



# BE the CHANGE

shaping our future together

**Study Guide**

FACAMP Model United Nations 2020

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Patrícia Nogueira Rinaldi

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Talita de Mello Pinotti

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FAMUN 2020 FACAMP MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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*Professor Patrícia Nogueira Rinaldi*

*Professor Roberta Silva Machado*

*Professor Talita de Mello Pinotti*

*Professor Patricia Capelini Borelli*

Campinas, August 2020.

## PREFACE

### Be the Change: Shaping our Future Together

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The creation of the United Nations (UN), in 1945, marked the end of World War II and the beginning of a new international order in which multilateralism would play a central role. It was clear that States could no longer embrace unilateralism if they wanted to ensure a peaceful and stable international system. Cooperation was seen as a mutual compromise through which States would seek to avoid new world wars. In this manner, international cooperation became key to solve “international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character”<sup>5</sup>.

The Preamble of the UN Charter states that the main purposes of the organization are based on the principles of justice, social and economic progress, and respect for human rights. In order to maintain international peace and security, UN Members should act collectively, practicing tolerance, refraining from the use of armed force, and respecting international law<sup>6</sup>.

As the most universal arrangement for solving international problems, the UN developed a wide range of tools that would become its system – composed of different agencies, funds, and programs – in order to adapt to new challenges and play a crucial role in global governance throughout the decades. During the Cold War, the organization was responsible for managing the rivalry among its Members and consolidating peace efforts in different regions; establishing the pillars of the international human rights and environmental regimes; and coordinating efforts to support the independence and development of developing countries.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, the UN started a process of reinventing itself in an era of economic liberalization and globalization. In the 1990s, the organization went through a series of reforms, from peacekeeping to the development agenda. By the celebration of its 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2000, the UN positioned itself in a completely different role, as a convener and a consensus builder for the implementation of global goals. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) guided the work of the organization on two fronts. First, as a relevant actor that would work as an advocator and communicator of the MDGs. Second, as a platform to gather different actors and support policy initiatives, best practices, and resources to achieve these time-bounded targets.

Fifteen years later, the consensual adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in 2015, provided a framework for repositioning

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5 UNITED NATIONS (UN). “Chapter I: Purposes and Principles”. In: *Official website of the United Nations*, 2020. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>>. Accessed 26 July 2020.

6 UNITED NATIONS (UN). “Preamble”. In: *Official website of the United Nations*, 2020. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/index.html>>. Accessed 24 July 2020.

the UN on the eve of its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Undoubtedly, the 2030 Agenda consolidated a paradigm shift in comparison to the international development agenda from the previous century, because it defined “(...) development as a much more complex process that must take account of the ecological limits, as well as human priorities and equity in the design of an action program. Most importantly, it is a universal challenge”<sup>7</sup>.

Even facing problems and criticism – such as their fragmentation; their unmanageable size in terms of goals, targets, and indicators; and the absence of crucial goals such as the rights of indigenous people and migrants –, the importance of the SDGs is undeniable. They present a strong communication and advocacy aspect, calling attention to and promoting targeted actions to solve many of the global problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Besides, the SDGs have allowed a truly multi-stakeholder dialogue, being incorporated not only to the agenda and work of UN entities and governments, but also being championed by NGOs, civil society movements, and companies.

Noteworthy is that by the time the international community took this important pledge to “leave no one behind” – as put in the preamble of the 2030 Agenda – global commitment to multilateralism and the UN system started to erode from 2015 on, leading to an international context in which global problems are mainly tackled at regional or national levels.

The current crisis of multilateralism is a consequence of three elements. The first one is the rearrangement in the international structure of power. On one hand, it reflects the crisis of the United States (US) as one of the founders of the UN and as a key advocator for multilateralism since 1945. The US assault against the UN is a consequence of the Trump administration’s view that the US power can only be preserved by a unilateral foreign policy. The country’s withdrawal from important UN instances – such as the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Relief and Work Agency for Palestine (UNRWA), and the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>8</sup> – certainly will have a negative impact not only on the UN human rights system but also in the lives of many people around the globe.

On the other hand, the increased activism of non-Western powers, such as China and Russia, made clear that the global governance structure can no longer favor the interests of some States at the expense of others. Consequently, the pressure for reforms throughout the UN system has increased.

The second element in the crisis of multilateralism is the weak response of countries that are sympathetic to multilateralism and the UN. That is the case of the European Union that, so far, is not willing to confront the US unilateralism. But also, that is the case of developing countries, who need the UN the most and are the hardest hit by this crisis. The absence of a coalition with a strong and coherent strategy in defense of multilateral coordination has not only accelerated the crisis but also seemed to validate the US criticisms to the UN and multilateralism<sup>9</sup>.

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7 FUKUDA-PARR, S. “Sustainable Development Goals”. In: WEISS, T.; DAWS, S. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations* (2nd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 767.

8 See more about the US unilateral withdrawal from the WHO in: CROSSETTE, Barbara. “Trump Quits the World Health Organization. The Victim is the United States”. In: *Passblue*, 29 May 2020. Available at: <<https://www.passblue.com/2020/05/29/trump-quits-the-world-health-organization-the-victim-is-the-united-states/?highlight=World%20Health%20Organization>>. Accessed 24 July 2020.

9 BRUNDTLAND, G. H. *John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture*. Academic Council on the United Nations System Annual Meeting, 26 June 2020.

The third element lies on the UN itself. The organization has historically responded to new international challenges by the expansion of new agendas and bureaucratic instances and by the fragmentation of its decision-making process. This strategy has hindered its capacity of coordinating global action in an efficient way, as the current COVID-19 outbreak has shown. The world has been going through not only a health crisis, but also through economic, social, political, and humanitarian crises. The UN responses have been fragmented and underwhelming, reflecting a feeble global governance structure. As put by the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability, “[e]ven the more active UN presence in recent weeks mainly consists in asking of others to do things, not delivering directly”<sup>10</sup>.

If the UN cannot directly deliver a global response to face these overlapping crises, their negative impacts can be more profound than imagined, reversing the progress achieved so far under the 2030 Agenda. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, considered that the current economic and health crises have threatened the eradication of poverty and the achievement of “food security, gender equality and other Sustainable Development Goals”. He affirmed that the COVID-19 outbreak highlighted the existent “inequalities within and among countries” and “the world’s fragilities (...) in confronting the climate crisis, lawlessness in cyberspace, and still very-real risks of nuclear proliferation”<sup>11</sup>.

That is why the UN needs to take its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a moment to critically review its role<sup>12</sup>. As the most universal body at the global level, it must provide the convening capacity required to bring the major global actors and institutions together in an integrated approach, not only to fight the COVID-19 outbreak but also to devise a robust post-COVID-19 strategy to strengthen global governance and multilateralism.

The 2030 Agenda offers a solid point of departure to reposition the UN as the legitimate forum to reconquer the spirit of universality and solidarity needed to respond to these interconnected crises and create a more balanced global governance in the aftermath. The spirit of universality is expressed in the idea that no country can achieve sustainable development alone, and none of the current global problems can be solved without coherent and coordinated multilateral partnerships. The spirit of solidarity is articulated in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Even though this principle was originated from environmental negotiations, the 2030 Agenda can be seen as a way to consolidate the shared commitment of all stakeholders to reach consensus on the allocation of responsibility, so they could be able to provide collective responses as global public goods.

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10 FOUNDATION FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY (FOGGS). *The United Nations and the COVID-19 Global Emergency*. UN 2100 Initiative Discussion Paper, April 2020, p. 3. Available at: <<https://www.foggs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FOGGS-Discussion-Paper-UN-and-COVID-19-16-April-2020Final.pdf>>. Accessed 23 July 2020.

11 GUTERRES, A. “Remarks to High-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on “Multilateralism after COVID-19: What kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary?”. In: *Official website of the United Nations Secretary-General*, 17 July 2020. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-07-17/remarks-high-level-segment-of-ecosoc-multilateralism-after-covid-19>>. Accessed 24 July 2020.

12 On 7 July 2020, UN Members reached a consensus on a draft Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations. See further in: UNITED NATIONS (UN). *Draft Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations*. United Nations General Assembly, 7 July 2020. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/pga/74/wp-content/uploads/sites/99/2020/07/UN75-FINAL-DRAFT-DECLARATION.pdf>>. Accessed: 24 July 2020.

However, as many governments and world leaders are casting multilateralism and the UN out, this global response will also require from the UN to revive the spirit presented in the first words of its Charter, “We the peoples”, and develop a strong capacity to convene solid multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially with civil society movements. As stated by Robinson<sup>13</sup>:

We the peoples, 75 years ago, made a step forward in understanding our common humanity through the UN system. And now at the 75th anniversary, we have to renew and greatly strengthen that sense and take our responsibility as citizens of the world. It’s not just the leaders of different countries, it’s the citizens of the world who have to also be taking responsibility for moving forward.

It seems that UN Secretary-General is now steering this approach as part of the celebration of the UN 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In a recent statement, he proposed a reinterpretation of multilateralism, defending a new and inclusive perspective that brings “the critical contributions of civil society, business, foundations, the research community, local authorities, cities and regional governments”<sup>14</sup>.

Having this complex context in mind, the theme of this Study Guide, and also the conference theme of the simulation it was prepared for, invites readers to become agents of change. “Be the Change: Shaping our Future Together” is a combination of two powerful campaigns created by the UN. The first one, “Be the Change Initiative”, was launched in 2018 and has the aim of translating the 2030 Agenda into simple actions that can be taken by everyone. From tips on how to change small consumption patterns, such as eating less meat, to ideas on campaigns to be implemented at the local level, the Initiative calls all stakeholders to implement the 17 SDGs through their daily choices. This campaign is a reminder that achieving a more sustainable world depends not only on governmental actions but also on the engagement of civil society that has the capacity of advancing the 2030 Agenda in areas that governments are not able to reach<sup>15</sup>.

The essential contribution given by civil society was also recognized by the second campaign, “UN 75: Shaping our Future Together”, which invites the public to voice their concerns and propose solutions to global problems. Launched in 2020, the campaign is part of the celebrations of the UN 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and acknowledges that, even though international cooperation and multilateralism have endured, they are facing unprecedented challenges. In order to tackle them, the UN is organizing a worldwide survey to hear from people, especially marginalized groups and communities, their thoughts on how to create a better future. The main goal is to forge innovative solutions to improve the organization’s role by the time it turns 100 years, in 2045<sup>16</sup>.

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13 Apud FILLION, S.; CANDELA, K. “75 Years In, Does the UN Still Matter? Our New Podcast Episode”. In: *Passblue*, 25 June 2020. Available at: <<https://www.passblue.com/2020/06/25/75-years-in-does-the-un-still-matter-our-new-podcast-episode/>>. Accessed 23 July 2020.

14 GUTERRES, A. “Remarks to High-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on “Multilateralism after COVID-19: What kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary?”. In: *Official website of the United Nations Secretary-General*, 17 July 2020. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-07-17/remarks-high-level-segment-of-ecosoc-multilateralism-after-covid-19>>. Accessed 24 July 2020.

15 UNITED NATIONS (UN). “Be the Change: Take the Challenge”. In: *Official website of the United Nations*, 2020. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/be-the-change/>>. Accessed 24 July 2020.

16 UNITED NATIONS (UN). “UN75 and Beyond: a toolkit for a forward-looking conversation to reimagine our future”. In: *Official website of the United Nations*, 2020. Available at: <<https://toolkit.un75.online>>. Accessed 24 July 2020.

By combining two powerful campaigns, the theme “Be the Change: Shaping our Future Together” strives to raise awareness on the potential that civil society has to change the world. Youth is the leading force in this process of transforming our societies in more equitable, sustainable, and peaceful ones. They should also be seen as relevant stakeholders who have a contribution to solve pressing issues, such as sustainable development, human rights, and international peace and security.

But how can they start engaging in discussions? By fully participating in the debates of relevant international issues, such as the ones presented in the chapters of this book. Each one of them invites readers to translate lessons learned into daily actions to improve their communities. The best example is the chapter entitled “Youth, Peace and Security” that discusses how the UN Security Council has dealt with the inclusion of youth in the debates on international peace and security. This item was introduced in the Council’s agenda in 2015 and it acknowledges that youth must be considered as actors of change in peace processes, instead of perpetrators or victims of violence. It calls on States to foster youth participation in order to build a sustainable peace, avoiding the recurrence of conflicts and reducing societies’ fragility.

Resilient societies are key to achieve a positive peace, recognized not as the mere absence of conflict, but also as a state in which people enjoy sustainable development and have their human rights ensured. More than once, the Security Council has struggled with countries that have put an end to armed conflict but not to hostilities. This is the “Situation in Burundi”, another chapter of the book: after a violent civil conflict in the 1990s, the African country managed to reach peace by signing and implementing a peace agreement in the 2000s. However, the peace process was flawed and did not address properly the dormant tensions in the Burundian society. Consequently, in the 2010s, Burundi would witness a progressive concentration of power in the hands of former president, Pierre Nkurunziza, and recurrent accusations of massive killings, torture, and political persecution. This chapter reinforces the idea that peace cannot be achieved by the imposition of one group’s interests over the others.

Another urgent problem in which youth can play a major role is addressing climate change and its impacts on the most vulnerable communities, including children, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants and people who live in extreme poverty. These groups are constantly subjected to violations of human rights, and the impacts of climate change can aggravate this situation. Problems that emerge from climate change, such as water scarcity, food insecurity, or forced migration, impair the full enjoyment of fundamental human rights to life, food, water and sanitation, health, and adequate housing. In order to analyze this current scenario, the chapter “Human rights and climate change” presents the UN Human Rights Council discussions regarding the relationship between human rights and climate change, and highlights the importance of a human rights-based approach to address climate change and its impacts on migrants and people living in poverty.

Poverty is also a component that hinders the enjoyment of the right to food and food security. Global hunger has been on the rise since 2017 and the COVID-19 outbreak has the potential to push

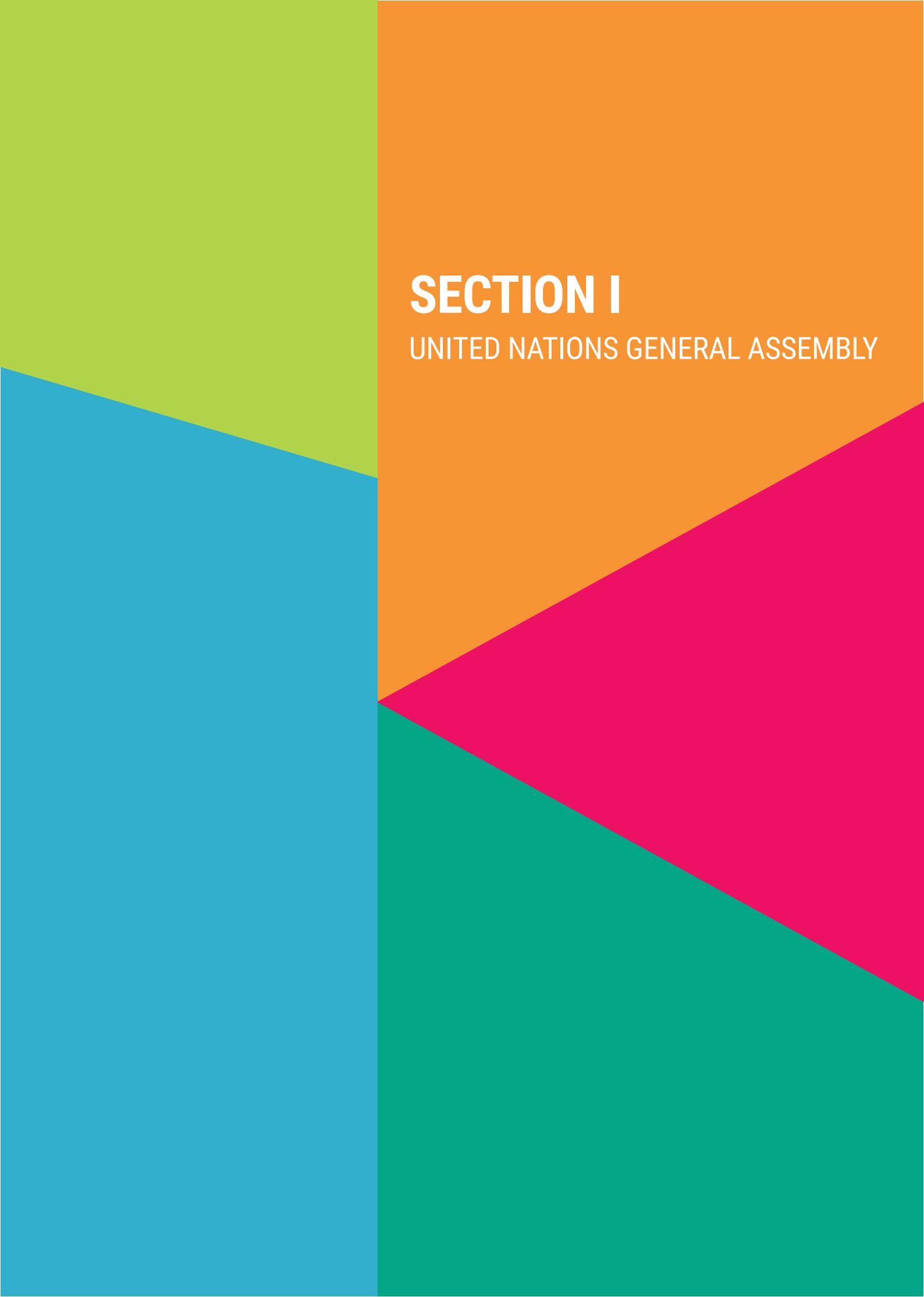
millions of people at the brink of famine and starvation by the end of the year. Without urgent action, it is unlikely that the world will be able to accomplish SDG 2 – End hunger – by the end of 2030. The chapter “Agriculture development, food security and nutrition” discusses the General Assembly strategy to put the world back on track of achieving SDG 2. The Second Committee has focused on promoting sustainable food systems, which means transforming the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed, so these processes can preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, be resilient to climate-related shocks, and be socially inclusive. Although boosting sustainable food systems is urgent to combat food insecurity and climate change, big players in food production chains have been resistant to change, and youth is key to outline creative solutions to foster this needed transformation.

Advances in science and technology are paramount to achieve SDG 2 and all the 17 SDGs, allowing concrete solutions for global problems such as climate change and the current pandemic. Yet, the same technologies that can be applied for improving living standards can also be employed for less peaceful purposes, for example, enhancing the destructive potential of weapons. In the chapter “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament”, it is presented how the General Assembly First Committee has addressed this topic since the Cold War. The main issue is how to avoid the application of scientific and technological advances in ways that can imperil international security, and, at the same time, to guarantee that this effort will not be impeditive for States to achieve their development goals. In a context of accelerated pace of scientific and technological discoveries and the broad range of actors involved, addressing this issue will require greater commitments that should also include youth as future leaders and members of the scientific community and the private sector.

