the leaders do not serve at the behest of states, but as individuals. They are open to influence.

An Emergency Platform

The final document assessed here is the second policy brief emanating from the OCA, titled Strengthening the International Response to Complex Global Shocks – An Emergency Platform (EP). The document refers to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing cost of living crisis to suggest that the multilateral system is not sufficiently prepared to deal with global shocks. The EP is proposed to bring various agencies, states, civil society, and financial institutions into unity to do so. As a reform, the document proposes an ambitious multi-stakeholder platform that "would not be a standing body or entity but a set of protocols that could be activated when needed" (United Nations, 2023). The EP would function as a voluntary structure with no obligations. There is little to ensure its effectiveness and little to prevent it from falling apart if states do not join or if they renege on their responsibilities.

The EP would respond to complex shocks (complex is mentioned 89 times in the document) that have global effects. An issue would thus have to be perceived as novel and complex for it to receive attention.

There are several concerns from the view of the Global South. First, many states in the South experience ongoing crises that require stayed support. Are these issues not pressing enough?

To the South, support should be mobilized as to respond to the existing crises. If an additional structure were to be initiated, it should be done on a permanent basis so to address ongoing crises. This approach does not align with the crisis-combatting approach of the South. An ad-hoc system would entrust the UNSG with the singular responsibility to legitimize each occasion. This would both politicize the UNSG and the process, requiring the UNSG to choose sides and source ad hoc resource allocation. Such a process would not necessarily ensure "stronger international cooperation" (Ibid, 2) as put forward in the EP but could potentially divide states further.

The document acknowledges that the COVAX facility became politicized, with Global South states receiving disproportionately low vaccine access to those of the Norte. It suggests that the lessons from COVID-19 include the need for "rapid, predictable and structured international response" (Ibid, 12). An EP that is administered on an ad-hoc, voluntary basis opens it to the influence and whims of both state and non-state actors. Its functioning would rely on effective and balanced relationships between partners. Yet, as recognized in the previous documents, this relationship remains a challenge.

A permanent structure with set obligations would thus be better suited to "ensure that all parts of the multilateral system are accountable for contributing to a collective response" (Ibid). From the perspective of the Global South, a capacitated, authoritative platform would be able to attend to persisting crises. Instead, the EP, which would draw initial operating costs from existing resources (Ibid, 20), suggests yet another initiative which, under the pretext of emergency, shifts the goalposts.

The word 'future' is mentioned 28 times, whereas 'present' is only mentioned 5 times I the EP policy brief. While there is value in anticipating future shocks, a bias to the future, suggests a denial or downgrading of ongoing' crises. As with the previous documents, the EP does not take a differentiated approach according to special characteristics and needs.

Final considerations

From the perspective of the Global South, adequate UN reform would see a plethora of member states asserting their own meaning and culture, in multilateral cooperation. To the south such a many-to-one world would be global. Instead, from the above analysis, it appears that the UN Secretariat leadership is pursuing something else. A one-size-fits-all collective, where different stakeholders are accommodated in an increasingly voluntary and undifferentiated way. The documents assessed suggest a broadened perception. One that expands upon existing meaning but in doing so opens space for confusion. One that is future-oriented and defers action on current crises.

Accordingly, reform proposals currently put forward do not take the perspective, nor do they accommodate the interests of the Global South. Whereas the Global South demands specific, enforceable commitments that respect national sovereignty and are enacted through state-led partnerships, the analysis shows a

preference for generalized commitments that ignore state-to-state responsibilities and are continuously reworked leaving delivery for the future.

This negates urgency and defers responsibility. The increased agency and arbitrary influence of unaccountable, non-state actors see the governance environment becoming re-territorialized. A new type of universality is introduced, a multilateralism comprising multiple stakeholders, many of whom serve business or other partial interests. As the UN works by precedent, unless the increased role of non-state actors is checked, their influence will be allowed to grow out of control.

If the UN leadership continues to apply its creativity or borrow ideas away from state-centred intergovernmentalism, it risks further existential and legitimacy backlash. It is from the relationship-centred, intergovernmental arrangement of member states that the UN receives its authority and legitimacy. When agency is distorted and territory shifts, it threatens the very edifice. States are already the occupying agents of territory and there is no basis for them to re-evaluate their circumscribed authority. They must however ensure that they deliver on their responsibilities and create frameworks that harness the potential of other actors without encroaching on their power and agency.