The youth engagement in recent civil society movements to fight violence against women, such as the Me Too and the *Ni Una a Menos* (No One Less), triggered a global awareness movement about the need for an international framework to address violence and harassment in the world of work. Without their engagement, it would not be possible for the International Labour Organization (ILO) to start the drafting of the first Convention and Recommendation on the matter in 2016. In the chapter “Ending violence and harassment in the world of work”, it is discussed the ILO vision to overcome unequal power relations at work, which is the main cause of physical, psychological, sexual, and gender-based violence and harassment. Bearing in mind the situation of groups more vulnerable to work-related acts of violence and harassment, the chapter presents the ILO negotiations between 2016-2018 to create a new integrated and inclusive international framework to not only prohibit such acts, but also provide remedies for victims, establish adequate sanctions to perpetrators and create a true social dialogue between workers, employers and governments to achieve decent work globally.

Considering the issues addressed in this book, the celebration of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a call for the UN to include civil society, and especially young people, at the center of the conversation. It was possible to see that young people are agents of change, and, as such, the UN must leave behind stereotypes regarding youth. Model United Nations (MUNs) are a great tool to support young people in strengthening their agency. MUNs are not mere extra-curricular activities, but a space in

which young people can be empowered to use their voices and to create ideas and initiatives that can advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that way, youth can give their valuable contribution to overcome the crisis of multilateralism and align a new global vision so the UN can keep its relevance by the time of its centenary.



# SECTION I

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

*Flávia Leal Mattos  
Maria Eduarda Marques Jareta  
Patricia Capelini Borelli<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was created by the end of the Second World War as an organization responsible to deal with matters of international peace and security, among other concerns. Among its six main bodies, there are two that address issues concerning international security: the Security Council (SC) and the General Assembly (GA). Although SC is the organ that deals directly with these issues<sup>2</sup>, the GA – more specifically its First Committee – has an important function of addressing international security and disarmament aiming at setting up guidelines and regulations<sup>3</sup>. The fact that all UN Member States are represented in the GA by the principle “one State, one vote” is a relevant aspect as it means that all members participate equally in these discussions. Hence, the GA is considered a deliberative and the most democratic organ within the UN (UNITED NATIONS, 2015; 2020 d).

One of the items discussed by the First Committee regards the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament. Since the 20th Century, the pace of scientific and technological developments has been considerably intensified, enabling not only the advent of new technologies, but also the improvement of the existing ones. Computers, the internet, the GPS and new medicines are examples of how innovations in science and technology allowed progresses on our living standards; yet, there are concerns about the implications of applying these instruments and knowledge for less pacific purposes. Considering this, the following chapter presents the issue on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament and how it is addressed by the GA First Committee.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first one presents why advances in science and technology are considered an issue in the security debate so that it became a formal item under the GA agenda in the 1980s. After that, it is observed how the discussion on this topic evolved in post-Cold War period, expressing concerns of developing countries on restrictions for accessing and developing technologies that could be applied both for civilian and for military purposes. The third section provides an overview of the international security debate in more recent years. Then, it is analyzed how this scenario influences the current debate on the role of science and technology in

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<sup>2</sup> The Security Council is composed by 15 Member-States only. Five of them are permanent members, while the other ten are rotative members, elected by the General Assembly for a two years term. Its mandate defines that the SC “has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” and establish “specific powers” for this organ which are explained by Chapters VI to XII of the UN Charter (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 19).

<sup>3</sup> As the GA deals with a wide agenda, its work is divided into six Committees with the objective to provide “(...) a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. It also plays a significant role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law”. In turn, the First Committee deals specifically International Security and Disarmament matters (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 b).

the context of international security and disarmament within the GA. The final section brings some considerations on this matter and proposes questions for further debate.

### **The development of science and technology as a challenge to international security**

Discussions about the impacts of science and technology in international security gained increased attention after the events of the First World War. The use of chemical weapons, submarines and airships raised awareness about the destructive potential of modern technologies when used in wars. The Second World War reiterated this apprehension, especially after the explosion of the atomic bombs by the United States, in 1945 (HOBBSAWN, 1995, pp. 35-36). This concern is reflected in the very first resolution adopted by the GA, in 1946, as it aimed at establishing “a commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1946).

As the context of the Cold War brought the arms race between the United States and Soviet Union to an upper level, the UN increased its efforts to call attention of Member States to the danger of applying science and technology for developing new weapons or improving existing ones, especially those of mass destruction (WMD)<sup>4</sup>. This matter was addressed by the First Committee in 1977, with the objective of prohibiting the development and manufacture of new types of WMD<sup>5</sup>. The GA recognized that modern science and technology had reached levels that could endanger global peace and security, as it could be used for creating new and more destructive types of WMD, so agreements should be encouraged in order to prevent the application of science and technologies for this end (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1977, p. 1).

It was only in 1988, however, that an item entitled “Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security” was introduced in the First Committee agenda. Its focus was to discuss the important role of science and technology for the development and progress of humanity, but also aimed at addressing the negative effects that advances in science and technology could have if oriented towards non-peaceful purposes. The resolution adopted under this item called attention to the qualitative aspects of arms race, until then efforts towards disarmament focused mainly on quantitative aspects, considering the number of weapons but not necessarily its destruction potential – which could be improved by scientific and technological advances<sup>6</sup> (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1988 a, p. 1; 1988 b, p. 38).

In this same resolution, the GA requested the UN Secretary-General (SG) to follow advances in science and technology in order to evaluate its potential for military applications. The result was a

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4 Weapons of mass destruction can be defined as “a class of weaponry with the potential to, in a single moment, kill millions of civilians, jeopardize the natural environment, and fundamentally alter the world and the lives of future generations through their catastrophic effects” (UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2020).

5 Through its Resolution 32/84, the GA urged all States “(...) to refrain from any action which would impede international talks aimed at working out an agreement to prevent the use of scientific and technological progress for the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new system of weapons” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1977, p. 2).

6 The resolution was introduced by the representative of India which stated that States “(...) must give science and technology a human face. Science and technology cannot be allowed to become masters of war, they must be used to serve humanity” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1988 b, p. 39).

SG report submitted in 1990. Also, in this year, a high-level conference was held in Japan, reuniting experts to discuss the “New trends in science and technology: Implications for international peace and security”. The difficulties in preventing military application of science and technologies were recognized, reaffirming the importance of States to follow and monitor developments in these areas that could endanger the security environment. During the conference, it was also highlighted that these same advances could and should be used for peaceful purposes as “(...) the very technologies capable of improving existing weapon systems can also often be used for their limitation, destruction or conversion” (UNITED NATIONS, 1991, p. 4).

Since then, the UN became not only an important channel for discussions on such topics but also an important actor responsible for following the developments in areas considered as cutting-edge, such as nuclear, space and information technology and biotechnology, considering its possible impacts on the international environment. So much that the GA recommended the UN Disarmament Commission to include the item “The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament and other related fields” in its agenda for further discussions. Two years later, this same topic was included in the First Committee agenda (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1990 a, p. 3; 1990 b, p. 21).

## **New challenges on the role of science and technology in international security after the Cold War**

The end of the Cold War represented a new scenario for international security and disarmament discussions. Yet, the application of science and technology for non-peaceful purposes continued to raise concerns among States, especially due to the faster pace of scientific and technological developments. It also became increasingly difficult not only to follow and monitor this pace, but also to distinguish military from civilian application. This is the “dilemma” upon the so-called dual-use technologies, as the same technology that could be used for improving our living standards can also be applied to upgrade existing weapons systems or even to create new types of weapons. The GPS and robotics are known examples of dual-use technologies; yet, the same challenges can be applied to dual-use materials in areas such as biology and chemistry<sup>7</sup> (EVANS; HAYS, 2006, pp. 106-107).

The challenging aspect of dual-use technologies is that addressing and regulating national weapons programs may not be enough. First because these technologies can be applied for beneficial purposes, functioning as important instruments for disarmament efforts as it facilitates monitoring and communication among States and other entities. Second because these same technologies are essential to civil projects, improving industries and the medical area, contributing to social and economic development. Thus, efforts towards weapons control could not simply reside on restricting the access or use of technology. In addition to the matter on how to orientate

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<sup>7</sup> Chemical and biological materials are widely used for civilian purposes: in industries, for medicine or agriculture practices. Still, the same substances can be harmful to human health and can be applied for less peaceful ends as chemical or biological weapons. Although there are international conventions and agreements that prohibit the use of these substances for military purposes, they are relatively accessible and their wide use makes it difficult to monitor its production and applications. Nuclear technology follows a similar path, as it can be applied for medical purposes or for generating electricity. However, the mere access to this technology can enable a basis for developing military capabilities (EVANS; HAYS, 2006, p. 107).

States to use technologies for beneficial and disarmament-related purposes, non-discriminatory regulations also became a great concern between States when discussing the impacts of science and technological developments in the context of international security.

Regarding this, in 1995, India introduced another resolution<sup>8</sup> to include a new item in the First Committee agenda entitled specifically: "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament". Beyond the issues already addressed in the previous item, this new one also aimed at discussing "(...) the arbitrary, ad hoc export-control regimes, which tend to limit, in a discriminatory way, access to technologies for peaceful purposes" (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1995 a, p. 18). This issue was already addressed by the Non-Aligned Movement in 1995, as developing countries were concerned that regulatory measures could difficult their access to technologies that could be applied both for enhancing security and promoting social and economic development (NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, 1995, pp. 34-35).

The discussions under this item can be summed up in three main points: first, the GA continued discussing both quantitative and qualitative aspects of arms race; second, it recognized that scientific and technological progress are important for economic and social development, so civilian applications of these technologies should be maintained and encouraged as much as the transfers of these instruments between States, in order to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries; third, it addressed the military capabilities of these technologies, so international transfers should be agreed in multilateral negotiations aiming at establishing more transparent, non-discriminatory and universally acceptable guidelines for States considering its different development conditions. It also continued encouraging the role of the UN on following scientific and technological developments in order to fulfill these goals (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1999 a, pp. 3-4).

Noteworthy is that this resolution was adopted by vote, which means that Member States were not able to reach consensus on this content<sup>9</sup>. The lack of consensus persisted in the following years and can be explained by the position of the United States when replying the SG Report on this item, in 1999, as it points out that addressing new instruments for regulating and monitoring technological and scientific developments was duplicating the UN work, since there were already established control measures and international agreements to deal with this subject in specific areas, such as agreements on nuclear weapons or conventions on chemical and biological weapons (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1999 b, p. 3).

For example, during the 1970s the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was created as a disarmament treaty to ban States from developing, acquiring, producing and stockpiling biological agents that could be used for military purposes. It works upon self-regulation and confidence-building measures among States which constrains them "to prevent or reduce the occurrence of

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<sup>8</sup> Together with Bhutan, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria and Sri Lanka (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1995 a, p. 18).

<sup>9</sup> While 98 Member States voted in favor of the resolution, 51 abstained from voting and only six voted against it: France, Israel, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1995 b, p. 2).

ambiguities, doubts and suspicions and in order to improve international co-operation in the field of peaceful biological activities". Although the convention recognizes the importance and encourages scientific and technological advances in biology for peaceful purposes, some States were resistant in ratifying the BWC alleging the dual-use of biotechnology, specially its benefits in the medical and agricultural areas (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 a; EVANS; HAYS, 2006, pp. 108-110).

How to guarantee that dual-use technology, such as biotechnology, will not be misused by civilian projects so that it threatens security, and how to ensure fair and non-discriminatory regulations that do not jeopardize efforts towards social and economic developments are challenges that the topic aims at calling attention to, independently of an specific area<sup>10</sup>. Still, between 1995 and 2006, all resolutions under this item were adopted by vote. The main argument against these resolutions relied on the risk of duplicating the UN and other entities work that were already addressing similar issues but in specific areas, an argument sustained mainly by developed countries<sup>11</sup>. This topic continued to be discussed in the GA but by the Disarmament Commission; only in 2017 it was reintroduced in the First Committee agenda (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1999 a, pp. 2; 2006, pp. 2).

### **The international security context after 2015 and the UN new disarmament agenda**

When the item returned to the First Committee agenda, the security context was quite different and complex, especially regarding the use of technologies. Conflicts between but also within States have become more elaborated, long and lethal, blurring the distinction between international and domestic security; non-state actors got more involved in armed conflicts, making disarmament efforts even more difficult. In recent years, military spending and capabilities became much greater than they were in the Cold War and part of that can be explained by the intensive application of high technology in conflicts, aiming at the development of more precise and intelligent weapons. More than ever, the dilemma of the dual aspect of technologies was exposed, so much that it composed a central part of the UN new disarmament agenda, published in 2018.

The 2018 agenda was created by the SG to address the current challenges for promoting peace and security in this new context, as an essential step to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals (SDGs). Launched in 2015, the 2030 Agenda links disarmament to development efforts, as a safe and peaceful environment facilitates the pursuit of development goals, simultaneously, socioeconomic development contributes to building peace and security among nations. In sum, disarmament is important for achieving development as it aims at

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<sup>10</sup> In 1998, the representative of India stated that: "For developing countries, access to scientific and technological advances for developmental purposes remains a priority issue. (...) the developing world has had to pay a developmental cost in view of the persistence of discriminatory control regimes which, in effect, are no more than exclusive groupings of countries that limit the exchanges of such technologies to exchanges among themselves while denying access to other countries that may require them for developmental purposes. We believe that the regulation of flows of dual-use goods and high technologies, to be effective and efficient, should be internationally applicable on the basis of multilaterally negotiated, universally applicable, non-discriminatory guidelines. At the same time there is a need to recognize that internationally negotiated guidelines for the transfer of high technology with military applications should take into account the legitimate defence requirements of all States and requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, while ensuring that access to high-technology products and services and know-how for peaceful purposes is not denied" (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1998 a, p. 1).

<sup>11</sup> In 2006, during the GA 61<sup>st</sup> session, 52 Member States voted against the resolution under this topic and 13 abstained, most of them are middle income countries (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2006, pp. 2).

eliminating conflicts and its consequences for people, for the economy and the environment – which are the main pillars of the 17 SDGs. Advances in science and technology are important for both agendas: towards disarmament, it facilitates monitoring and also enhances communication, transparency and confidence-building among States; towards development, it improves our living standards and connects societies (UNITED NATIONS, 2018, pp. 7-8; UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015).

Although the 2018 agenda is directly connected to SDG 16, dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, SDGs 17 and 4 are particularly important for addressing the role of science and technology both for development and disarmament processes. For strengthening means of implementation and global partnerships in achieving the others goals, SDG 17 recognizes technologies as keen instrument, so that one of its targets states the necessity to “Enhance (...) international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms”, highlighting need for cooperation for development and transfer of technology to disadvantaged countries (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 26). Yet, this discussion resumes the debate about the dual aspect of technologies: as advances in science and technology need to be encouraged, how to guarantee it will not be applied for non-peaceful purposes? In addition, regulating dual-use technology is still challenging as it cannot hinder States in pursuing development.

In this sense, the multi-stakeholder partnerships are another key aspect of the SDG 17 that influenced recent debates towards the role of science and technology in the context of international security. It should take into account not only the cooperation between States, but other actors, such as the civil society, the private sector and scientists, that are also part of the disarmament and development efforts. This aspect is expressed in the 2018 agenda, specially by the idea of ensuring “responsible innovation and application of new technologies”, which aims at bringing industry representatives, researchers and engineers to consider the implications of advances in science and technology for global security. It also dialogues directly with SDG 4, that aims at promoting quality education, mainly through its target 4.7, which addresses the need to ensure education for sustainable development and for promoting a culture of peace and non-violence (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 27; 2018, pp. 7-8; 53).

Disarmament education has an important role in raising awareness among students about the implications of scientific and technological developments for international security. To make the youth think about these implications is a key step towards directing the application of science and technology of beneficial purposes, considering their role as future professionals in different areas such as chemistry, biology, physics and engineering, both in academic or private sectors. It is also expected that it impacts youth’s role as part of the civil society, enhancing their engagement in public debate about weapons control and security and demanding political actions towards these ends. Regarding this, the agenda released in 2018 complements SDG 4 stating that “disarmament education should be mainstreamed at all levels in national education, policies, curriculums, teacher education and student assessment” (UNITED NATIONS, 2018, pp. 67-69).

The 2030 Agenda strengthened multilateral efforts to think concrete measures to deal with common problems between States and their societies. The initiative inaugurated a new moment for disarmament debate, especially in this context in which conflicts and security issues are more complex and diffuse. The advent of new technologies and new types of weapons are still a major challenge that intensifies this scenario – so much that the disarmament agenda has as part of its implementation plan the following actions: to raise awareness on the implications of new weapon technologies; to produce studies of new weapon technologies; to convene dialogue on emerging technologies; to encourage responsible innovation of science and technology; and to enhance coordination among the disarmament bodies (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 c; 2018, p. 51).

It is in this scenario that the item “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament” is reintroduced in the First Committee agenda, indicating a greater willingness by States to take action on these challenges that are not necessarily new but gain a renewed aspect as scientific and technological developments continue.

### **The debate on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament in recent years**

This renewed interest on the topic is expressed by the fact that since 2017 all resolutions were adopted by consensus. Even States that used to vote against the resolutions until 2006, like Austria, Germany and Spain, began supporting the decisions under the item. Many subjects addressed by the First Committee during the 1990s and early 2000s are considered in recent resolutions, such as the dual aspect of science and technology and the importance of orienting its application for civilian purposes; and the need to continue technology exchange, but also its regulation following international conventions already established. It is notable, though, that the universally applicable and non-discriminatory aspect of regulating technology transfers are not considered in these recent documents as it used to be until 2006 (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2017; 2018 b; 2019 b).

Since technology has become an essential instrument in our everyday lives, States have also become more inclined in debating its security aspects in a broader way in order to consider concrete solutions for problems regarding its application. In this regard, the resolutions adopted in the last two years – both by consensus – reflected much of the guidelines of the disarmament agenda. A key aspect is the appeal for States to engage with the private sector and the research community to “(...) remain vigilant in understanding the new and emerging developments in science and technology that could imperil international security” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 b, p. 4; 2019 b). This matter was also addressed in the recent reports of the SG about this item, which identifies that much of the recent discoveries in science and technology occur in the academia but also in research and development centers within the private sector. It resumes the UN efforts for connecting multiple stakeholders in this debate, engaging the civil society, scientific and industrial communities to make them aware of the possible uses of these innovations for non-military purposes (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 a, p. 20).

The resolutions adopted after 2017 continued to acknowledge the decisive role of the UN in following the scientific and technological developments and the potential impacts for security and monitoring the States' level of compliance with international standards. Noteworthy is that, in addition to this acknowledgment, the resolutions also considered the importance of avoiding duplicating "(...) efforts already under way in United Nations entities and in the framework of the relevant international conventions", reflecting the United States concern stated in a reply to the SG report in the late 1990s. As a result, the latest documents dialogue directly with other multilateral agreements, agencies and committees created for dealing with specific fields (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2017, p. 3).

The very reports of the SG continued to fulfill the crucial function in monitoring, assessing, and communicating the possible consequences of scientific and technological advances in cutting-edge areas for security matters. Beyond the areas already considered previously – for example, biology and chemistry, material, and space technologies –, the latest reports also dedicate attention to the advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomous systems<sup>12</sup>. As another example of dual-use, intelligent and autonomous technologies have been extensively explored for civilian purposes, such as autonomous cars, voice assistants and other smart devices; on the other hand, it brings apprehensions – especially in terms of international law – about its implications when used in conflicts, once it can work without human control (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 a, p. 4).

Although it can be perceived broader commitment between States to discuss how scientific and technological developments can affect the security environment, it is notable that States still have different interests and perspectives about what should be the focus of the debate. Since 2018, Member States have been invited to give their views on the matter addressed in the SG reports under this topic and also to explain their intentions in developing technologies in cutting-edge areas that could be applied for security purposes, as a measure to enhance transparency and confidence among them. Analyzing these documents, it is possible to identify three major points of concerns that express the differences in terms of priorities between States when discussing the role of science and technology in international security context.

The first one resumes the initial debate under this item. The importance of science and technology for socioeconomic development is recognized as vital and should be encouraged, especially due to their role in achieving the SDGs. The dual aspect of technologies is taken into consideration and regulatory measures are necessary to avoid its application for non-peaceful purposes. This, however, should not prevent States to access and develop instruments and knowledge which can be important for overcoming challenges such as climate change, food security and health issues, or even applied to legitimate defense purposes. This concern is expressed mainly by developing

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12 As stated in the SG report: "There is no universally agreed definition of artificial intelligence. The term has been applied in contexts in which computer systems imitate thinking or behaviour that people associate with human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving and decision-making". Autonomous systems are systems that "(...) execute tasks without human input or control, once activated" and can use AI to this end. When applied to military purposes, autonomous systems can "(...) employ autonomous functions in the use of force, namely target selection and engagement". It is broadly debated, however, whether a system can be truly autonomous, as "they may not be deployed in a fully autonomous configuration" (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 a, p. 3-5).

countries, which reinforces the importance of technology transfers in reducing inequality between States and, by that, promoting global peace (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 a, pp. 23-24; 28; 36; 2019 a, pp. 8-10).

A second concern is related to strengthen multilateral cooperation and discussion forums towards the global governance of science and technology. The participation of the private sector and the research and academic community alongside with States and governmental organs is recognized as crucial in advancing the consolidation of a legal framework that tackles the possible consequences of scientific and technological advances for security matters. Great attention is dedicated to “common areas” such as the cyberspace and the outer space, that are zones that do not have defined borders so they demand wider coordination and dialogue between stakeholders to guarantee they will not be misused. Once again, the UN is a key actor as it organizes conferences and dialogue forums that bring together researchers, scientists, engineers, diplomats and industry representatives to work on behalf of international security and disarmament<sup>13</sup>. The importance of avoiding overlapping works among specialized bodies and conventions is still considered, especially by the United States (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 a, p. 43).

A third concern, which reflects a new aspect in this debate, is about the challenges brought by technological innovations in AI and autonomous systems when applied in warfare. On one hand, the military application of this type of technology has been justified in terms of enhancing precision and avoiding catastrophic human errors, complementing but not replacing human action in conflicts; on the other, it raises apprehensions in moral, humanitarian, ethical and legal terms, as these instruments can act without human control. If decisions are taken autonomously by machines in the battlefield, what are the limits for warfare? Who would be responsible if they get out of control? These concerns are expressed mainly by developed countries which argue about the urgency in taking serious steps in international law regarding the application of AI and autonomous weapons in warfare (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018 a, p. 5; pp. 21-22; 2019 a, p. 7).

Considering all this, it is possible to affirm that discussions on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament gained a renewed attention in recent years. This does not mean that the debate was not important before. This is a discussion that permeates and is constantly present in different fields: nuclear, biological, chemical, informational, among others, which have specific bodies and conventions on their own. Still, as progress in science and technology is advancing in new and unexplored areas, at an increasingly rapid pace, wide efforts were perceived as necessary to coordinate interests among multiple stakeholders to guarantee these advances are directed towards the good of humanity and not to threaten it. Hence, the First Committee has an essential task as it works as a forum for discussions among countries so they can debate on how to advance in standard-setting on this subject.

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<sup>13</sup> For example, in 2018, the GA requested the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to organize a conference “(...) in order to facilitate dialogue among relevant stakeholders on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts”. The result was a seminar and a report entitled “Innovations Dialogue” which aimed at addressing how digital technologies impacts disarmament efforts and international security (UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH, 2020).

Nonetheless, as the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament corresponds to a wide range of issues on different and often overlapping fields, challenges remain on how to advance on concrete measures about the subject considering that science and technology are essential for socioeconomic development, but can also be applied for non-peaceful purposes; and also on how to avoid duplicating work in existing entities and convention.

### **Final considerations**

This chapter aimed at discussing the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament and how this issue is addressed by the GA First Committee. Although this is a debate present in the UN since its creation, it was only in 1988 that it was adopted as a formal item in the First Committee agenda. At that moment, the main concern was the qualitative aspect of the arm race between the Soviet Union and the United States and the importance of orienting efforts in science and technology to peace related purposes. During the Cold War several multilateral instruments were created to deal with advances in science and technology in specific areas, such as agreements and bodies to deal with nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

After the Cold War, the main point of discussion resided in the challenges regarding the dual aspect of science and technology. Since the same technology and knowledge applied to warfare can also be applied to disarmament and civilian projects, it was necessary to consider regulatory measures to prevent the use of science and technology for non-peaceful purposes but that, at the same time, could not imply in restrictions on accessing instruments that are crucial to the promotion of socioeconomic development. This is a major concern for developing countries even nowadays. Consensus could not be reached on this topic until 2006, as some States considered these measures should be addressed separately in specific areas to avoid duplicating works within the UN and other related entities.

The recent discussions under this item does englobe all these aspects already addressed, but in a different context. The 2030 Agenda adopted in 2015 inaugurated a new moment for cooperation as States were more inclined to commit with multilateralism in order to achieve common goals. Efforts towards achieving these goals do not depend exclusively on States; thus, the Agenda also comprehends the active participation of multiple stakeholders such as the civil society, the private sector and the scientific community. It also considers the key role of science and technology in addressing global challenges such as climate change, food security and health crisis. This context is paramount to understand the new disarmament agenda adopted in 2018.

Today, the international security scenario is more diffuse and yet complex. The nature of conflicts has changed, military expenditure is increasing and advances in science and technology are creating a new format of warfare. The increasing difficulty in separating and defining civil and military applications is another factor that raises concerns among States and the civil society. As progress in science and technology are important and cannot be stopped or reversed, challenges remain on how to guarantee it will be oriented exclusively towards peaceful purposes. This demands

commitment not only from States but also from the scientific community and the private sector, where great part of these advances come from today. The renewed interest in discussing the role of science and technology in security context and disarmament after 2017 can be understood as an intention of States in pursuing common understandings on these new challenges that also resumes the old ones.

The willingness of the Member States in taking action on these issues is expressed by the fact that since 2017 the GA returned to adopt resolutions under this item and all of them were by consensus. In general, the last three resolutions address the importance of science and technology in improving living standards; the implications of the dual-use of technologies; the challenges regarding dual-use technology transfers; the need to follow and to enhance international obligations, expanding the dialogue and commitment not only between States and other actors; the essential role of the UN in monitoring and assessing the most recent advances in science and technology in cutting-edge fields and the importance of avoiding overlapping efforts between specialized entities and conventions.

Consensus around these matters express the importance of the development and disarmament agendas on tying common understandings among stakeholders to work on behalf of common goals. Better understanding the role of science and technology in the current context to make better decisions towards its application has been perceived as a crucial part of this effort. Hence, the GA has the crucial function of enhancing standard-setting to advance on this matter in a broad yet coherent way. The main difficulty is that the topic comprehends a wide range of subjects, since science and technology are applied in many different fields and issues. In this sense, to advance on concrete measures on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament is an important but challenging task, as Member States present diverse interests and priorities when debating this topic. In addition, given the broadness of the subject, advancing in concrete measures cannot overlap efforts already made in specific conventions and bodies to deal with them.

The work of the GA First Committee is paramount in order to advance on better coordination and understanding among Member States and also among the UN system that deals with specific issues regarding the role of science and technology in different areas. Considering the challenges discussed in this chapter, there are some questions important to be addressed:

1. Considering the dual aspect of technologies, how to advance on regulatory measures to avoid their application for non-peaceful purposes, without creating barriers to access essential technologies for socioeconomic development?
2. How to coordinate interests among stakeholders in order to orient developments in science and technology towards peaceful and beneficial applications?
3. How to enhance the participation of the private sector, the scientific community and the civil society in these efforts?

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## AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

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### Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the promise of “leaving no one behind”. Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SDG 2 comprises the global commitment to not only end hunger, but also malnutrition and food insecurity, and to promote sustainable agriculture. As stated in the founding document of the 2030 Agenda, “Transforming our world”:

We are also determined to end hunger and to achieve food security as a matter of priority and to end all forms of malnutrition. (...) We will devote resources to developing rural areas and sustainable agriculture and fisheries, supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, herders and fishers in developing countries, particularly least developed countries (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015, p. 7).

However, almost five years after this pledge, the world is not on track to achieve SDG 2. The UN estimated that 770 million people suffered from food insecurity in 2017, while more than 820 million people were malnourished in 2018 – a couple of years ago, the numbers were around 40 million less. Then, 2019 was the third consecutive year that hunger was on the rise, with a persistent famine situation in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNITED NATIONS, 2019). Not to say the potential of the current COVID-19 outbreak to push more people to the verge of starvation by the end of 2020.

Considering this worrisome context, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the UN can integrate the 2030 Agenda perspective of sustainable development into current food systems to promote food security globally. Food security is a concept used by the UN to define a state in which there is food availability, access, quality, and stability. The main challenge to food security nowadays lies in the way food systems are organized, because the current production, distribution, access, and consumption of food have generated inequalities, conflicts, and have put great pressure on the environment.

It is argued in this chapter that only by making food systems sustainable – which means transforming them to be more adaptable and resilient while protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, and guaranteeing the inclusiveness of vulnerable groups – will it be possible to put the world back on track of achieving SDG 2 and accomplishing food security globally.

To address these issues, this chapter will first discuss the evolution of the concept of food security at the UN. Then, it will present the challenges to food security in the 2000s, considering the global goal of ending hunger in the context of economic, social, and food crises. Next, it will analyze the connection between food security and the 2030 Agenda, and after that, it will consider how the promotion of sustainable food systems could accelerate its implementation. The chapter ends with

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some considerations on the urgent need to transition to sustainable food systems to tackle the main causes of hunger and malnutrition globally.

### **The concept of food security**

Although the so-called Green Revolution<sup>2</sup> in the 1960s made it possible to increase food production and agricultural productivity all over the world, the adoption of modern agricultural practices – such as the mechanization of crop production and the use of fertilizers in high scale – was not enough to guarantee food price stability and to eradicate hunger globally. In the early 1970s, an unprecedented food crisis emerged due to a combination of three factors: the global economic crisis; the long-term unsolved imbalances in food production and food distribution; and circumstantial problems, such as weather conditions and natural disasters, that caused a sharp decrease in the food supply. The crisis reached its limit in 1973 and revealed the need for delineating a new global approach to the problem of food, which came to be known as food security (SHAW, 2007, pp. 115-118).

The first definition of food security emerged from the First United Nations World Food Conference, held on 5-16 November 1974, in Rome. The main goal of the conference was to ensure adequate food supply and respond to food emergencies while bridging the gap between rich and poor countries. As a result, in the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, the participants of the conference defined food security as the “availability at all times of basic world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices” (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2003).

Based on this concept of food security, the Conference proposed a three-point plan to tackle the ongoing crisis and prevent future ones. The first point was the creation of a World Food Bank, to store grains to be used in food emergencies. The second point was the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), to finance food producers worldwide. The third point was the launch of a new forecast system that would map out the state of food security and warn future crises (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 29).

Although in the 1974 Conference there were talks about how to increase the nutritional value of diets and how to guarantee people’s access to food, these issues were not directly included in the concept of food security. Discussions to expand the concept beyond matters of food production and availability started in the 1980s, due to the influence of Amartya Sen’s work “An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation” (1981). For Sen, the main problem in major food crises and famine periods in the past was people’s access to food, rather than a matter of food production alone. He developed the entitlement approach to analyze how access to food would require people to be entitled to conditions to produce or to be able to acquire food (SEN, 1983, pp. 45-46).

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<sup>2</sup> The Green Revolution is a term used to describe the transformations in agriculture in the 1960s and 1970s. It encompassed the mechanization of agriculture combined with the use of fertilizers, pesticides, optimized seeds, and irrigation projects (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 149).

Influenced by Sen's work, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO)<sup>3</sup> publication entitled "World Food Security: a Reappraisal of the Concepts and Approaches" (1983) defined food security as "ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need" (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2006, p. 1). This new concept balanced the focus on food supply with a demand perspective, by ensuring that all should have access to a nutritional diet and quality food.

Then, the World Bank report "Poverty and Hunger" (1986) provided other elements to the definition of food security. The study recognized that the main food problem was not the availability of food per se, as food production was growing at rapid rates, and commodity prices had fallen in the 1980s. Rather, the main cause for food insecurity was poverty, in the sense of lack of purchasing power, so, for the World Bank, it was crucial to raise household incomes through economic growth<sup>4</sup>. The report defined food security as the steady "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life. Its essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it" (WORLD BANK, 1986, p. 1).

In the 1990s, the question of nutrition was incorporated into the debate concerning food security. Although the number of undernourished individuals decreased in the period, there were still almost a billion people that did not have a diet that sufficiently met their basic daily needs. Around 40% of the world population had some sort of micronutrient deficiency, especially among children in sub-Saharan Africa (SHAW, 2007, p. 306).

Under these circumstances, the FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) convened the First International Conference on Nutrition on 1-3 December 1992, in Rome. In the final document of this Conference, entitled "World Declaration on Nutrition", the definition of food security was complemented by a nutritional dimension. Food security would encompass the equitable access to safe food and a nutritionally suitable diet (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS; WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 1992, p. 27).

Finally, in the World Food Summit (WFS), held on 13-17 November 1996, in Rome, the UN defined the concept of food security as it is understood today. The Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action presented the concept of food security as follows: "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1996). This concept also incorporated a human rights approach, based on the "right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger" (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1996).

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3 The FAO was created in 1945 as a specialized agency of the UN designed to handle the challenges in food and agriculture after World War II. Its mandate is to ensure the end of hunger and malnutrition by improving agriculture and food standards globally (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 10).

4 The World Bank defined two types of food insecurity: chronic and transitory. Chronic food insecurity was the inability to acquire food as a consequence of structural poverty and low income. Transitory food insecurity was the temporary inability to acquire food as a result of price inflation, natural disasters, or situations of conflict (WORLD BANK, 1986, p. 1).

In order to guarantee food security on a global scale, the WFS Plan of Action urged countries to adopt strategies on national level while cooperating on regional and international levels. It was necessary to adapt the existing agricultural framework to meet present and future needs while promoting food security for all. The focus was to guarantee a comprehensive access to food for everyone by a combination of sustainable food production and vigorous policies to combat poverty and inequality (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1996).

In sum, the current concept of food security encompasses four dimensions. Firstly, the continued availability of quality and nutritious food, through sustainable patterns of production. Secondly, the steady access to food by all people, which would be achieved through poverty eradication and productive jobs. Thirdly, the promotion of nutritional welfare and a healthy lifestyle, which would require not only a proper diet, but also access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. Fourthly, the constant stability of the other three dimensions, which would entail a peaceful and stable environment (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1996).

### **Food security in the 2000s: End hunger as a global goal in a context of crises**

At the dawn of the new millennium, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) decided to convene the Millennium Summit on 6-8 September 2000, with the purpose of creating global solutions to the main problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The outcome of the conference was a new development agenda, with eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015. The first MDG was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, focusing on three targets: reduce the number of people living with less than \$1.25 a day; promote decent work for all; and decrease the number of people suffering from hunger (UNITED NATIONS, 2015).

The achievement of the MDG 1 was crucial to the promotion of food security in the period of 2000-2015. Firstly, because it brought the fight against hunger to the forefront of international efforts to promote development, consolidating it as a global goal. Secondly, because it institutionalized the multidimensional character of food security, since it connected measures to end hunger with targets related to the end of poverty and the promotion of decent work.

In light of the MDGs, the realization of the World Food Summit (WFS) - Five Years Later on 10-13 June 2002, in Rome, had as goal resuming the 1996 WFS debate towards food security. One of the most controversial debates during this summit was how the globalization and economic liberalization of food production chains, based on the commoditization of food<sup>5</sup>, could hamper the right to food, and, consequently, food security, by making access to food more dependent on monetary resources.

Developed countries claimed that the globalization of food production chains was crucial to increase food availability, distribution and commercialization on a global scale, whereas developing countries counterargued that it was fundamental to set up a code of conduct in order to regulate the power of transnational food enterprises and protect the right to food. Due to a lack of consensus,

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<sup>5</sup> The commoditization of food occurs when it is produced for international trade and considered as a basic good in global production chains.

the Summit Final Declaration recognized only the need for voluntary guidelines regarding the issue, but even so, developed countries (mainly the United States) presented reservations to this point (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2002 a).

In the end, the summit was defined by Jacques Diouf, the FAO Director-General at that time, as the “Summit of the poor”, due to the weak commitment from developed countries to address food security globally (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2002 b).

This lack of political will took its toll in the context of the 2008 global financial and economic crisis, which not only posed negative consequences on income, employment, and welfare, but also resulted in a global food crisis due to the sharp rising of food prices. The crisis demonstrated how fragile the global situation of food security was, leading to serious humanitarian consequences – the number of people malnourished raised from 856 million to 1 billion people right after the crisis (UNITED NATIONS, 2008). The UNGA, concerned about the negative effects of this global food crisis on the attainment of the MDG 1, decided to introduce the topic “Agriculture Development and Food Security” in the agenda of its Second Committee – which discusses economic, financial and development issues – so it could address this situation in the following years (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2008, p. 2)

Aware that the 2008 crisis interrupted the prospects for strengthening food security globally, UN Member States held the World Summit on Food Security on 16-18 November 2009, in Rome, with the purpose of renewing their commitment to the MDG 1. The diagnosis was that “the gravity of the current food crisis is the result of 20 years of under-investment in agriculture and neglect of the sector” (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2009 b).

The Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security were created as a result of the Summit. With the purpose of delivering a global structured response to the crisis, Principles 1, 2 and 4 focused on the issue of partnerships and coordination among stakeholders, including the need for strengthening multilateral institutions. It was also necessary to deepen the comprehensive approach towards food security, so Principles 3 and 5 focused on both short-term actions to protect the most vulnerable groups from hunger; and long-term measures, such as to devise agricultural programs to combat hunger at its core, and to increase investments in sustainable agriculture and nutrition (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2009 a, pp. 2-6).