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PART IV – THE ROLE OF MEDIA

1. The role of mainstream media and social media in the UN reform context – surveys findings

By Cilene Victor, from Brazil

In this Part IV, our aim is to analyze and discuss the influence, significance, and impact of both mainstream media outlets, such as newspapers, television, radio, and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, in the context of global governance reform.

This section also explores how mainstream media outlets and social media channels of the UN system and other multilateral organizations and institutions contribute to shaping public opinion, disseminating information, influencing discussions and debates, and potentially affecting perceptions or attitudes towards UN reform. We examine the role of these media channels in amplifying or marginalizing certain voices, as well as their potential to facilitate or hinder public engagement and participation.

By examining the role played by mainstream media outlets and social media, our goal is to gain insights into how these platforms contribute to the broader discourse and understanding of global governance reform, considering their reach, influence, and potential implications in shaping public opinion.

To achieve our objective of understanding the role of media in the context of military and non-military threats and UN reform, this part of the report is divided into two sections, with the first focusing on **survey findings** related to the media theme, and the second concentrating on the results of the **focus group with media professionals.** In this first part, a careful analysis is conducted of the responses from the 512 survey participants, from the three key regions, regarding the role of media. Specifically, we examine the responses to questions 20, 21, and 22. For each question, we provide a section with an analysis of the respondents' perceptions.

1.1 The local media effectiveness in covering UN reform

In this first section, we analyze the respondents' impressions regarding question number 21 of the survey: *Regarding the role played by media, to what extent do you believe mainstream media in your country effectively covers and informs the public about the ongoing discussions and initiatives related to UN reform?*

As mentioned in the methodology of this report, the closed-ended questions were multiple-choice. In the case of this specific question, the 512 respondents were presented with these choices:

1. Mainstream media is highly effective in covering and informing the public about this issue
2. Mainstream media is somewhat effective in covering and informing the public about this issue
3. Mainstream media is ineffective in covering and informing the public about this issue
4. I am unsure / I don't have an opinion

LATAM

In this region, a significant majority of 132 respondents (65,3%), out of 202, believed that mainstream media was ineffective (Option C) in effectively covering UN reform.

A substantial number of 53 respondents (26,2%) considered the media somewhat effective (Option B), while only a small minority, 12 (5,9%) perceived it as highly effective (Option A). A small portion of respondents, 5 (2,5%) did not express a clear opinion (Option D).

The prevalent perception of ineffectiveness suggests that mainstream media in LATAM may not be adequately addressing or informing the public about UN reform. This could be attributed to factors like a prioritization of local issues, limited resources for international coverage, or a growing distrust in mainstream media – a global phenomenon.

Africa

The African respondents also showed skepticism regarding the effectiveness of mainstream media in covering UN reform. A considerable number, 85 (42,5%) out of 200, believed that mainstream media was ineffective (Option C).

A significant portion, 72 (36%) considered the media somewhat effective (Option B). A minority, 31 (15,5%) perceived it as highly effective (Option A). A small number, 12 (6%) did not express a clear opinion (Option D).

Similar to the participants from LATAM, African respondents were more inclined to view mainstream media as ineffective or only somewhat effective in covering UN reform. Limited resources for international news coverage and a preference for local news may contribute to this perception.

MENA

Respondents from the MENA region demonstrated a comparable level of skepticism. The majority, 52 individuals (47,3%), out of 110 believed that mainstream media was ineffective (Option C).

A significant number, 32 (29,1%) perceived it as highly effective (Option A). A smaller portion, 12 (10,9%) considered the media somewhat effective (Option B). A few, 14 (12,7%) did not express a clear opinion (Option D).

MENA respondents, like those from LATAM and Africa, expressed doubts about the effectiveness of mainstream media in covering UN reform. The notable perception of ineffectiveness may stem from factors such as political influences on media, regional conflicts taking precedence in coverage, or limited resources for comprehensive international reporting.