The progress in implementing the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security was impaired by subsequent food price volatility and climate crises. In 2012, due to the continuous rise of food prices, people living in extreme poverty spent 70% of their income on food (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2012 a, p. 5). The volatility in food prices also triggered political and civil unrest in many countries. On top of that, climate crises negatively affected food production and productivity, which deepened the effects of the food crisis, especially in the Horn of Africa.

It was necessary to make food production more sustainable, and this issue was addressed in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held on 20-22 June 2012, in Rio de Janeiro. On this occasion, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Zero Hunger

Challenge (ZHC), which aimed to accelerate the achievement of MDG 1 by calling governments, private sector and civil society in a collective action to make food systems more sustainable. The ZHC promoted sustainable agriculture at country level to ensure food security, while mitigating the harmful effects of climate change. At the same time, initiatives focused on empowering small-scale food producers, so they could expand their income and access to nutritious food by implementing sustainable agriculture systems (UNITED NATIONS, 2012).

Another important discussion was the need to improve the nutritional aspect of food security. To draw greater attention to this, the UNGA Second Committee decided to include the item “Agriculture development, food security and nutrition” on its agenda for the year of 2013 (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2012 b, p. 8). The deliberations of the Second Committee about the importance of assuring nutritious and safe food for all was reinforced at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), held on 19-21 November 2014, in Rome. The ICN2 considered the following issues as the main challenges to guarantee the nutritional aspect of food security: political conflicts; climate change; the relationship between poverty and malnutrition; and the effect of food price volatility in food security. In the Conference Outcome, it was recommended to incorporate a sustainable development perspective in food production and in the management of natural resources, which would be crucial for the definition of the post-2015 development agenda (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS; WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2014, p. 3).

### **Food security and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

After the completion of the MDGs, the UNGA adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 25 September 2015. This new development agenda was grounded on the concept of sustainable development, which has three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – and can only be achieved in a context of “sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015, p. 4).

Under the scope of the 2030 Agenda, the SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture – comprises five targets related to ending hunger and malnutrition, improving the condition of small-scale food producers, increasing the genetic diversity of seeds and promoting sustainable food systems (UNITED NATIONS, 2019).

Food systems can be defined as the sum of actors and activities needed on the process of food production, availability, distribution, and consumption, as well as the consequences and results of this process. Food systems include private and public sector players, who define the way food systems are organized. The concept also accounts for food environments, which include aspects ranging from economic, social, and environmental factors that may influence food systems, either directly or indirectly. Likewise, consumers play an important role in food systems, as their food choices are influenced by the economic, social, political and cultural settings they are immersed in (HIGH LEVEL PANEL OF EXPERTS IN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, 2014, p. 29; UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, pp. 6-7).

Currently, food systems are structured in a way that it is not possible to reach a state of food security globally. Transnational food enterprises, as the main players, have shaped food systems on a large-scale and less diverse production perspective. Most of the food produced and consumed by food systems is ultra-processed and highly energy-dense, with low nutritional levels due to high concentrations of sugar, fat, and carbohydrates (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 5).

Besides consolidating a low-quality diet worldwide, this system has hindered the social and economic integration of small-scale food producers, who have access to less than 30% of available agricultural land, but even so, they are responsible for producing over 70% of all food available globally. They also lack proper access to both natural and technological resources needed to improve their productivity and their inclusion in food systems. Another problem is that, due to urbanization, small-scale food producers are usually far away from consumers, which makes the availability and distribution of high-quality and fresh food more unequal and expensive (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 4).

Additionally, current food production and consumption patterns pose a serious environmental threat: firstly, because they are an important source of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases emissions; secondly, because they put natural resources under pressure as a result of land degradation, the deterioration of ecosystems, as well as the indiscriminate use of essential resources, such as water and fishery (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 6).

The proposition of the 2030 Agenda and its SDG 2 is to change food systems through a sustainable development perspective. In fact, attempts to make food systems more sustainable date back the 1980s, but then, the focus was mainly on the production and availability aspects of food security. The 2030 Agenda, on the other hand, has moved towards a holistic approach, grounded on a balance between increasing food production and productivity, while preserving biodiversity, strengthening the capacity to adjust to adverse circumstances caused by climate change, and empowering small-scale food producers (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015, p. 15).

Thus, the concept of sustainable food systems that emerges from the 2030 Agenda aims at inciting more positive responses from food systems so they can truly promote food security. Making food systems sustainable requires a triple approach. Firstly, it is centered at promoting the adjustment and resilience of food systems. Secondly, it aims to guarantee that food systems are mindful of the environment and actively engaged to protect it. Thirdly, it intends to promote inclusiveness and equality among different social groups, especially those subjected to greater vulnerability (HIGH LEVEL PANEL OF EXPERTS IN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, 2014, p. 30).

Guided by this approach, the first necessary change in food systems is to diversify agricultural structure and vary the types of food produced and consumed, considering different food environments. The second change needed is the strengthening of small-scale food producers, so they are able to provide fresher and more nutrient-rich food. That would require improving the inclusiveness of food systems for the most vulnerable small farmers, such as women and indigenous people, giving them the means to prosper both economically and socially (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 9).

Another important change towards sustainability is reducing food loss and waste. Food loss refers to a decrease in the mass of food produced at one or more production stages. Food waste means a loss of food during consumption. Both impact sustainability and food security because one of the main reasons for food loss and waste is the mismanagement of resources, especially natural resources, which results in environmental pressure and reduction of food availability. Estimates show that 1.3 billion tons of food is lost or wasted annually, and to overcome this problem, it is necessary not only to make food production more efficient in terms of resource management, infrastructure, and logistics, but also to change consumption patterns towards fresh food and bulk food, which generate less waste (HIGH LEVEL PANEL OF EXPERTS IN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, 2014, p. 11; p. 93).

In the UNGA Second Committee, regional and political groups have supported different initiatives to make food systems sustainable. The European Union has been vocal about the need of diversifying food production through investments in research and sustainable management of natural resources. The group has also encouraged a gender perspective in the empowerment of small-scale farmers, supporting measures to give women equal access over land and agricultural resources (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2014, p. 2).

Developing countries, organized in the Group of 77, have advocated for measures such as natural-based solutions as a way to address the linkages among sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, and rural transformation. For the Group of African States, the promotion of sustainable food systems is crucial to build resilience against recurrent food security crises in the continent. This group has supported initiatives that combine poverty reduction with strengthening the access of vulnerable rural population to land and agricultural resources (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 a, p. 2; p. 4).

Over the last year, the UNGA has been concerned about the fact that changes in food systems are not being done in the pace required to achieve SDG 2 by 2030. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss ways of accelerating the implementation of sustainable food systems, especially in a context marked by two of the biggest threats to food security nowadays: climate change and conflicts.

### **Accelerating food security through sustainable food systems**

Since 2018, the relationship between climate change and conflicts has been one of the main triggers of hunger and malnutrition globally. The prospects are not optimistic: the UNGA Second Committee, on its resolution 74/242, of 19 December 2019, expressed its concern "(...) that the current pace and scope of implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2 is unlikely to promote the transformational change needed and that its targets will not be achieved in many parts of the world", so it called for "(...) additional efforts to support the transformational change needed" (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 c, p. 3).

Food systems are simultaneously one of the main causes and victims of climate change. On one hand, the energy used in the production, trade, and consumption of food accounts for 26% of the total of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019

b, p.12). On the other hand, climate change has been a major catalyzer of food insecurity globally, and food systems are very vulnerable to it since it affects the availability, access, utilization, and stability of nutritious food.

Climate change has affected food production and productivity on many fronts. Global warming and the volatility of weather have jeopardized biodiversity and the quality of forestry, water, and soil, all of which we depend on to survive and produce food. The increase in global temperature has mitigated soil nutrients, which, consequently, has reduced the nutrient levels of plants and animals, culminating in diseases in crop yields and livestock. Sea level rise has increased the occurrence of water salinization, floods, and droughts, negatively affecting fishery and aquaculture, which are the main source of food in many countries. In addition, the loss of genetic diversity of plants and livestock has reduced the ability of food systems to adapt and be more resilient to changes in environmental conditions (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2016, p. 5; UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 4).

In 2018, climate change and natural disasters put 29 million people in a situation of acute food insecurity, and poor and vulnerable communities were the most affected, due to the lack of physical and economic access to food. Most poor rural communities rely on agricultural production for their survival, but due to the negative impacts of climate change on their productivity, their access to food and income becomes even more difficult (FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION NETWORK, 2019, p. 2).

Women and children are also more vulnerable to food insecurity due to climate change. It is estimated that “by 2050, the risk of hunger and child malnutrition could increase by up to 20 per cent due to climate change” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 6).

Climate-related shocks – such as tropical storms, floods, and droughts – are also aggravating factors in countries that are currently undergoing conflict and insecurity, such as Afghanistan, Syria, and countries in the Sahel region, such as Ethiopia<sup>6</sup>. The problem is that “countries whose economic bases have been destroyed by years of conflict cannot cope with the consequences of (recurrent) natural disasters” (FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION NETWORK, 2019, p. 19). Conflicts combined with climate-related shocks lead to food insecurity because this situation forces people to displace and deprives them of their basic resources to produce and access food, such as land and income. Furthermore, food markets are disturbed, which causes imbalances in food prices and makes access to food more difficult<sup>7</sup>.

Many people affected by conflict and climate-related shocks can only rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic food needs, which is not always reliable due to the difficulty of delivering it in an unimpeded way. Moreover, humanitarian assistance works as a relief in emergency situations, so it does not address the root causes of food insecurity in these countries (FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION NETWORK, 2019, p.5).

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<sup>6</sup> In the Sahel region, rainfall deficits since 2017 have deteriorated food security and contributed to the situation of conflict and crisis. Afghanistan and Syria have faced severe droughts since 2018, which have impaired agricultural production and led both countries to a situation of food insecurity emergency (FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION NETWORK, 2019, p. 19; p. 26).

<sup>7</sup> As highlighted by the UN Security Council in its Resolution 2417, of 28 May 2018, food insecurity can be directly connected to the disruption of conflicts (FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION NETWORK, 2019, p. 5).

Once again, sustainable food systems are key to address these issues and to accelerate the achievement of SDG 2 in the long term. Since 2018, the UNGA Second Committee has focused on practices that could improve resilience and consolidate changes towards sustainable food systems.

An important practice is agroecology, which has been developed since the 1920s and is based on family farming and indigenous agricultural practices prior to the Green Revolution. Agroecological approaches aim at reviewing and counterpointing the methods of the Green Revolution, because these methods have endangered the environment without solving the issue of global hunger (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2018, p. 1).

By combining ancient agricultural knowledge with a scientific approach and clean technologies, agroecology seeks to establish balance and harmony between nature and food systems. The goal is to produce more food while conserving biodiversity with less environmental impacts and improving levels of food nutrition. Agroecology also has a political dimension, and it is a social movement as well, fighting for the rights of nature, family farmers, women and indigenous people (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 2018, p. 2).

Another practice, known as Agriculture 4.0, is defined as the introduction of new technologies and innovations in food systems in order to drive sustainable practices. One example is precision agriculture. It applies technologies such as drones, satellite information and remote sensing technology to establish a data-driven decision-making on how to minimize the use of resources and maximize agricultural output. Another example is smart farms, which use technologies such as gene editing to make yields more resilient to extreme weather conditions or to specific stresses such as pests and diseases. Of course, the main concern is how to make these costly technologies accessible for developing and least developed countries in general, and small-scale food producers in specific. For the UNGA, making these technologies available will require measures such as “pro-poor technology and innovations developed and made available through technology transfer and other means” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 15).

A specific practice designed to address the linkages between food insecurity, conflicts and climate-related shocks is the World Food Programme (WFP) Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus initiative. With this strategy, the WFP plans to not only deploy short-term humanitarian action to relief people from extreme hunger and malnutrition, but also to tackle the roots of food insecurity with long-lasting solutions that will provide both social protection and strengthening the resilience of local and national food systems (WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, 2018, p. 1).

In face of current challenges, it is urgent to promote sustainable food systems as a way of not only promptly accelerating food security worldwide but also achieving the goal of ending hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

## **Final considerations**

The consolidation of the concept of food security in the last four decades has been crucial to driving a multidimensional perspective in international efforts towards ending hunger. Promoting food security globally means not only increasing food production and productivity, but also addressing

inequalities related to nutrition and economic and physical access to food. Besides, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its SDG 2 has highlighted the need for integrating a sustainable development perspective into food systems as a way of truly achieving a state of food security globally.

Current food systems have proved to be inefficient to end hunger and malnutrition, because they are not able to distribute diverse and high-quality food. Existing food systems have also proved to harm the environment by putting pressure on natural resources and threatening biodiversity. The lack of inclusiveness is another problem, since the prevailing food systems exclude important players to food security, such as small-scale food producers, women, and indigenous people.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to transition to sustainable food systems to tackle problems that are interconnected, such as hunger, poverty, conflicts, and climate-related shocks. Making food systems sustainable means adopting measures to improve their resilience to reduce pressures over ecosystems while improving food security to present and future generations.

This change will firstly require adapting food systems to climate change by reducing food loss and waste, building a better urban-rural connection, and increasing the use of sustainable technologies. Secondly, it will entail the promotion of family farming and agroecology, so food systems can be more inclusive, sustainable, nutritious, and promote the right to food. Thirdly, it will involve a long-term strategy on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The promotion of long-lasting sustainable development in conflicted countries is key to end both armed conflicts and climate-related shocks that are catalyzers of food insecurity.

These actions are even more urgent considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemics that, combined with a global economic and social crisis, have disrupted a new global wave of food insecurity that will constrain the possibilities of achieving SDG 2 by 2030 even more. Thus, there are three crucial questions to be addressed by the UNGA Second Committee on its agenda item "Agricultural development, food security and nutrition":

1. What are the necessary measures to speed up the creation of sustainable food systems?
2. Which should be the short-term and long-term actions to accelerate the implementation of SDG 2, especially in countries affected by food insecurity resulted from conflict and climate-related shocks?
3. How to properly address the different challenges to food security in developed and developing and least developed countries, especially considering the technology gap?

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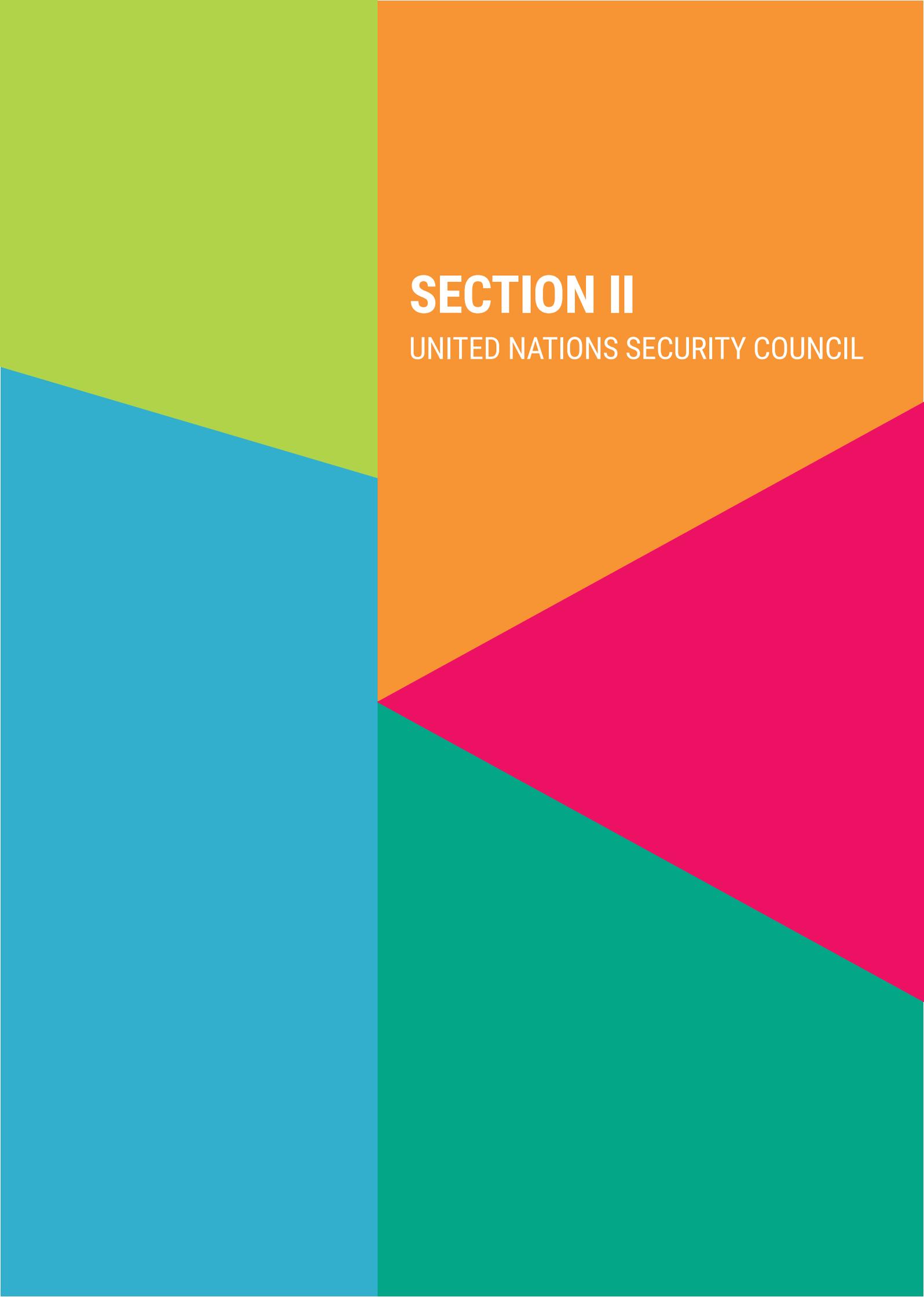
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# **SECTION II**

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

## THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

*Arthur Magro Machado  
Lais Cavallin Rodrigues*

### Introduction

Created in 1945, through the Charter of the United Nations (UN), the Security Council was structured as one of six main organs of the Organization and its mandate and procedures were established under Chapters V, VI, VII and VIII of the Charter. According to them, the Council's primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. Its composition is defined under Article 23, which states that the Council consists of 15 Members-States, of which five are permanent members - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States - and 10 are non-permanent members, and these are elected by the General Assembly for a two-year term. Article 27 of the UN Charter further establishes voting procedures. According to the text, each member (permanent and non-permanent) of the UN Security Council (UNSC) has one vote and, in order for any decision to be taken, a minimum of nine affirmative votes is required. However, a negative vote casted by any of the permanent members is considered a veto to the resolution and prevents its approval (UNITED NATIONS, 2020).