Brief analysis

In LATAM, respondents predominantly expressed skepticism regarding the effectiveness of mainstream media in covering UN reform. This prevalent perception of ineffectiveness suggests that mainstream media in LATAM may not be adequately addressing or informing the public about UN reform. This could be attributed to factors like a prioritization of local issues, limited resources for international coverage, or a growing distrust in mainstream media – a global and concerned phenomenon.

In Africa, a significant number of respondents also showed skepticism regarding the effectiveness of mainstream media in covering UN reform. Similar to LATAM, African respondents were more inclined to view mainstream media as ineffective or only somewhat effective in covering this reform. Limited resources for international news coverage and a preference for local news may contribute to this perception.

Respondents from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region demonstrated a comparable level of skepticism about the effectiveness of mainstream media in covering this subject. The notable perception of ineffectiveness may stem from local factors, as in the other regions.

These regional variations in perceptions underscore the challenges mainstream media faces in effectively covering global governance reform across the regions. The prevalent skepticism suggests a need for mainstream media to reassess its strategies for informing the public about UN reform and for considering the unique regional factors that may influence its effectiveness.

1.2 UN system media role in raising awareness

This section focuses on the respondents' perceptions regarding question number 21: How well does the UN system media (e.g., UN News, UN WebTV) fulfil its role in raising awareness and promoting understanding of the reform process of the UN and multilateralism?

The multiple choices for this specific question were:

1. The UN system media is highly effective in raising awareness and promoting understanding of this subject
2. The UN system media is somewhat effective in raising awareness and promoting understanding of this subject
3. The UN system media is ineffective in raising awareness and promoting understanding of this subject
4. I am unsure / I don't have an opinion

LATAM

Among the 202 participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, the responses to the effectiveness of the UN system media in raising awareness and promoting understanding of UN reform and multilateralism are as follows: Highly Effective (Option A), only 12 respondents (5.9%); Somewhat Effective (Option B), 33 respondents (16.3%); Ineffective (Option C), 84 respondents (41.6%); Unsure/No Opinion (Option D), 73 respondents (36.1%)

A significant portion of respondents in this region (41.6%) perceived the UN system media as ineffective in its role. Furthermore, a considerable number (36.1%) indicated uncertainty or a lack of opinion. Only a small percentage (5.9%) believed that the UN system media is highly effective in raising awareness and promoting understanding.

Africa

Among the 200 participants from Africa, their responses are as follows: Highly Effective (Option A), 18 respondents (9%); Somewhat Effective (Option B): 45 respondents (22.5%); Ineffective (Option C), 86 respondents (43%); Unsure/No Opinion (Option D), 51 respondents (25.5%)

In Africa, a substantial number of respondents (43%) found the UN system media to be ineffective in fulfilling its role. Additionally, a notable portion (25.5%) expressed uncertainty or had no opinion on the matter. The percentage of those who believed the UN system media is highly effective (9%) was relatively low compared to other options.

MENA

Among the 110 respondents from the MENA region, their responses are as follows: Highly Effective (Option A), 23 respondents (20.9%); Somewhat Effective (Option B), 6 respondents (5.5%); Ineffective (Option C), 61 respondents (55.5%), Unsure/No Opinion (Option D), 20 respondents (18.2%)

The MENA region showed a somewhat polarized perception regarding the effectiveness of the UN system media, even asymmetrically. A significant majority (55.5%) believed it to be ineffective, while 20.9% considered it highly effective. A smaller percentage had no opinion (18.2%), and a minority found it somewhat effective (5.5%).

Brief analysis

The survey responses from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions collectively underscore a prevailing skepticism regarding the effectiveness of the UN system media in fulfilling its role of raising awareness and promoting understanding of UN reform and multilateralism.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a substantial portion of respondents expressed doubt about the effectiveness of the UN system media in its mission. Additionally, a significant number indicated uncertainty or a lack of a clear opinion. Only a small percentage believed that the UN system media is highly effective in achieving its goals.

Africa exhibited a similar pattern, with a considerable number of respondents perceiving UN system media as ineffective. A notable portion expressed uncertainty or had no opinion on the matter. Moreover, the belief that the UN system media is highly effective was relatively low in comparison to other options.

In the MENA region, there was a more divided perception, with a majority considering the UN system media as ineffective, while a significant minority found it highly effective. A smaller percentage had no opinion, and a minority considered it somewhat effective. This polarized view indicates a divergence of opinions compared to the other regions.

These responses collectively emphasize the need for improvements or increased visibility in the role of UN system media across these regions to foster a deeper understanding of UN reform and multilateralism. The substantial number of respondents expressing uncertainty highlights an opportunity for more effective communication efforts to bridge the awareness gap. The prevailing sentiment in each region is that the UN system media is perceived as ineffective, calling for strategic enhancements in its communication strategies to engage a wider and more informed audience effectively.

1.3 The role of UN, NGOs, universities, and think tanks' social media in this context

In this last section, we analyze the respondents' impressions regarding question number 22 of the survey: In your opinion, how effective are the social media platforms of major institutions interested in UN reform (the UN itself, NGOs, universities, research groups, think tanks) in popularizing and raising awareness about the discussions and initiatives related to UN reform?

As mentioned previously, the closed-ended questions were multiple-choice. In the case of this specific question, the respondents were presented with these choices:

1. Social media platforms are highly effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform.
2. Social media platforms are somewhat effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform.
3. Social media platforms are ineffective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform.
4. I am unsure / I don't have an opinion.

LATAM

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a significant portion of respondents, 27 (13.4%) considered these social media platforms highly effective (Option A), while a larger percentage, 93 (46%) found them somewhat effective (Option B). A notable number, 37 (18,3%) thought they were ineffective (Option C), and a group of 45 individuals (22%) did not express a clear opinion (Option D).

The data reveals a mixed perception of the effectiveness of social media platforms owned by major institutions interested in UN reform. While a noteworthy portion views these platforms as highly effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform, a larger majority finds them somewhat effective, suggesting a moderate level of impact. However, a concerning finding is that 18.3% of respondents perceive these platforms as ineffective, indicating a notable segment with reservations about their impact. Additionally, 22% expressed uncertainty regarding their effectiveness. This diversity in responses highlights the need for a nuanced approach to communication strategies in this region to address both positive perceptions and concerns about the effectiveness of social media platforms in promoting UN reform initiatives.

Africa

Africa exhibited a somewhat similar pattern, with 21% of respondents, 42 individuals, perceiving these platforms as highly effective (Option A), and 73 (36.5%) finding them somewhat effective (Option B). However, a substantial percentage, 51 respondents (25,5%) believed they were ineffective (Option C), and 34 (17%) participants did not have a clear opinion (Option D).

The result indicates a relatively similar pattern to Latin America and the Caribbean, although with some distinctions. A notable portion perceives social media platforms owned by major institutions interested in UN reform as highly effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform. Additionally, a substantial percentage finds these platforms somewhat effective, pointing to a significant impact. However, there is a concerning finding that 25.5% of respondents consider these platforms ineffective, suggesting skepticism or reservations about their efficacy. Furthermore, 17% of participants did not express a clear opinion on the matter, highlighting a need for more engagement and awareness-building efforts to address varying perceptions and uncertainties regarding the role of social media platforms in promoting UN reform initiatives in the African region.

MENA

In the Middle East and North Africa, a majority, 46 (41.8%) of respondents viewed these social media platforms as highly effective (Option A). A significant proportion, 32 (29.1%) found them somewhat effective (Option B). A minority, 17 (15.5%) considered them ineffective (Option C), and a smaller group, 15 (13.6%) did not express a clear opinion (Option D).

The responses showcase a relatively positive perspective regarding the role of social media platforms owned by major institutions interested in UN reform. A majority of respondents perceive these platforms

as highly effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform, signifying a significant impact on public engagement. Additionally, a substantial proportion finds them somewhat effective, further reinforcing their role in conveying reform-related discussions and initiatives to a broader audience. However, it's noteworthy that a minority holds the view that these platforms are ineffective, indicating some room for improvement or addressing concerns within this subset of respondents. Moreover, a smaller group did not express a clear opinion, suggesting that there is potential for enhancing awareness and understanding of the UN reform efforts through these platforms among this segment of the MENA population.