In order to accomplish its mandate, the Council has different tools, which range from the peaceful settlement of disputes to sanctions, or even the collective use of force. It is expected that the Council uses these different options in a progressive scale, proportionate to the threat faced (UNITED NATIONS, 2020). Noteworthy, is that the organ, since the 2000s, is also expected to not only solve disputes and achieve peace agreements, but also to monitor the situation in a country as it treads its path towards peace and stability. This broad perception of peace understands the stabilization process as a long-term effort, which also involves the promotion of sustainable development and human rights. Consequently, it became harder for the Council to identify the right moment to step back and to ensure a successful transition from international support to national sovereignty. Since the concept of "peace consolidation", which entails the ideas just presented, has been more developed in the last 20 years, the UNSC still struggles to conduct the cases of countries that, despite having been torn apart by conflicts in the past, have completed the roadmap for peace in the present and are reluctant to continue under the Council's supervision (PARIS, 2008, pp. 8-10).

The situation in Burundi is one of these cases. Added to the organ's agenda in 1993, due to the violent civil conflict that engulfed the country, the item is still under consideration of the Council, but through different lenses. The peace agreement signed in the early 2000s failed to address the root causes of conflict, raising great challenges to peacebuilding in Burundi. Consequently, tensions have mounted and, since 2010, recurrent complaints against the Government emerged – charges of human rights violations, war crimes and genocide – that may compromise stability (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020; UNITED NATIONS, 1995, p. 496).

It is not clear, however, to what extent the Council can influence the situation. While some representatives consider that the situation in Burundi should no longer be in the organ's agenda;

others argue that the Security Council should remain seized of the matter, as the escalation of violence portrays a potential threat to international security. The situation in Burundi is an expression of one of the greatest challenges to the Security Council that is to identify when a country can be considered at peace: is the absence of armed conflict enough? If it is not, what are the boundaries to international engagement? To consider such a relevant issue, this chapter is divided in three sections, besides this introduction: the first section presents the historical background of the issue and how the topic was introduced in the United Nations agenda. The second section will present the recent discussion on the topic in the Security Council and reflect on conceptualization of peace and its implications to the situation in Burundi; lastly, the final section will bring some concluding remarks and questions to be considered.

## **The situation in Burundi**

The current situation in Burundi may seem a sporadic escalation of tensions and the result of the aggravation of political disputes. However, looking back at the country's history it is possible to understand that the recurrent failure in addressing the root causes of conflict, both by national and international efforts is the reason behind this protracted crisis. From the UNSC perspective, the agenda item challenged the organ to adapt its approach and also to engage with regional institutions in order to try to ensure peace consolidation. This section will highlight some of the elements and decisions that may have conducted Burundi to its current deadlock.

### *Understanding how Burundi's past influences the current situation of instability*

Burundi is a small African country, whose population is divided into two major ethnic groups: Hutus and Tutsis. This classification was determined during the colonial period by the Belgian authorities. Burundi became independent from Belgium in 1962 and for four years it was ruled by a monarchic system. In 1966, the monarchy was overthrown and the country officially became the Republic of Burundi. Its political history is marked by several *coup d'état*, as there are not only two rival ethnic groups, but several political groups within each ethnic group aiming for power. This political instability has resulted in recurrent political, economic and sociocultural crises (UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS, 2000, pp. 15-17).

In the 1990s, mirroring the ethnic disputes in its neighbor Rwanda, the Hutu-Tutsi divide also sparked a violent civil conflict in Burundi, after the Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, was killed by the opposition. The protracted conflict involved different political groups in the country and was marked by massive and deliberate killings, acts of genocide, war crimes and widespread violence (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020; UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS, 2000, p. 17). By the end of the 1990s, negotiations evolved with some international support and with the willingness of different Burundian parties to put an end to the armed conflict. Negotiations began in June 1998 and were attended by three rebel groups, external mediators and civic and religious organizations<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence of this effort, the Arusha Peace

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<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Church had a key role as a mediator between competing factions in 1994 (UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, 2020).

and Reconciliation Agreement was elaborated in 2000: the document is actually comprised by a set of agreements signed involving different national and international actors (UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, 2020).

There was unanimity among those present in the negotiations that the establishment of a new political, economic, social and judicial order in Burundi was essential. Therefore, other than putting an official end to hostilities, the Arusha agreements also determined a roadmap to guide Burundi's stabilization process. For example, it brought elements aimed at combating impunity for crimes, eradicating acts of genocide, preventing human rights violations and implementing awareness and education programs throughout the national territory. It turned illegal all political associations and institutions that encouraged ethnic, regional, religious or gender discrimination. More generally, it reinforced the importance of ensuring a qualified, transparent and responsible public administration that values the general interests of the Burundian population, without segregating ethnic communities. The agreements also created the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission – which would have the function of investigating, arbitrating, reconciling and holding the perpetrators of war crimes accountable (UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS, 2000, pp. 18-20).

The Arusha Peace Accords also indicated the foundations of a new Constitution, which had the responsibility of ensuring an environment conducive to democracy, equality and ethnic and political tolerance: in this sense, ethnic communities were reintegrated into Burundian society and into State's institutions, and powers were shared between the different political stakeholders. Also, armed groups were allowed to become political parties if renouncing violence, generating a greater expectation of stabilization and ensuring national reconciliation, socioeconomic development and prevention of *coups d'état* (UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS, 2000, pp. 17-18).

The Constitution was promulgated in 2004 and started a period of peace-building and restoration in Burundi, with the help of the international community. However, even with all these efforts, the Arusha agreements failed in addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as the political disputes and the ethnic divide. Consequently, stability was fragile and new reports of grave human rights violations and political unrest emerged in the country, escalating tensions by the end of the 2000s. The country was preparing to hold its first direct presidential elections in 2010, but some feared that the process could be undermined by the lack of transparency and the inadequate representation of all parties in the presidential race. Due to many allegations of fraud, the opposition boycotted the elections and Pierre Nkurunziza, who had been indirectly elected by the Parliament in 2005, was not challenged and won the bid. A growing distrust between the government and opposition undermined the political environment in the following years (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2013; 2020; UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS, 2000, p. 87).

The political tensions, combined with increased political persecution, violent attacks and harassment also jeopardized the following elections, held in 2015, and raised concerns of the international community that the commitments foreseen in the Burundian Constitution would not

be respected. Even though the law established a two-mandate limit to presidents, for example, Nkurunziza was pressuring the Parliament to change some of the power-sharing agreements between Hutus and Tutsis and allow for an expansion of the mandates limit that would allow him to run in the 2015 elections. He managed to ensure flexibilization and was re-elected for a controversial third-term, under accusations of fraud (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2013; 2014).

Since then, there has been a significant increase in the political deadlock in the country, as the parties became unwilling to engage in dialogue, fueling tensions. Attacks against governmental and military facilities resulted, more than once, in a violent backlash from the government and accusations of mass murder, political persecution and gender-based violence. The Imbonerakure, a youth militia linked to Nkurunziza's party, was also accused of grave violations of human rights, conducting forced abductions, mass rape and torture. Also, intimidation against political opponents escalated and media was recurrently attacked, hindering its freedom of speech. As a consequence, many Burundians decided to flee the country, starting a refugee flow to neighboring countries. Within national borders, the humanitarian crisis was also aggravated, since the political instability greatly compromised economic policies and public services (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 a, pp. 3-4).

In face of that, president Nkurunziza was taken to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is responsible for prosecuting individuals accused of committing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and/or the crime of aggression. Discrediting the accusations, Burundi decides to cease its membership of the ICC, accusing the court of being biased<sup>2</sup> (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 c, pp. 6-7).

In 2018, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), Nkurunziza's party, called for a national referendum to amend the Constitution and redefine the presidential mandate to seven years, which could be renewed only once. However, according to the new text, previous mandates would not be considered, meaning that Nkurunziza could run again twice. The referendum proposal also targeted Constitution's articles that addressed mechanisms to prevent genocide, ensure power-sharing between ethnicities and safeguard democracy. The government threatened to punish those who voted against the proposal and intimidated opposition, which, despite denouncing the process, did not organize a counter-campaign. As a result, the changes were approved, reinforcing CNDD-FDD control over the government and its repression capabilities, jeopardizing efforts made since the Arusha Peace Agreements to stabilize the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 a, pp. 4-6). Consequently, the democratic space was even more restricted, worrying national and international actors about the impacts of such decision to the following elections (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 d, p. 8).

In the same year, as an effort to improve dialogue, members of the Burundian ministry called a meeting with the different political parties to discuss the elections. So, they were intended to

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<sup>2</sup> The ICC still has jurisdiction to investigate the crimes that occurred during the period when Burundi was a member. It has initiated an investigation into the alleged violations and crimes that occurred between 2015 and 2017 – an act that was harshly criticized and disapproved by the Burundian government (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 c, pp. 6-7).

align and agree on their interests in relation to the definitive consolidation of peace, promotion of democracy, political and ethical tolerance, human rights, freedom of expression and definition and compliance with the electoral code. As a result, 20 of the 22 political parties have established a regulation for the 2020 elections (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 d, p. 2).

In May 2020, new presidential elections were held amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Nkurunziza chose not to run, but indicated a candidate, Evariste Ndayishimiye, who secured almost 70% of the voting and was elected president. Again, the opposition accused the government of intimidation and fraud, questioning the legitimacy of both the electoral process and the results (“BURUNDI...”, 2020).

As we could see, Burundi’s situation is both grave and delicate. Grave because since the root causes of conflict were not adequately addressed: they resisted the peace agreement and created a pervasive political tension within the country, hindering the efforts towards stabilization. In this context, the ethnic disputes worsened and political persecution culminated in many reports of renewed human rights violations. The situation is also delicate because the political deterioration was not the result of a declaration of conflict between concurring groups, instead, what we are witnessing in Burundi is a progressive effort to undermine political institutions, concentrate power in the executive branch and eliminate the mechanisms foreseen in the Arusha agreements to ensure democracy and power-sharing. In face of that, the UNSC is challenged to analyze whether the absence of a “declared” conflict is enough to state that a country is peaceful. Also, since Burundi has been holding elections and at least, theoretically, following some of the formalities of democracy, should it still be in the Council’s agenda?

### *The Situation in Burundi addressed by the United Nations*

The situation in Burundi, as an agenda item of the Council, is an interesting example of the progressive approach that the organ has with issues threatening international peace and security, from a context of civil war to an effort of building and consolidating peace. The Situation in Burundi came to the Council’s attention following the military *coup d’état* of October 1993 in the country. In response, through Resolution 1012 (1993), the UNSC established an international commission of inquiry to investigate the circumstances of the assassination of Burundi’s president, identify the involved parties in the massacres that followed, and also monitor the political situation to provide the Council with information to proceed its consideration of the new agenda item (UNITED NATIONS, 1995, p. 496; p. 498; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 1995, p. 2).

In the years that followed, the UNSC had the major role of fostering negotiations between rival political groups in Burundi. However, dealing simultaneously with tensions in Rwanda and Bosnia, the UNSC chose to support the regional organization, Organization of African Unity (OAU)<sup>3</sup>, in taking the lead of the efforts on the ground. With the signature of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation

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<sup>3</sup> When the civil war actually began, African Unity had a relevant involvement in the chaining of the conflict. In order to help the Burundian government to deal with the conflict situation, African Unity was an important actor, not only in the process of restoring democratic institutions, but also in mobilizing efforts to stabilize the situation. Because of its importance, the Security Council requested the creation of a voluntary fund, with the intention of support the sending of a mission of the Organization of African Unity, which together with the Secretary-General, would be responsible for monitoring the situation in Burundi (UNITED NATIONS, 1995, pp. 497-498).

Agreement, in 2000, a new phase began with the priorities of implementing the agreement, ensuring that the cease fire involved all armed groups, and leading the path towards reconstruction. Still with a leading role, the African Union – which replaced the OAU - created in 2003 under the Council's authorization its first mission, the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB), which was tasked with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, and with creating adequate conditions to the later deployment of an UN peace operation (BOSHOF; VRAY, 2006; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2004, pp. 3-4).

In the following year, Resolution 1545 (2004) established the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), a peacekeeping operation mandated mainly with activities related to the implementation of ceasefire, disarmament and institutional reforms. What is interesting is that ONUB started by incorporating existing AMIB forces on the ground, through a process of authority transfer between the OAU and the UN. Also, the operation was authorized to use “all necessary means” to advance demobilization, ensure the cease fire agreements and guarantee the security conditions to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Burundi (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2004, pp. 3-4). ONUB was essential in ensuring a stable and conducive environment to the approval of national Constitution and in supporting electoral process.

With the end of ONUB's mandate by the end of 2006, the Council established the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), which should carry on activities related to supporting institutional reform in the country, assisting the government with social and economic policies, and fostering ethnic dialogue. The task, however, was not easy, since during its existence from 2006 to 2010, BINUB faced a deteriorating political and security situation, with confrontations between the government forces and the opposition. It was clear, at that point, that a real threat to the consolidation of peace persisted in Burundi (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2006, pp. 2-3; 2010, p. 2). Notwithstanding the recurrent allegations of human rights violations and political unrest, the Council chose to replace BINUB with the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), through the adoption of Resolution 1959 (2010). In the occasion, the BNUB<sup>4</sup> was defined as “a significantly scaled-down United Nations presence, for an initial period of 12 months (...), to support the progress achieved in recent years by all national stakeholders in consolidations peace, democracy and development in Burundi” (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2010, p. 2). BNUB was actually seen as a part of the transitional process, which entails the progressive reduction of international presence in the country.

In this sense, BNUB also had to end and, in 2014, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare the transfer of appropriate responsibilities from BNUB to the United Nations Country Team, ending its presence in the Burundi. The regional organizations, however, maintained their presence and have now central roles in advancing dialogue. The African Union even attempted to deploy a robust prevention and protection mission, but the political divide between its members prevented

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4 The new operation should focus on and give its support to the Government in areas such, but not limited to: strengthening national institutions, in participle those under the judicial and parliamentary scope; fighting impunity; promoting human rights; ensuring public finance strategies and policies focus on peacebuilding and equitable growth; providing support on regional integration issues (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2010, pp. 2-3).

the decision's approval. It is also interesting to note that, despite supporting regional institutions, such as the African Union and the East African Community (EAC)<sup>5</sup>, in resolving tensions in Burundi, the Council has failed in aligning positions with these, resulting in a limited international response to increased violence in the country (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2014, p. 3; 2015, pp. 2-3).

From the end of 2014 to 2016, the Council repeatedly expressed its concern on the grave accusations against the government, Nkurunziza's attempt to seize power and the deteriorating security situation. But these responses were not enough to impede the escalation of tensions. In 2016, through the adoption on the Resolution 2279 (2016), the CSNU urged the Government of Burundi and all stakeholders to extend their cooperation through the EAC-led, AU-endorsed Mediator on reaching a consensus on participants of a renewed inter-Burundian dialogue. In the same year, the UNSC would issue its last resolution on the situation of Burundi so far, in an effort to help reducing ongoing violence in the country. Through Resolution 2303 (2016), the Security Council established a UN police component of 228 police officers with the mandate of monitoring the security and human rights situation, and also requested the Secretary-General to substantially increase the number of political officers in Burundi in order to strength the dialogue efforts. Again, the initiative was insufficient to counter violence and the consolidation of peace seemed more and more compromised (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2016 a, p. 3; 2016 c, p. 4).

Initially a civil war, the country reached a cease-fire, agreed on peace treaties and peacebuilding operations – under Chapter VII of UN Charter – were established in order to promote the respect of those agreements. While undergoing challenges in maintaining what have been achieved so far, the Security Council adapted its mission in order to meet the actual needs regarding peace consolidation and further reconstruction of Burundian national institutions. But, has it been sufficient?

Since 2016 the Council has not been able to agree on a resolution, while political unrest and accusation on the violation of human rights, persecution of opposition and restriction of the media are more frequent every day. At this point, the UNSC has to face a new challenge: would it be capable of adapting its approach to Burundi and address the fragile balance between international actions and sovereignty?

### **Is the Council ready to tackle the challenge in Burundi?**

It is important to highlight that the situation in Burundi represents a key development to the UNSC approach to peace consolidation and to its ability of dealing with countries in transition from international support to national ownership. As we presented in the previous section, the growing concern over the continuous allegations of violations on the Arusha Agreements, which are

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<sup>5</sup> Besides their relevance during the civil war, regional institutions such as the African Union – former African Unity – and the East African Community (EAC) play an essential role in monitoring the situation in Burundi. These are responsible for applying sanctions, and even freezing assets, always aiming to prevent and cease the continuation of violence. Besides that, specifically concerning EAC, the institution was held responsible for moderating the discussions on reassessing ways and means to help the country to reach a peaceful solution through the inter-Burundian Dialogue (UN NEWS, 2018; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015, pp. 2-3).

a central element for the stabilization and consolidation of peace in the country, exposes a delicate situation in Burundi. It inevitably raises the issue of clarifying what is the Council's understanding of peace: is it merely the absence of armed conflict or does it include sustainable development and the promotion of human rights? What is at stake with the perpetuation of violence within Burundian national borders? And more importantly, what further actions can the UN take?

### *The divides within the Council*

Since 2016, when the last resolution on the item was issued, the decision-making process in the UNSC has been hampered by a great divide among Member States, especially the permanent ones, leading any proposed document to be vetoed. Even though all sides raise grave concern to the situation in Burundi, from the reports on human rights violations to the pervasive political instability, members differ in the approach they believe the Council should take towards the African country. Something that goes back to a permanent tension present in the UN since its very foundation: what is the right balance between sovereignty and international action?

On the one hand, there are some Council members who, although refraining from a direct action in Burundi, believe that the situation should be closely monitored by the organ, especially due to the country's recent past of conflict and consolidation of peace. Delegations such as France, United Kingdom, United States believe that it is within the role of the Council to keep an eye on the realization of elections in the country, since moments like this are key to secure national stability. These delegations also reinforce the reports of serious human rights violations, which in their opinion may not be neglected by the UNSC as it may hinder the possibilities of peace to Burundi (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 b, p. 6, pp. 16-17; 2019, pp. 7-9).

On the other hand, there are Council Members who consider the extensive focus of the UNSC on Burundi as an interference in domestic affairs and an overstepping of sovereignty. Russia and China, for example, argue that the issues relating to the presidential elections should not be discussed by anyone other than Burundi itself, as it in their belief the country has presented efforts towards advancing stability, such as the realization of elections and the compromise of Nkurunziza of not running for a fourth term. To these members, the Council's real focus should be to facilitate the resumption of a large-scale negotiation process and to support regional organizations in fostering dialogue. For them, the country no longer represents a threat to international peace and security, and the Burundian people is capable of independently solving the current internal social-political problems without the need for external interference (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 b, p. 7; p. 19; 2019, pp. 9- 14).

Interestingly, Burundi's position has also been towards reinforcing its sovereignty to dismiss the UNSC. In the most recent Council meetings, the Burundian representatives have continuously stressed that the country does not represent a threat to international peace and stability and, therefore, should not continue as an agenda item to the UNSC. Burundi argues that its maintenance in the Council's agenda violates the regulation foreseen in the UN Charter, which clearly states the importance of respecting sovereignty. According to its representatives, the commitments set out

in the Arusha agreements are being followed by Burundi, which keeps investing in the improvement of its political and security situation. Moreover, he claims that Burundi is ratifying international conventions with the aim of increasingly committing itself to the protection of human rights (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 a, pp. 11-12; 2019, pp- 20-21).