Brief analysis

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, respondents displayed a mixed perception of the effectiveness of these social media platforms. While a notable portion viewed them as highly effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform, a larger majority found them somewhat effective, indicating a moderate level of impact. However, a concerning finding is that a significant portion perceived these platforms as ineffective, suggesting reservations about their impact. Additionally, there was a notable degree of uncertainty regarding their effectiveness. This diversity in responses highlights the need for a nuanced approach to communication strategies in this region to address both positive perceptions and concerns regarding the effectiveness of social media platforms in promoting UN reform initiatives.

In Africa, there was a somewhat similar pattern to Latin America and the Caribbean. A notable portion of respondents perceived social media platforms owned by major institutions interested in UN reform as highly effective in popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform. Additionally, a substantial percentage found these platforms somewhat effective, pointing to a significant impact. However, there was also a concerning finding that some respondents considered these platforms ineffective, suggesting skepticism or reservations about their efficacy. Furthermore, a portion of participants did not express a clear opinion on the matter, highlighting a need for more engagement and awareness-building efforts to address varying perceptions and uncertainties regarding the role of social media platforms in promoting UN reform initiatives in the African region.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), respondents demonstrated a comparatively more positive outlook regarding the effectiveness of social media platforms in promoting UN reform. A majority viewed these platforms as highly effective, indicating a widespread positive perception. Additionally, a significant proportion found them somewhat effective, suggesting a substantial impact. While a minority considered them ineffective, the overall sentiment in MENA was more optimistic. This suggests that social media platforms owned by major institutions interested in UN reform are seen as influential tools for popularizing and raising awareness about UN reform initiatives in this region.

These regional variations in perceptions emphasize the importance of tailored communication strategies to address regional nuances and effectively engage audiences in discussions and initiatives related to UN reform through social media platforms. Understanding these diverse perspectives is crucial for designing effective communication efforts that resonate with the specific needs and perceptions of each region.

Suggestions and contributions from the findings

The survey data from Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions, collected by questions 20, 21 and 22, provided valuable insights into the perceptions of individuals regarding the role of media and social media platforms in covering and promoting awareness of global governance reform.

The findings underscore the importance of improving the effectiveness of media and communication efforts in promoting awareness of UN reform. By addressing skepticism, enhancing transparency, and leveraging the potential of social media, these regions can contribute significantly to fostering a more informed and engaged global citizenry in the context of multilateralism and UN reform.

Next, we list some modest contributions or pathways to consider based on the analyzed results:

Enhanced Engagement and Transparency: The prevalent perception of ineffectiveness in mainstream media coverage of UN reform calls for increased engagement between media outlets and the public. Media organizations should consider providing more comprehensive coverage of global issues, enhancing transparency in reporting, and actively addressing public concerns to bridge the gap.

Educational Initiatives: There is an opportunity to launch educational initiatives that aim to inform the public about the importance of UN reform and multilateralism. Collaborative efforts involving the UN, NGOs, universities, research groups, and think tanks can be instrumental in developing programs that foster greater awareness.

Strengthening Trust: To address skepticism, media organizations should work towards rebuilding trust with their audiences. This involves adhering to ethical journalism standards, ensuring nonbiased approaches, and actively correcting misinformation.

Leveraging Social Media: The relatively positive perception of social media platforms in popularizing UN reform indicates their potential as powerful tools for advocacy. Major institutions should continue to leverage these platforms to engage a wider audience, but also be mindful of addressing concerns and uncertainties expressed by respondents.

Localized Content: Recognizing the preference for local news in some regions, media outlets and institutions can enhance their effectiveness by providing localized content that connects global issues like UN reform to regional interests.

Dialogue and Feedback: Establishing a continuous dialogue with the public, especially in regions where uncertainty prevails, can provide valuable feedback for media outlets and institutions to improve their coverage and communication strategies.

Collaborative Efforts: Collaborations between media, NGOs, universities, and research groups can help in conducting research to better understand public perceptions and develop strategies to enhance media effectiveness.