Therefore, in the current state of the agenda item, the main point under discussion is whether the Council's actions would or would not infringe Burundi's national sovereignty. As it was presented in this section, while some countries recognize the Council's support to Burundi, considering that this stage is now complete and that the country no longer represents a threat to international peace and security; other Council members argue that further actions must be considered as the situation in the country indicates fragile institutions, and it may generate future instabilities to the region. Inevitably, one should ask: if the Council's role was originally to support Burundi in its transition to peace, what is peace and when is the moment to leave an agenda item behind?

### *Is Burundi in peace?*

Even though the word "peace" is widely used and its meaning seems simple to be grasped, the concept behind the term is very complex. According to Johan Galtung (1996, pp. 3-6), the father of Peace Studies, the more commonly used sense of peace as the absence of conflict, is merely one possible definition of this state instead of the only one. This definition is recognized as "negative peace", involving only the military dimension. However, Galtung argued that there is more to peace than just the absence of conflict, and that in most cases armed conflict was only the culmination of a deeper and longer process of undermining peace. In this sense, peace should encompass more than that, it should include the conditions conducive to a peaceful context, which are achieved through development, the rule of law and the promotion of human rights. This multidimensional peace is often labeled as "positive peace".

Noteworthy is that the UN Charter, despite being drafted prior to the abovementioned conceptualization of peace, also highlights the intrinsic correlation between what became known as its pillars: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. For example, Article 55 states that the role of the UN to promote international peace, necessarily encompasses the promotion of the "(...) conditions of economic and social progress and development (...)" and the "(...) universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms (...)" (UNITED NATIONS, 2020). Hence, a peaceful international system, or even a peaceful country, is where these conditions are met. However, the same Charter repeatedly implies that peace is the absence of conflict, especially in the chapters that mention the UNSC: the organ itself has for decades interpreted peace as "negative peace".

The 1990s, though, were a turning point in the Council's approach to peace. Emerging from the unprecedented violent civil conflicts, the UNSC understood that ensuring a ceasefire not always represents achieving peace, and that, very often, conflicts and instability were deeply rooted in a broader fragile context. In response, the idea of peace consolidation was forged, aiming at ensuring international support so that countries torn apart by conflict could be rebuilt, following their path

towards a sustainable peace. This even changed the tools that the Council used to address its agenda items: peace operations were reinvented in order to adequately incorporate these new demands.

As referred to by Paris (2008, p. 2; p. 9), other types of peace operations were introduced in the Council's practice in 1992. One of them was peacebuilding, which would aim at strengthening peace in a post-conflict scenario by reconstructing national infrastructure; promoting the rule of law alongside reestablishing and stabilizing public institutions; and capacitating national enforcement units, such as police and militaries. Through this, the Council was committing to offer a long-term support to countries that faced conflict: the absence of armed conflict was no longer seen as enough to a peaceful setting.

Fourteen years later, in its Resolution 2282 (2016), the Security Council recalled some key aspects on the concept of peacebuilding and sustaining peace – it has been recognized that United Nations peacebuilding effort must comprehend an adequate course of action in sustaining peace and preventing further conflicts. According to the text, while “peacebuilding” designates a political process (which comprehends actions based on the co-related values of development, peace and security, and human rights) that aims to prevent the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of a conflict (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2016 b, p. 1); “sustaining peace” encompasses a wide process that aims to access all needs within a society, by activities that may include the prevention of further conflicts, “addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and towards recovery, reconstruction and development” (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2016 b, p. 2). But then, an important question arises: when should UNSC peace consolidation support cease to be provided?

In Burundi, following the ceasefire and the adoption of the Arusha Agreements, the UNSC has deployed peacebuilding operations – the first one under Chapter VII of UN Charter – in order to promote the respect of these agreements and the establishment of peace. While undergoing challenges in maintaining what have been achieved so far, the Council adapted its operations to meet new demands on the ground regarding peace consolidation and further reconstruction of stable institutions. As we saw in the previous section, the UNSC progressively changed its approach to Burundi, revising the mandate of its operations up to the point it has transferred its responsibilities to the country team and to regional organizations. In this sense, the absence of conflict, and the existence of a peace agreement, was considered by the Council enough to cease its operations on the ground.

Notwithstanding, as we also presented in this chapter, the “negative peace” of Burundi was a misrepresentation of the actual tensions in the country and only concealed the recurrent violation of human rights and the persistent lack of development, highlighting that a positive peace was still far away. In other words, even though Burundi no longer represented a classical threat to peace – as an armed conflict – the country was still in need of reconstruction and consolidation of peace, to prevent re-insurgence of conflict.

Therefore, this complex definition of considering whether Burundi is or not at peace is what currently lies in front of Council members. In face of that, it is also important to remember that the

UN Charter acknowledges that the UNSC itself shall determine what may be considered as a threat to peace, or a breach of the peace, or lastly an act of aggression, and, therefore, also what is peace. And the same Charter states that sovereign equality is reserved to all Member-States, and that the UN may not intervene in domestic matters of its members, except when it identifies a threat to peace and security (UNITED NATIONS, 2020).

In that sense, the contradiction finds its way on the following thought: if Burundi is considered peaceful, and no longer a threat to international peace and security, further UNSC action may overstep sovereignty; however, if the “positive peace” approach is used, can the current situation in Burundi be considered peaceful? Therefore, the main point under discussion, rather than what action the Security Council must take, is should it take any further action at all?

### **Final considerations**

Bearing in mind what has been said, some final considerations are important in order to promote fruitful discussions in the near future. The situation in Burundi poses further questions on the actions taken by the UN besides its involvement in the country. It not only questions the effectiveness of what has been done up to this point to consolidate peace, but also the UN’s own criteria in defining what peace is. Although, for some, since Burundi no longer presents an armed conflict and is acting in accordance with its national Constitution, which would exclude it from the UNSC agenda, for others, the situation still represents a threat to international peace and security. The current debate in the Security Council is blocked by the lack of consensus and further actions are not likely to take place in the near future. While the members of the UNSC continue to disagree on the issue, the international community denounces the Burundian government for perpetuating violations of Human Rights and the Arusha Agreements, which undermine the very idea of peace.

In that sense, while debating on the situation in Burundi, delegates should acknowledge the following three questions:

1. Does the absence of armed conflict define peace?
2. Can the reports of human rights violations in Burundi be considered a breach of world peace?
3. How should the Council observe the situation in Burundi? Is the item ready to be off the organ’s agenda?

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## YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

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### Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is an important organ of the United Nations (UN) that consists of five permanent members (United States of America, United Kingdom, China, France and Russia) and ten non-permanent members, elected for a term of two years by the UN General Assembly. The Council's decisions are issued as resolutions, which require nine affirmative votes and no negative vote from any of the permanent members, in order to be approved (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 a).

According Chapter V of UN Charter, the Council's primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. UNSC Member States can investigate any situation likely to create a threat to the maintenance of peace and security, and can also determine whether that situation falls or not within the Council's mandate. In the absence of a clear definition of what peace and security mean, the trend in the last few years has been to broaden the Council's agenda including new items that focus, for example, on the process of building peace and resilient societies. The agenda item "Youth, Peace and Security" (YPS) is one of these cases. Among Council members, there are divergent positions on the matter: while some States claim that the topic should not be dealt with through security lenses, that is, it does not fall under the Council's mandate and should be discussed in other bodies; others, believe that a broad approach on peace and security necessarily entails discussions on more democratic and inclusive peace processes, which is the main focus of debates on youth (UNITED NATIONS, 2019; 2020 a).

This chapter will further explore the issue of Youth, Peace and Security as addressed by the Security Council: the agenda item was introduced in 2015 and aims at bringing youth's perspective on international peace and security. The key element in these discussions is to raise awareness on how young people can contribute positively as agents in peace processes and in conflict resolution. However, this is especially tricky to the Council, since it is one of the most State-centered organs in the UN: to this day, the UNSC has great resistance in including civil society in its discussion passing a certain point. Hence, this agenda item highlights the need of the Security Council to be better engaged with other actors and include them in their approach to international peace and security. The topic especially reveals the urgency of including civil society in these debates (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015 b, pp. 1-2).

To this end, we will present the selected information in three sections, with this introduction: the first part shows a brief background on the emergence of the issue and its inclusion in the Council's agenda. The second section will focus on the relation between youth and international security and the challenges that the Security Council faces in order to adequately incorporate this topic on its agenda. Finally, the last section will present some concluding remarks and questions that should be considered by participants of the simulation.

## **The Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security and the Amman Youth Declaration**

The relation between the United Nations and the civil society is at the core of the YPS agenda. Despite the fact that the UN Charter poses great emphasis on “We the peoples of the United Nations (...)”, States are still the main actor inside the organization, being entrusted with the power to vote and take decisions (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 a). And, although States should embody the better interest of their societies, not rarely their official representation in multilateral organizations, such as the UN, actually reflect the priorities of a specific group that managed to become the government, either through elections or less democratic ways. Consequently, the State representation may cast aside some important stakeholders of discussions on its agenda items. According to Wapner (2008, p. 1; p. 3), the UN needs the civil society to be legitimated and to be able to operationalize its decisions with support and efficiency: this is because civil society participates of the UN as experts, consultants and other positions that allow them to influence the institution’s understanding on different topics and to contribute with the expertise on the ground, something that most States lack the capacity to do. In this scenario, young people can be key in organizing their demands and bringing to the Council’s attention their contribution to the construction of peaceful and resilient societies, advancing the UN’s agenda.

It is important to understand that the possibility of inclusion of youth in peace processes as an agent was only possible from the 2000s onwards, due to the new perceptions on peace and security. Based on the experiences of intrastate conflicts during the Cold War period, it became apparent that a lasting peace would only be possible if all the sectors of the society were included in peacebuilding, with solid participation in the institutions (PARIS, 2008, pp. 12-13). The concept of peacebuilding, fundamental for this topic, involves addressing the root causes of conflict, the prevention and mitigation of violence; the inclusion of youth is part of the goal to form a culture of peace (PEACE DIRECT, 2019, p. 12).

This is why that even before the theme of youth was inserted as an item to the Council’s agenda, it was discussed as a cross-cutting issue, which are topics that are recurrent in most of agenda items, such as gender, environment, development and others. The situation of youth in armed conflicts and their participation in peacebuilding was mentioned, for example, in previous debates on countering terrorism, and was widely connected with the agenda of Women, Peace and Security. From the beginning, there were opposite opinions on whether YPS should be considered as pertaining or not to the Council’s agenda, since it addresses an issue that goes beyond the traditional perspective of security as conflict-related matters. On the one hand, some Members argued that the theme was more a social issue than a security one, and, therefore, should be discussed in bodies that are dedicated to social and economic matters, such as the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) or even the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) that have agendas targeting youth. On the other hand, some States argued that youth and security were widely connected, not only because young people are considered a vulnerable group in situations of conflict but because of the potential of youth to be agents in peace processes (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2013).

The year of 2015 brought a significant change relating to the relevance of the topic. In April, under Jordan's presidency, the Security Council hosted a Ministerial Debate on the "Role of Youth in Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Peace". The initiative gave momentum to another key event that laid the foundations for advancing discussions in the UNSC and ultimately introducing YPS as an agenda item: the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security, held in Amman, Jordan, in 2015. The Global Forum gathered a great diversity of actors, such as non-governmental organizations, youth-led organizations, governments and UN entities, to discuss the role of youth at all levels of the peace process as essential for the promotion of a lasting and effective peace, and for combating extremism and preventing conflict. The aim was mainly to overcome the mainstream approach to young people as either the perpetrators of conflict or the victims, and place this group at the forefront of peace efforts (GLOBAL FORUM ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY, 2015, p. 2).

The Forum "(...) marked a turning point in recognizing young people's role for peacebuilding through a multi-level, intergenerational conversation that defined a new international agenda on youth, peace and security" (GLOBAL FORUM ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY, 2015, p. 2). The debate was organized in two segments: the first was the high-level policy department, which discussed important policy recommendations; and the second part of the debate was a technical segment, aimed at fostering the exchange of relevant experience among young people (GLOBAL FORUM ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY, 2015, p. 1).

As a result, the Global Forum adopted the Amman Youth Declaration, which was, interestingly, elaborated through previous consultations with young people from different countries, who had the chance to express their views and concerns on the topics addressed in the Forum. Drawing from these inputs, the event participants were able to debate and draft the final document, issued as the Declaration. It focused on four points: first, youth participation and leadership to increase their presence in decision-making bodies; second, recognition of the role of youth not as perpetrators of violence and extremism, but as agents of change; third, the need to address gender as part of the youth debate; and fourth, the importance of economically empowering youth to reduce their vulnerability to conflict recruitment. Each of these four main points put civil society at the forefront of peacebuilding, reinforcing the importance of including them in the discussion not only as objects but as drivers of the process. The declaration also called the UNSC to step up and adopt a resolution on the issue (AMMAN YOUTH DECLARATION, 2015, pp. 2-4).

Months later, in December, Jordan introduced to the Security Council the first draft on what would become the debate on Youth, Peace and Security. The theme was put under the topic "Maintenance of international peace and security", which is a broader agenda item involving different thematic issues, and was recognized as pertaining to the organ's agenda. The momentum was favorable to the incorporation of the discussions of YPS in a more organized way, since Council members, especially Europeans, were worried about the growing adherence of youth to extremist movements. Mostly, two of the permanent members, United Kingdom and France, had witnessed the increasing recruitment of youth nationals to ISIL, for example. Therefore, at the beginning, the Council's

attention was focused on tackling this connection between youth and extremist movements (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015 a, p. 3).

The discussions of the Global Forum, however brought a different approach to the topic: instead of viewing youth as perpetrators of violence and a problem to be solved, Jordan, building on the Amman Declaration, suggested the recognition of young people as drivers of change and peace. The former Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, supported this vision while briefing the Council and affirmed that, despite bearing the brunt of conflicts, young people are rarely involved in the negotiations for peace, which would be key in ensuring long-term stability. The broad agreement was that young people should be at the heart of the efforts to counter those violent actions (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015 a, p. 3).

The meeting led to the adoption of Resolution 2250, the first one completely dedicated to address the topic YPS. Despite the overall agreement mentioned above, the negotiation on the resolution was not simple and some important divides<sup>1</sup> emerged. The most important was regarding which focus to present in the resolution: while the United States, Russia and China were looking for a greater emphasis on the connection between youth<sup>2</sup> and violent extremism and terrorism, and on measures to avoid recruitment, Jordan insisted that the document should entail other aspects and contributions of youth for security and peace, incorporating their agency as subjects of peace (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2015).

The Resolution was especially innovative in proposing a new approach on YPS to be adopted by the whole United Nations system: a five-element framework, again building from the Amman Declaration, that should guide the organization's efforts towards the topic. The five areas are: (i) youth participation, (ii) protection, (iii) prevention, (iv) partnership, and (v) disengagement and reintegration (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015 b, p. 3).

The first pillar is participation, which consists of free, active and meaningful participation of young people on decision-making, in the formulation of policies, in the adoption of strategies and the implementation of actions towards peaceful societies. The second pillar is protection, which aims at protecting young civilians, young refugees and internally displaced people in particular. The emphasis is on promoting human rights and holding accountable those who commit crimes against youth. The third pillar is prevention, which consists in preventing young people to adhere to violence, and promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and inclusion. It also comprises offering youth a positive environment through sustainable development: adequate access to education, job opportunities, political participation, gender equality and etc (SIMPSON, 2018, p. 2; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2020, pp. 3-6).

The fourth pillar is partnership. The issue of partnerships reinforces the idea that States have a role to play, so they need to become enablers of a favorable context for youth participation, offering a broad support to their political inclusion. Accordingly, States must guarantee equal access to

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<sup>1</sup> Even when dealing with the connection of development and security, a few positions defended that it was a matter of States responsibility and not something to be determined inside the Council (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015 a, p. 22; p. 79).

<sup>2</sup> Resolution 2250 (2015) recognized youth as individuals from 18 to 29 years old.

justice and promote a safe environment for young people working in peace and security. In addition, States are called to make a political investment to ensure the immediate and long-term development of youth, engaging local, regional and international actors in the task of fostering young people agency. Thus, partnerships recognize that in order to be able to play its positive role in peace process, youth need national and international support (SIMPSON, 2018, p. 2; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 b, pp. 2-3). Finally, the fifth pillar on disengagement and reintegration raises the imperative of investing in young people who are affected by armed conflict, ensuring their adequate reintegration to society and offering the tools so that they can overcome the trauma, instead of being stigmatized as perpetrators of violence (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2020, pp. 9-11). Through this resolution, the UNSC also recognized the need for the United Nations, as a whole, to work together with youth to create inclusive solutions to international problems.

However, despite creating this innovative framework on YPS, it is important to note that Resolution 2250 was not drafted with strong language, especially in the preamble. The paragraphs that carry stronger verbs (such as “urges” or “calls upon”) mostly deal with documents and concepts that were already agreed upon from other items of the agenda, *inter alia*, the protection of civilians and the respect for international humanitarian law. Consequently, the resolution lacks the capacity of pressuring States in presenting results related to the issues raised. Also, the five-element framework resulted more of previously agreed areas of the Amman Youth Declaration than from new understandings advocated by the UNSC on the matter, leaving incomplete the discussion on YPS as a Council agenda item (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2015 b, pp. 4-5).

Despite these issues, Resolution 2250 (2015) requested the Secretary-General to conduct a progress study on the positive contribution of young people to security issues, what would be useful to identify the main concerns on YPS and advance discussions. The final document took three years to be completed and is entitled “The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth”<sup>3</sup>. The progress study was the result of a collaborative work between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other United Nations agencies that convened regional consultations with young people. In addition, a Steering Committee was formed, composed of 34 partners from the UN system, civil society, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and foundations that enabled the implementation of consultations with different stakeholders from all over the world (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018, p. 2).

The study identified two main issues that jeopardize youth engagement in peace and security debates: stereotypes and exclusion, which will be explained in detail in the next section of this chapter. In order to face these challenges, the Progress Study called for a collective strategy towards youth conducted by Governments, the United Nations and other international actors, non-governmental organizations and the civil society (SIMPSON, 2019, pp. ix-xi).

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<sup>3</sup> The study was developed by Mr. Graeme Simpson, independent lead author who was appointed by the Secretary General, as well as the Expert Advisory Group. The study included 263 focus group discussions, being 18 of these in refugee settings, and was conducted through 6 national consultations and 7 regional consultations. Other than that, there were 25 county-focuses researches (SIMPSON, 2018, p. 4).

Responding to the findings presented in the Progress Study, the UNSC approved its second resolution on YPS, Resolution 2419 (2018). The Council once again unanimously recognized that youth must be included in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, and also reinforced the need to involve all relevant actors in these debates, including the UN Secretariat and the civil society. The focus of this second resolution, however, was on the role of States and the UN as creators of an enabling environment to increase youth's engagement in peacebuilding: in order to fully enjoy their rights and be able to contribute to peace and security, youth need the support of their governments and international organizations. The resolution clearly defined the role to be played by States in this debate: to provide the opportunities for young people to participate, be it through the creation of inclusive spaces, legislation or combating the stigma surrounding youth as perpetrators of violence. This was clearly highlighted in the Progress Report and represented the core of the second resolution on the topic (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 b, pp. 3-4).

Although the Resolution 2419 (2018) was adopted with 15 positive votes, negotiations were harder than the previous one precisely due to the recognition of States as enablers of the inclusion of youth. On one hand, some States had a more conservative position, pointing out that the topic Youth, Peace and Security should not be addressed in the UNSC, since its mandate focuses on the maintenance of international peace when faced with threats, and YPS leans towards social issues. Even though they recognized the importance of the issue, they suggested it to be primarily addressed by other UN bodies, as the ECOSOC or the General Assembly. These States feared that advances in the discussion of YPS in the UNSC could compromise State's sovereignty in creating and implementing its own policies. On the other hand, there were States pushing for stronger language on the role of governments in the YPS debates, in order to ensure that the Council could insist upon results in future meetings<sup>4</sup> (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2018).

Once again, the second resolution did not use strong verbs to address the main issues raised in the study of the Secretary-General, and briefly touched the problems of the gap of participation and gap of opportunities explored in the Progress Study. The use of a broad language as "as appropriate" or "where appropriate" to indicate that the final decision of supporting youth-lead organizations and their inclusion in matters of the Council belongs to each Member State leaves the actual decisions of the resolution open to interpretation. Nevertheless, Resolution 2419 foresees a mechanism for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations contained in it, which was not included in Resolution 2250 (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 b, p. 4).

With only two resolutions and four meetings on this topic, it is possible to affirm that the debate has not advanced much since 2015. Aside from the meetings that were held to adopt the resolutions,

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<sup>4</sup> Russia and China were especially worried by YPS superposing sovereignty. Russia did not agree with stronger mentions to peacebuilding and the participation of young people in it, precisely in the process of prevention, by fearing that this could lead to false accusations against the States, and expressed concern regarding the use of radicalized youth against domestic governments, requesting the need to reaffirm respect for sovereignty. On the other hand, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom advocated for a stronger language, including when referring to the importance of the Progress Study, a point that was rejected due to the divergence about the relevance of the topic itself (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2018; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2018 a).

the Council only had only three meetings until the end of 2019<sup>5</sup>. The work of the Council is still very far from what is expected to achieve: the concrete participation and inclusion of young people in all levels of the peace process (UNITED NATIONS, 2019). Key obstacles still need to be addressed, such as inadequate resources to fund initiatives towards youth, which remain a central challenge for the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). The lack of resources is the impediment to building and maintaining peace and to fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Agenda<sup>6</sup>, since youth can also be contributors to these global commitments (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2020, pp. 13-14).

An interesting development was the request made by the UNSC to the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy to deal with YPS: the person would be the public face of the campaign to raise awareness to youth of their own value and agency. The current envoy is Jayathma Wickramanayake, from Sri Lanka, and she has adopted two approaches: the advocacy for the empowerment of youth and for the recognition of its contributions to peacebuilding. Besides that, she chose three pillars to action: "(...) increasing youth participation in the Inter-Governmental Space; realizing the potential of the young people within the UN system; [and] engagement and mobilization of young people". Wickramanayake was also tasked to, in conjunction with the UN system and the youth themselves, lead the development of a UN Youth Strategy, so that her office could advocate for mainstreaming youth engagement in all pillars of the Organization - sustainable development, human rights and peace and security - as well as in humanitarian actions (UNITED NATIONS, 2018).

With this background in mind, the next section of the article will discuss the main challenges the Security Council faces in this topic, and debate the connection of Youth, Peace and Security with the theme *Be the Change: Shaping our Future Together*. After all, the debate on YPS actually highlights one of the main gaps within the UNSC's practice: its relation with civil society.

## **Challenges of the YPS agenda**

The inclusion of YPS as an item in the Council's agenda was undoubtedly a step forward towards raising awareness on the role of youth in peace processes. Notwithstanding, some crucial challenges remain unsolved in the debate: the first one is related to the implementation of youth-related policies and the decisive role played by governments in creating enabling environments to allow youth's engagement; the second revolves around the own difficulties of the UNSC in dealing with actors other than States, which sometimes may jeopardize the inclusion of youth perspectives in the discussions of peace in security. This section will reflect upon both issues.

### *Understanding the young as agents*

As mentioned in the previous section, the Progress Study elaborated under the request of the

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5 This chapter addresses only the events up to December 2019. Recent updates will be found in the Report of the Secretary-General prepared as a study material to FAMUN 2020.

6 The 2030 Agenda was launched by the United Nations in 2015 and presents 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved until 2030 by the world. The SDGs include different dimensions of Sustainable Development, ranging from eliminating extreme-poverty and ensuring gender equality to reconsidering production patterns and preserving the environment. More information can be found in [www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org).

Secretary-General on the status of youth worldwide, identified three main issues as the root causes of most of the obstacles impeding young people of achieving adequate participation in peace processes: stereotypes and marginalization.

The first problem identified in the Progress Study is related to stereotypes build upon youth. Young people, especially young men, are often labeled as perpetrators of violence and agents of conflict, instead of victims. In the study, young people complained of an excessive media focus on youth violence, at the expense of an absence of attention to ordinary young people who were far from violence or involved in peacebuilding. Consequently, public policy towards youth tend to focus in ways of countering them as a problem to be solved by national policies, rather than as positive agents of peace and security. As put in the Progress Study: “Youth is associated with a number of harmful labels and stereotypes, which can drive problematic programming responses and limit young people’s agency” (SIMPSON, 2018, p. 17). This negative stereotype impairs young people’s ability to act because they are delegitimized as peace contributors and unable to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes (SIMPSON, 2018, pp. 17-19; pp. 107-108).

This misrepresentation, which is often reinforced not only by the media but also by the government, creates a, sometimes unsurmountable, obstacle to youth integration in political activities. This is because, once labeled as offenders or perpetrators, young men and women are hardly reintegrated in society without losses. Not only they do not get support to engage in political spaces, but they also internalize this self-image of helpless and useless, which jeopardize their own view on their potential of agency (SIMPSON, 2018, pp. 17-18). By focusing on individualizing problems as traits of young people and criminalizing them, this perspective also disregards the influence of structural inequalities and of the lack of proper social, political economic opportunities on young people’s lives, and how this context can significantly hinder their development and limit their choices (SIMPSON, 2018, pp. 17-19).

This is the focal point of the second issue raised in the Progress Study, and which is directly linked with the first: youth’s exclusion and marginalization in the social, economic and political areas. Young people are often the ones who suffer the most from the lack of adequate social policies, such as inadequate health services, housing policies and failed education institutions. They are also disproportionately affected by growing economic inequalities, which result in less job opportunities, limited income and higher insecurity. Finally, they are also victimized in scenarios of massive violence, instability, and widespread corruption (SIMPSON, 2018, pp. 18-19). In face of this scenario, young people tend to lose their confidence in public institutions and in their communities that repeatedly lack the capacity of supporting youth.

In order to tackle these challenges, the stakeholders of this debate must understand “the roles of young people as political actors, besides their contributions in the economic, social and cultural spheres” (INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE, 2019, p. 4). This leads us to the third problem highlighted in the Progress Study One: youth-led or youth-focused organizations are not always operating at full capacity in terms human and financial resources. This is because most youth-led organizations are largely dependent on volunteers, what can limit their sustainability and the

possibility of replicating these organizational forms. Another important factor is that not all young people can dedicate their time to volunteering for free, since many of them are unemployed or seek to generate independent sources of income, limiting their willingness to engage in youth-led initiatives (SIMPSON, 2018, p. 43).

In terms of financing, funds for youth-led initiatives are limited and access to these resources is difficult due to technical and bureaucratic requirements. Consequently, the lack of funding and support for young people creates a lack of youth organization. In other words, young people do not have the ability to organize themselves, precisely because they do not have economic and development opportunities prior to these issues. To make it more accessible to youth-led organizations, there should be a greater communication among the donors, so as to make it possible that young people have the necessary tools to act (INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE, 2019, p. 6).

It is interesting to note that the three problems indicated in the Progress Study all underscore one central issue: the YPS debate can only advance if there is a greater commitment from different stakeholders, since at the same time that young people can act in the leading role of peace processes, they will only achieve their potential if supported by their communities, their governments and international institutions. In this sense, aware of its responsibility, the United Nations, and especially its Secretariat, have been vocal in defending that youth is also an essential element for the achievement of broader UN objectives, such as the 2030 Agenda.

One of the central commitments of this document is linked to investing in young people and transforming the exclusion system, fulfilling the responsibility adopted by Member States that no one should be left behind. According to the Secretary-General, the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development depends on training young people as agents of change and rights holders (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2020, p. 8). Young peacebuilders around the world are increasingly advocating more inclusion in the implementation of SDG 16, as this SDG consists of building peace, justice and effective institutions, promoting an inclusive participation in politics. This can only be achieved by fighting the underlying causes of instability and conflicts, such as the lack of development and recurrent human rights violations. As we mentioned before, these are precisely some of the root causes of youth's exclusion of peace processes (PEACE DIRECT, 2019, p. 18; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2020, p. 14).

Mainstreaming youth, peace and security into broader political structures is essential to guarantee strategic and coordinated action at the national level and to contribute to the construction of peaceful, just and inclusive societies (PEACE DIRECT, 2019, p. 14). In this sense, we can also suggest that the insertion of youth's perspective into different stages of the political debate can be seen as a means of implementation to the 2030 Agenda, under SDG 17<sup>7</sup>. Especially because SDG 17 reinforces the need of a global partnership that includes the public sector and civil society in order to realize the 2030 Agenda. Also, this SDG reinforces the urgency of strengthening capacity-building, which may directly affect young people opportunities, improving their agency.

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7 SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The UN has recently taken an important step in this direction. In 2020, due to its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the organization launched the campaign *Shaping our Future Together*, which puts global cooperation at the center of multilateral efforts towards achieving common goals, such as the 2030 Agenda. The campaign proposes a global dialogue to address the demands of different stakeholders and puts special emphasis on young people, as drivers of change (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 b).

Having exposed some of the main constraints to youth's participation in peace processes, from them being stereotyped to marginalized, it was clear that States have a key role to play. And it is precisely when it comes to States that another great challenge should be highlighted: their (in) ability to negotiate YPS in the Security Council and their willingness to incorporate civil society in discussions.

### *The UNSC and civil society*

From its very preamble, the UN Charter presents the UN as an organization that, despite having States as its members, was forged to serve the peoples of the world (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 a). Its Chapter I defines that the UN's mandate is to maintain international peace and security to avoid the destruction seen in previous wars and, in doing so, promoting and guaranteeing human rights, justice, development and equality for the people (our highlight). States were seen as mediators that would take their societies' demands to the international forum and defend their best interest in front of other governments. However, throughout the years, it became clear that sometimes States lack the capacity for properly representing their society, because the very representation of the State in the UN is the reflex of a foreign policy forged by the government, which may be only one of the different interest groups within a country. This is why civil society had to find its ways to engaging in the UN, even though it is not allowed to cast a vote in its meetings.

Despite what it may seem, the civil society is not external to the UN, it exists as a part of the organization. Following an idea first introduced by Inis Claude, the UN is composed by a great variety of actors. The argument, further developed by Thomas Weiss, considers the UN as being composed by three spheres: the first UN, composed of the Member States, is the one that forms the forum for dialogue, negotiates and takes the decision in each topic of the agenda. The second UN is composed of the Secretariat that has a major role in the implementation of the objectives of the system and, although they cannot take decisions as the State representatives do, they try to influence the debates somehow (WEISS et al, 2011, pp. 129-130).

Finally, there is a third UN that consists of experts, scholars, NGOs, personalities and consultants that may also influence the organization work. Their role "often combine forces to put forward new information and ideas, push for new policies, and mobilize public opinion around UN deliberations and operations". They are independent from government positions and the institution's Secretariat (WEISS et al, 2011, p. 127). Topics such as YPS especially highlight this complex relation between the diverse stakeholders that are connected through the works of the United Nations.

The interaction between the three spheres of the United Nations is what results in the insurgence of new topics and new interpretations of old ones, which causes the debates to evolve. The

outcomes are also interlinked with the actions of all three UNs, each with their specific responsibility and degree of agency. One good example of this ability is the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security, which by combining the perspective of different actors set the basis for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in the UNSC (WEISS et al, 2011, p. 141). The interaction, however, is hardly simple or easy and in organs such as the Council, which maintains a State-centered approach it can be even tenser.

The UNSC is tasked with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, and to accomplish its mandate it can use tools that range from peaceful negotiations to the use of force. These prerogatives are built upon the broader understanding that States, collectively, are the only ones who can legitimately use force in the international system and on the assumption, recognized in the Charter's Preamble, that the limits to this collective action would be State sovereignty. In the 75 years of the UN this balance has proven to be hard to reach (UNITED NATIONS, 2020 a). While in some situations the Council put sovereignty as a constraint to international commitments, in others, it has overlapped sovereignty arguing that the international community had the moral responsibility of protecting civilians.

This is precisely the reason why the item of YPS has found some hardship in advancing in the Council. On the one hand, the Progress Study, drafted as a collaborative work of the second (Secretariat) and the third (experts) UNs, pushes States to step-up and recognize their responsibility in ensuring the participation and in combating the marginalization of youth. As we previously saw, to some extent, States are held accountable to the problem involving the exclusion of youth. On the other hand, States, despite recognizing the importance of the matter, are fearful that by advancing the commitments on YPS, the boundaries between sovereignty and international action could be crossed (UNITED NATIONS, 2019). To worsen the situation, the UNSC is one of the least transparent bodies in the UN and still struggles with the possibility of incorporating civil society in its decision-making process.

By offering the floor to actors coming from the civil society, the UNSC risks to underlie the issue of representation mentioned above: for instance, it may happen that the young leader invited to address the Council has a divergent opinion from its government, highlighting domestic divides. But by excluding these voices, the Council also risks to fail in accomplishing its mandate, since peace and security relies heavily on ensuring that civil society is adequately supported and their concerns are well represented.

The main challenge of the UN as a whole, in this regard, has been to uphold its commitment to the people at the same time as dealing with the statist character of the institution (WAPNER, 2008, pp. 5-6). The UN's legitimacy, authority and credibility depend on this interaction between the peoples and the States, especially in matters of peacebuilding and creating a lasting, multidimensional peace. This is even more relevant for the discussion of the YPS, which while heavily demanding the participation and inclusion of part of the civil society, is being discussed in the most State-centered body of the UN.

This confrontation between governments and youth, which are often “(...) feared as threats to the political *status quo*” causing them to be pushed away from the political decisions, is paramount to this discussion (PEACE DIRECT, 2019, pp. 20-21). Young peacebuilders can shape new cultural and social norms and have the capability to transform the State, including based on their experience during armed conflicts, but they cannot do it if it is not in the interest of the States to foster this agency

## **Final considerations**

It is clear that with that there is still a lot to be done on the topic of Youth, Peace and Security. The advancement may prove itself hard considering the challenges highlighted in this chapter. Problems that involve not only issues related to poor public policies and approaches to youth, but also to the institutional constraints of the UNSC. However, despite all these up downs, it is clear that youth has a significant role to play in building a sustainable peace, which is at the core of the UN mission.

In face of that, a few questions should be considered by delegates while addressing the issue of YPS:

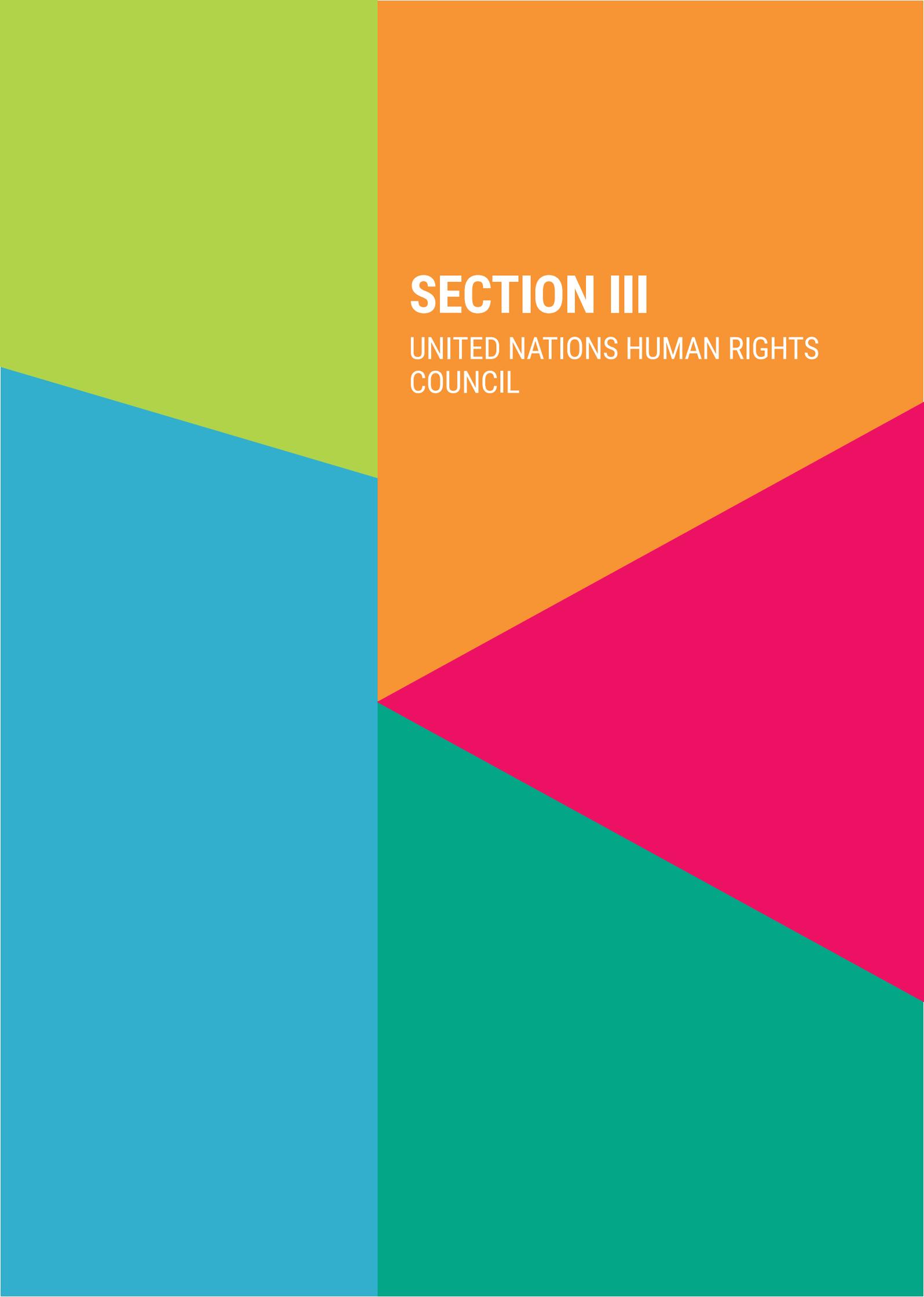
1. How to revert the marginalization of youth and ensure their inclusion in local, regional, national and international levels?
2. How to increase the partnership with all the stakeholders to work together towards the implementation of the Security Council Resolutions?
3. How the UNSC properly engage youth in this debate?