2. The role of mainstream media and social media in the UN reform context – Focus Group Findings

By Benedine Azanu, from Ghana

1. Introduction

This section outlines journalists and media professionals' perspectives on peace and security, and non-military threats in their countries, as well as proffers ways the media in the Global South can be strengthened to effectively play its role in the future of a more effective multilateralism. On peace and security, the focus group discussion (FGD) sought to understand the challenges and possibilities of improving the coverage of military threats; determine the media role in relation to non-military threats such as food insecurity, water insecurity, democracy and climate change and cyberattacks, etc.; as well as how media's role might enable innovative ways to create resilience in global governance.

Participants comprised fourteen specialist journalists and media professionals from Argentina, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Philippines, and Rwanda. The focus group was conducted via zoom on 15 August 2023.

This article lays out the state of the press/media in Global South, then follows up with some characteristics of the evolving Global South media landscape, continues with discussions of the issues that emerged during the FGD under thematic areas around contextual challenges with peace and security and non-military threats. Finally, by way of recommendations, the paper ends with a discussion of the role of Global South media in strengthening the future of an effective multilateralism.

2. Thematic Discussions

2.1 Evolving Global South Media Landscape

Media in Global South countries have rapidly evolved over the past decades. While there is increased participation, growth of social media platforms, and proliferation of digital technologies, information dissemination and consumption has been altered significantly. Emergent views were on the nature of press/media in the Global South, resource disparities, press freedom and independence amidst violations of human rights under declining democracies.

Media all over the world have faced unprecedented challenges in recent times. However, challenges to the Global North media pale in comparison to the myriad of complex challenges faced by Global South media. Many Global South countries struggle with limited resources, both in terms of technology and funding for media outlets.

On one hand, this hinders accurate reporting of issues in Global South countries, as well as international news in general. On the other hand, Global South journalists are unable to report comprehensively and

accurately. Lack of access to modern communication tools, reliable internet, and proper training result in incomplete or biased reporting, affecting the public's understanding of the emerging non-military threats.

Media freedom is precarious in most Global South countries. Governments exert control over media outlets, leading to censorship, self-censorship, and biased reporting. Participants shared many examples of human rights violation and killing of journalists in Ghana and other countries, including extrajudicial killings of citizens and journalists in the Philippines, gender-based violence against female journalists in Brazil, etc.

These issues limit the capacity of the media to provide objective country-specific and UN-related coverage, creating a challenge for transparent and accountable reporting. Journalists face intimidation, legal action, or even violence for attempting to cover sensitive UN-related issues. Consequently, the view was that, there exists high levels of mistrust between the press and governments in Global South countries, which then undermines their fragile democracies given the intricate link between press freedom and an effectively functioning democracy.

Similarly, the view was that trust between citizens and the press has also dwindled, leaving citizens at the mercy of less regulated digital media platforms for news and credible information, a view consistent with Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2021 report. Most press media are either state controlled or privately owned and operate along political party lines leaving citizens with very little independent critical journalism for informed decision-making (Serwornu et al., 2022). Relatedly, the lack of a strong and independent media, as well as the lack of effective application of media accountability instruments, (Serwornoo et al., 2022), compounds the problem of the absence of public service media to uphold public interests and provide civic education and credible information.

Participating media experts expressed concern over lack of regulation of social media platforms in the Global South regarding the circulation of mis/disinformation campaigns, as well as recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) that present serious risks. This begs the question of how Global South countries can regulate social media under the current power asymmetry between them and several powerful social media organizations, when Global North countries like the United States of America wield such control (Takhshid, 2022).

Related to the above are the struggles with limited resources of many Global South countries, both in terms of technology and funding for media outlets hindering their capacity to conduct in-depth research and investigations. Furthermore, the lack of access to credible sources is further aggravated at a time when digital platforms facilitate rapid dissemination of information, making separating truth from falsehood increasingly challenging.

2.2 Non Military threats: Contextual challenges under which media operate

Under this thematic area, issues that emerged focused on the multidimensional challenge of covering non-military threats such as: economic crisis, youth unemployment, environmental challenges and climate change, misrepresentation and underrepresentation, and the lack of UN support for journalists on the ground.

These threats have had a profound impact on the well-being and development of Global South citizens. The media, with its influential reach and communication capabilities, plays a crucial role in addressing and mitigating these threats. However, challenges hinder the influence media can exert.

Participants were of the view that the UN was not providing enough support for journalists on the ground in conflict situations, despite its access to timeous intelligence on dangerous areas and from competing interests within war zones, as well as safety vehicles, resources that could be vital to accurate reportage as well as the safety of journalists. Effective coverage of military threats requires a deep appreciation of historical antecedents, cultural and political contexts as well as the capacity to decipher complex military strategies and technologies in conjunction with existing bilateral relations.

Engaging with diverse perspectives in conflict areas is crucial for responsible reporting. Offering a platform for all stakeholders, from government officials to grassroots activists, allows for a well-rounded view of the situation. Thus actively seeking out and amplifying voices often marginalized in conflict reporting, journalists can play a role in promoting dialogue and understanding. Lack of access to credible sources, conflict zones and restricted information poses a challenge to accurate reporting, potentially leading to misinformation or incomplete analysis.

There are several examples from the Russia-Ukraine war as well as the recent coup in Niger. In general, journalists from Global South news media organizations lack the resources to travel to war zones. Those who make it there have little to no information and are exposed to threats on the field.

Non-military threats and human security

The most salient of the issues that journalists and media professionals agreed is an urgent non-military threat is economic crisis experienced in most of the Global South nations that already carry heavy debt burdens.

Youth unemployment is on the rise in Global South nations amidst the increasing cost of living including electricity and water tariffs, fuel, food and unfavourable foreign currency exchange rates. Participants were of the view that at the base of these crises are institutional weakness and corruption.

Another important issue that media experts and journalist believe constitutes a non-military threat are environmental challenges. Rampant illegal mining activities that pollute water bodies and farmlands and invade protected forest belts especially in the rural areas in Global South nations continue unabated, further reducing available arable land and freshwater resulting in food security issues. Again the exposure of citizens to dangerous chemicals in such areas is a health disaster waiting to happen. More serious is the potential of environmental challenges to induce conflict. This is established based on evidence of the indirect role of climate change arising from prolonged droughts in the Darfur conflict (Akasha, 2012). Consequently, this situation has the potential to cause conflict in a number of Global South Countries (Roy, 2022).

While participants saw the importance of including proposals from Global South, such initiatives are often repugnant to developed nations like the USA, keeping in mind how the USA withdrew from UNESCO. Moreover, though excellent the Climate Change Solidarity Pact will not trickle down to the ordinary people, who are bearingthe brunt of climate change impacts, because there are no mechanisms to ensure the money reaches the ordinary people. It is likely to become a source of income for the profligate expenses of developing nation leaders.

A further critical issue is the misrepresentation/underrepresentation of the Global South in Global North media, as well as poor representation or underrepresentation of events in the Global South media themselves. Indeed, pertaining to the crisis associated with economic challenges and human rights violations already discussed, media experts and journalists agreed that it was not a true reflection of life in those countries.

While Western media coverage of the Global South is dominated by negative reporting, most Global South media, especially, those in West Africa, rely on the Global North media (DW, BBC, VoA, RFI) as sources for coverage of events in their own countries. For example, Serwornoo, (2018) provides evidence that shows that in covering international news, as well as covering Africa, BBC ranked first as the preferred source among other international news organizations for African journalists. While this can be attributed to limited resources already discussed, the situation points to one of the many postcolonial institutional connections that "... is centrally imbricated in the politics of communication studies" (Shome and Hegde, 2002, p. 249).

Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 has deepened poverty levels, with many businesses, including media, folding up. Those media houses that survived had to lay off a number of already underpaid journalists and media professionals. The question that arises concerns the level of resilience of Global South media, whether they can still play an effective role in the future envisaged.

3. Global Governance: Towards a future of Global South Media taking its position in an Improved Multilateralism

Here, two major themes emerged: addressing challenges of comprehensive and accurate reporting and UN and Global South media interactions.

The global governance system today has seen the emergence of the Global South exemplified in the formation and seeming expansion of BRICS stands to diffuse the previous power concentration in the US and Western Europe. This requires an effective response by the UN to deal with Global South concerns with the weakening present form of multilateralism. Importantly, media in Global South must be strengthened to cover in-depth the rising non-military threats and challenges to global peace and security. Thus, for Global South media to be responsive in positioning themselves in a resilient global governance system, there is the need for a strengthened Global South media that can provide an effective counterbalance to Western media conglomeration, shape perception and set its own agenda, and foster global solidarity. In response, media experts and journalists proffered the following.

3.1 Addressing the challenges of comprehensive and accurate reporting

Participant journalists and media experts acknowledged the fact that media support is integral to UN relations with Global South operations but pointed out that the UN with its myriad resources and capacity can do more. They suggested a collaboration between the UN and journalists in the Global South, especially those in war zones. Specifically, the view was that the UN could provide support for journalist through building a register of journalists in a war zone so as to provide information and provide an avenue for journalists to connect with their colleagues within the same conflict zone at any given time in addition to creating opportunities for collaboration.

This is because the interconnected world of today that is characterized by a complexity of competing geopolitical interests demands an effective media coverage of non-military threats and peace and security issues. Such coverage must be accurate and comprehensive in order to feed the essential needs of informing public discourse, conflict resolution and policy. However, the intricacies of trends in global sociopolitical issues demand careful navigation to achieve effective coverage without sensationalism, bias and insensitivity.

3.2 UN and Global South Media

Participants acknowledged that the United Nations (UN) remains a guiding light of international cooperation that facilitates multilateralism towards global peace, development, and humanitarian goals. While the role of media in Global South countries in relation to the UN's activities is pivotal, as it's potential to influence public perception, facilitate information dissemination, and shape the discourse on international issues remain untapped. Besides, most of UN activities are largely unknown to Global South citizens.

Among the many UN institutions that provide support for journalism training and media support in general, four have media support as a constant objective underpinned by specific UN mandates (Orme, 2019). The four are the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the UN Department of Peace Operations (UN DPO) (Orme, 2019).

Additionally, for over three decades, the UN uses radio stations particularly in peace operations in conflict zones to share reliable information. Despite the resources available to them, the UN radio stations have challenges regarding balancing its mission role as a source for public information and serving the public as a source for impartial news, as well as political challenges regarding weakening relationships with host countries. Besides, questions that arise pertain to what happens post-peacekeeping mission. Could the UN build better collaborations beyond the mission roles with Global South media for a more sustainable approach to playing its watchdog role?

A relatively stronger Global South media landscape benefits the UN as well. By leveraging the Global South media, the UN can facilitate discussions on pressing global issues, such as climate change, migration, and sustainable development in a way that reaches marginalized Global South populations.

Current global trends identified by participants demand a stronger collaboration between the UN and the media in Global South countries as essential for overcoming challenges and maximizing opportunities. Consequently, the proposal of the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS) to establish a Global Resilience Council (GRC) to lead UN efforts for a better global governance, in the face of emergence of non-military threats was highly supported by journalists and media experts in the FGD. Inclusion of Global South non-state actors in the GRC structure positions the UN to directly engage and receive relevant perspectives, at the heart of challenges faced by citizen in these regions, and expert counsel beyond the current UN representation accorded to Global South countries.

3.3 Summing up

This report covers the views of media experts and journalists from Global South countries shared in a focus group discussion regarding non-military threats in the various countries and well as determine the role of Global South media in the formation of a more resilient global governance system.

On global peace and security, thematic discussions highlighted an evolving Global South media landscape wrought with lack of resources or resource disparities between Global South and Global North media that hindered effective coverage and representation of their specific countries. Challenges of press freedom and independence amidst violations of human rights under declining democracies and a fast evolving media that are far ahead of regulatory frameworks to address issues with mis- and disinformation are challenges that characterized Global media landscape.

Regarding non-military threats, participants discussed economic crisis and the concomitant youth unemployment, environmental concerns that threaten food security and the health of especially rural populations as well as Global South's inability to effectively represent these challenges. Participants suggested an improved support system beyond mission roles for journalists and media UN, Global South media can raise media awareness about non-military threats in Global South countries.

From climate change-induced disasters to public health emergencies, media outlets have the power to inform the population about the severity and implications of these challenges.

The case for the establishment of a Global Resilience Council as part of an improved UN is supported for the reduction of the power differentials due to veto powers currently exercised by a few countries. This is key to ensuring that Global South countries can influence global governance.

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