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# SECTION III

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS  
COUNCIL

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the main challenges regarding the relationship between human rights and climate change, a topic that has been part of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR)'s agenda since 2008. The UNHRC was created in 2006<sup>1</sup> and is composed of 47 Member States, which are elected by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for a period of three years, according to a geographical distribution. The Council is responsible for the protection and promotion of all human rights around the globe, serving as a multilateral forum to address global and country-specific human rights violations (UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 2020).

Since its creation, the UNHCR has addressed a variety of topics, which are complex, inter-related and demand comprehensive approaches. Concerning the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights, the UNHCR advocates for a human rights-based approach to climate change, which means that all the actions adopted by States in order to mitigate the effects of climate change must consider their international obligations concerning human rights. A human rights based-approach to climate change also demands that all panels and conferences that discuss climate change should address its impacts on human rights, as well as the importance for human rights to achieve sustainable development (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020 a).

Therefore, the analysis of the topic must encompass the negative impacts of climate change on the full enjoyment of fundamental human rights, such as the rights to life, food, health, water and sanitation, and adequate housing. Nowadays, the most pressing issues concerning human rights and climate change are the situation of migration and extreme poverty around the globe. In this sense, in order to address the main challenges concerning both issues, this chapter will present the recent reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) that address the impacts of climate change on migration and displacement (2018) and the relationship between climate change and poverty (2019).

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents a historical background of the topic "human rights and climate change" in the UNHRC' agenda through the analysis of the reports of the Secretary-General and Special Rapporteurs of the OHCHR. Section two introduces the meaning and implementation of a human rights-based approach to climate change. The third section analyzes the effects of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights regarding two main issues: the gaps concerning migration and displacement caused by climate change, and the relationship between poverty, human rights and climate change. Lastly, some concluding remarks and questions to be addressed on the topic will be presented.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 60/251 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 March 2006.

## **Human rights and climate change: Origins and development**

The protection of human rights in the United Nations (UN) system had its first steps with the creation of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), in 1946. The Commission was a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with the mandate to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms around the globe. In order to do so, the Commission was composed by 53 States and assisted by the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, as well as working groups, individual experts, and rapporteurs<sup>2</sup> (UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 2020).

The CHR addressed the relationship between human rights and the environment in its decision 2004/119 and requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report regarding the link between the protection of the natural environment, considered as a vital part of sustainable development and the enjoyment of all human rights. The report entitled “Human rights and the environment as part of sustainable development” presented the growing recognition – at the international, regional and national levels – of the nexus between the environment and human rights (UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, 2005, p. 2).

The report recognized that UN human rights treaty bodies contributed to the demonstration of the connection between human rights and the environment. For instance, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), in its General Comment N° 15 (E/C.12/2012/11) on the right to water (2002), defined water as a precondition for the enjoyment of human rights for present and future generations – especially the rights to life, food, adequate housing and health. In General Comment N° 1 (E/C.12/2002/11) (2001), the CESCR analyzed the importance of education – in the context of the rights of the child – and the respect of the natural environment. In this sense, children should learn that the respect of the environment is connected with their communities and should be involved in environmental projects as well (UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, 2005, p. 5).

The report also emphasized the role of the special procedures of the CHR and the work of its special rapporteurs in addressing human rights issues and the environment. In this sense, the report presented the work of the “Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights”, such as “the rights to life, health, sufficient food, safe and healthy working conditions, housing, information, participation, freedom of association, the right to form and join trade unions”. The report highlighted that the right to adequate housing is not separated “from a range of other issues related to sustainable development, including land, access to potable water and sanitation, a safe and healthy environment, and poverty” (UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, 2005, pp. 6-7).

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to its role in elaborating human rights standards, the Commission also implemented procedures and mechanisms – known as Special Procedures of the Commission on Human Rights – to examine, monitor and report on specific or thematic human rights situations. In this scenario, some of the main themes addressed by the CHR concerned its work included the matter of the protection of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, inter alia, women, children, indigenous populations and migrant workers (UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 2020).

Another issue addressed by the report was the situation of human rights defenders and activists, who can be exposed to violations of their rights when fighting multinational enterprises and campaigning against the degradation of the environment and the violation of indigenous rights. In addition, it mentioned the work of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which focused on the right to access information concerning “decisions affecting the environment” (UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, 2005, pp. 6-7).

After its creation, the UNHCR continued the work of the CHR and, on 28 March 2008, the Council introduced the topic “Human Rights and Climate Change” in resolution 7/23, in which Member States recognized climate change as a global problem and stressed that it posed a threat to the enjoyment of human rights (UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 2008, p. 1).

The resolution affirmed that human beings must be in the center of discussions regarding sustainable development, and recognized that poor people are a vulnerable group in areas where there is no guarantee of their safety against the adverse impacts of climate change. The resolution also emphasized the situation of vulnerability of the “low-lying and other small island countries, countries with low-lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas or areas liable to floods, drought and desertification”, as well as “countries with fragile mountains ecosystems” (UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 2008, p. 2).

Following a request of the UNHCR, in 2009, the OHCHR presented a report that discusses how the observed and projected causes and consequences of climate change have implications for the full realization of human rights, such as the right to life and the right to health. Additionally, the report recognized the obligations of States under international human rights law regarding the effects of climate change on specific groups, such as women, children and indigenous people (UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 2008, p. 3; UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2009, p. 1, p. 7).

In 2012, the OHCHR presented a report on the conclusions of the seminar on addressing the adverse impacts of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights. Member States, UN bodies, experts, civil society and other stakeholders, gathered in Geneva on 23-24 February 2012, discussed the impacts of climate change on the rights of the most vulnerable people – including women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and migrants – and on the least developed countries and small islands states. They concluded that a human rights-based approach to climate change should consider the principle of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the transnational component of climate change (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2012, p. 1; p. 15).

In 2013, Special Rapporteur John H. Knox delivered a report that addressed the human rights obligations relating to the environment, based on an extensive view of global and regional experiences. He presented the obligations of States to evaluate the impacts of climate change on human rights in order to make the information public, facilitating the engagement in environmental

related decision-making, and providing access to reparation measures for environmental harms. He also emphasized States' obligations to adopt legal and institutional frameworks to protect their population from the impacts of climate change, especially vulnerable groups, such as women, children and indigenous people (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2013, p. 1).

The Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in his report of 2015, concluded that the implementation of human rights obligations "can help to make environmental policies fairer, more effective and more respectful of the concerns of those most affected by environmental harm" (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015 a, pp. 20-21). Additionally, he appointed two areas that required more attention of governments: the protection of human rights defenders and the human rights obligations concerning transboundary environmental damages caused by climate change.

The year of 2015 marked a turning point in the United Nations sustainable development agenda: the adoption of resolution 70/1, "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". UN Members decided to act in collaborative partnership in order to realize the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, strengthen universal peace and achieve all dimensions of sustainable development, *inter alia*, economic, social and environmental. For this purpose, the 2030 Agenda presented 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to be implemented in an integrated and inclusive manner (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015 b, p. 1).

Another important accomplishment was the adoption of the Paris Agreement by the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 12 December 2015. The Agreement is a landmark treaty concerning climate change and, for the first time, a legally binding document addresses the link between human rights and climate change. In this sense, it states that climate change is a common concern of humankind and all actions taken in order to mitigate its negative effects must correspond to States' obligations to respect and promote human rights. It also considers the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable people to the impacts of climate change, such as indigenous people, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities, women, and persons in situation of poverty. Moreover, the Paris Agreement presents the concepts of climate justice and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDRRC), recognizing the specific needs and circumstances of the least developed countries and small island countries, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, pp. 3-4).

In its resolution 32/33 (2016), the UNHRC acknowledged the 2030 Agenda and the UNFCCC responses to climate change. The Council highlighted the importance of SDG 13 and the concept of climate justice in order to reinforce the discussions on climate change and its impacts on human rights, especially of the most vulnerable groups (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2016).

In 2018 and 2019, the UNHRC focused its discussions on two relevant issues regarding human rights and climate change: the impact of climate change on migrants and the relationship between

poverty and climate change. The following section presents the meaning of a human rights-based approach to climate change and how its impacts can be addressed in order to protect the most vulnerable people.

### **A human rights-based approach to climate change**

Climate change affects the enjoyment of human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights recognized in international law, including the rights to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, education, and the right to development. As affirmed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), all of the aforementioned human rights can be severely damaged by extreme weather events, rising sea levels, floods, heat waves, droughts, desertification, shrinking mountain glaciers, accelerating ice melt, spread of tropical and vector-borne diseases, and shifts in plant blooming times (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2018).

Whilst recognizing the threat climate change poses to the enjoyment of human rights, the UNHRC and the OHCHR have advocated for the adoption of a human rights-based approach to climate change. This conceptual framework emphasizes that all actions, measures and programs taken in order to mitigate climate change or adapt to its adverse effects must be in accordance with human rights treaties. As a result, this approach highlights the responsibility of States to protect human rights when addressing climate change impacts (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020 c).

Furthermore, a human rights-based approach to climate change considers that some communities are already living in disadvantageous and marginalized situations, which make them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, women and girls, children, the elderly, indigenous peoples, rural workers, persons with disabilities, migrants and persons displaced across international borders, as well as people who live in extreme poverty can be impacted by climate change more dramatically (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2015, p. 1).

Children are disproportionately affected by extreme weather events, natural disasters, water scarcity, food insecurity, air pollution, and vector-borne and infectious diseases. In this context, they are less capable to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, which could also lead to their separation from parents or other relatives. Consequently, children often bear long-term physical and mental-health traumas because of changes in their environment (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020 e).

Persons with disabilities often sustain higher rates of injuries and mortality when exposed to the negative impacts of climate change. They have difficulties in accessing emergency support, as well as health-care services and medicine, which can affect their basic human rights to food, water and sanitation, health, education, adequate housing, and decent work (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020 d).

Another serious issue is the existence of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change regarding the right to health – which includes physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health –,

food security, adequate living standards, and access to land, decent work and human mobility. In this scenario, women and girls are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to the historical perpetuation of gender-based discrimination, systemic barriers and patriarchal structures founded upon inequality, which hinders the realization of their human rights (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 a, pp. 3-8).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development does not consider the importance of a human rights-based approach to sustainable development. Although SDG 13 – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – acknowledges the UNFCCC as the primary international forum that discusses measures to mitigate the effects of climate change, it does not address a human rights-based approach to combat its impacts. Target 13.b, for instance, affirms the need to promote effective measures to address climate change effects on least developed countries and small island countries, giving attention to women, youth and marginalized communities (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2015 b, p. 23).

The Paris Agreement was the first legally binding document to present the connection between climate change and the full realization of all human rights. In its Preamble, the Agreement stresses States' obligations to respect and promote the full enjoyment of all human rights whilst tackling climate change and its negative effects, considering also people in vulnerable situations, such as indigenous people, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and women (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 2).

Furthermore, it states that climate change must be considered a “common concern of humankind” (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 2) and it is expected that all States strengthen the global response and partnerships in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. However, in light of the different responses to climate change of developing and least developed countries, the Paris Agreement presents the concepts of climate justice, and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDRRC). Both concepts highlight the fact that developed countries have not only been the source of 70% of all greenhouse gas emissions, despite housing only one-seventh of the global population, but also present higher capability to deal with the negative impacts of climate change. Therefore, the Agreement calls upon developed countries to engage in leadership roles to tackle climate change and support developing and least developed countries on this matter (CAMERON; SHINE; BEVINS, 2013, pp. 8-9; UNITED NATIONS, 2015, pp. 3-4).

It is important to highlight that UNHRC Members have different views regarding their own responsibilities towards the mitigation of climate change effects on the enjoyment of human rights. Developing countries, including Bangladesh, Philippines and Pakistan, affirmed that climate change represents an existential threat to the enjoyment of human rights, especially for the most vulnerable communities. They emphasized that developing countries suffer more intensely with the negative impacts of climate change, which affects the human rights of their population, and bring challenges to sustainability and protection of the environment (BANGLADESH ON BEHALF OF THE CORE GROUP, 2019; MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA, 2018; PERMANENT MISSION OF PAKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, 2019).

Developed countries, such as European Union (EU) States, reiterated the importance of common but differentiated responsibilities and recognized the vulnerability of women and children, emphasizing the importance of bringing women into the decision-making process concerning climate change. Additionally, the EU reinforced the Paris Agreement as an important mechanism for mitigating the effects of climate change, helping to control its negative human rights implications (EUROPEAN UNION, 2018).

Bearing in mind the impacts of climate change on societies in developing countries and in least developed countries, the following section presents the importance a human rights-based approach to climate change in order to address two severe problems nowadays: the intersection between climate change and migration, and the effects of climate change on people living in extreme poverty.

### **The impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights: Migration and poverty**

Migration and poverty are global problems that demand an inclusive and integrated approach, which takes into consideration their complexity and urgency. Migrants and people living in extreme poverty already have their basic human rights compromised, which puts them in situations of vulnerability. In this sense, the negative impacts of climate change – such as droughts, desertification, floods and extreme weather events – can lead to poverty and, in some cases, can force people to leave their cities or countries to find better conditions of living. This section presents the latest reports of the OHCHR that address the relationship between climate change and poverty, as well as the gaps in the protection of the human rights of migrants caused by the effects of climate change.

#### *Climate change and migration*

Approximately 21.7 million people “were internally displaced each year in the period 2008-2016 by weather-related disasters”. In 2019, it was estimated that “there were around 272 million international migrants in the world”, equating “3.5 per cent of the global population” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 3; INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, 2019, p. 19).

Although the majority of migrants are internally displaced, both internal and cross-border displacement are linked and can be aggravated by climate change effects<sup>3</sup>. It is worth mentioning that the number of people displaced has already probably risen as of today, mainly because it does not include people who migrated due to slow onset consequences of climate change, such as the rise of sea level, desertification, precipitation changes, and the processes of salinization (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, pp. 3-4).

The connection between human rights, climate change and migration is complex and requires an analytical study of climate change implications on the enjoyment of human rights, in order to

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<sup>3</sup> According to the IOM (2019, p. 284), many terms “have been used to describe people who move as a result of environmental and climate change”. The term “human mobility” is preferred to address “a broad spectrum of people movement”, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and cross-border migrants, including refugees, and “environmental migrants”. Thus, “[t]hree main framings of environmental migration and human mobility in the context of climate change have emerged in academia, the media and in policy circles: (a) irregular migration related to environmental change and resource shortages as a border security issue, particularly for areas of destination; (b) protection of environmental migrants; and (c) environmental migration as a form of adaptation and climate risk management (...), reflecting the political sensitivities of migration” (INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, 2019, p. 284).

address the existent gaps in the protection of migrants. Migration is a multi-causal phenomenon, and it can be said that the effects of climate change can be a driver for human mobility, which can lead to the violation of civil, political, economic and cultural rights (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 4).

In this sense, climate change affects human rights not only of people already in vulnerable situations or in countries most exposed to the effects of climate change, but also of individuals on the move. In addition, when governments fail to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, situations of scarcity and vulnerability can be exacerbated. Thus, the absence of water and sanitation, food, adequate housing and other basic human rights can push people to internal or cross-border displacement (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, pp. 4-5).

Migrants can face dangerous and stressful situations when crossing borders. They are forbidden from entrance, mainly due to border control and the possibility of suffering punitive measures. This means that they may suffer human rights violations, and they can be subjected to violence, xenophobia, persecution, rape, torture and human trafficking. In addition, people most impacted by climate change have difficulty in accessing basic needs, such as food, water, housing and health-care (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 6).

Climate change can also “pose an existential threat” to people already facing vulnerable situations, “such as geography, poverty, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, national or social origin, birth or other status and disability” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 5). Children can be separated from parents, their culture and heritage, facing difficulties in accessing education and adequate health. Migration related to climate change can produce gender inequalities, leaving women exposed to human rights violations, such as lack of “adequate sexual, reproductive and mental health services”, “discriminations in access employment, social security, education, housing, legal documents and justice”. Furthermore, “women migrants face a heightened risk of gender-based violence, including human trafficking and other forms of discrimination” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 7). Indigenous people, as well, can be pushed to leave their territories due to climate change impacts, which hinders their “cultural survival, traditional livelihoods and right to self-determination” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 6).

Cognizant of the complexity of the nexus between migration and climate change, the OHCHR highlighted legal and policy gaps to address this issue. These gaps include the failure of States to comply with human rights obligations, the difficulty to understand the connection between human rights, climate change and migration, as well as the insufficient application of measures to mitigate climate change effects in order to ensure “safe, orderly and regular migration” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p. 7).

Concerning international human rights law, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) do not address cross-border displacement caused by climate change, since the definition of refugee does not include people who claim the protection from climate change effects. However, under limited circumstances, the Convention can be applied in specific cases, when

national authorities deny “protection from the adverse effects of climate change”; or by using “the negative impacts of climate change to persecute particular groups or individuals; and when “serious human rights violations or armed conflict triggered by climate change cause people to flee based on a well-founded fear of persecution” (UNHCR, 2017 *apud* UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, pp. 7-8).

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants recognizes environmental and climate issues that motivate migration, while emphasizes safe, orderly and regular migration that ensures the inclusion of human rights protection and facilitates migration across borders (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, pp. 9-10).

The OHCHR emphasizes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as fundamental treaties that compile States’ obligations to provide basic human rights for all (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, p 10).

Considering environmental law, it is important to highlight the UNFCCC – including the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement – and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, pp. 8-9).

In this sense, a human rights-based approach to address the impacts of climate change on migration should take into consideration the gaps aforementioned, as well as States’ responsibilities to ensure the rights of migrants in situations of both internal and cross-border displacement. States and other stakeholders have the duty to mitigate climate change in order to prevent its negative impacts as a driver of human mobility. Additionally, they have the responsibility of guaranteeing the rights of migrants, such as “safe, regular, dignified and accessible pathways”; refraining “from returning them to territories affected by climate change”; and recognizing and addressing the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights of migrants (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2018, pp. 16-17).

### *Climate change and poverty*

Extreme poverty is directly related to lack of basic human rights, preventing individuals and societies of dignifying conditions of life. In 2015, it was estimated that “10 percent of the world’s population, or 734 million people, lived on less than \$1.90 a day” (THE WORLD BANK GROUP, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak aggravates the situation of the poorest people around the globe and it is expected that this crisis will reverse the progress made before to achieve zero hunger and to end poverty. Thus, it is estimated that “40 to 60 million people will fall into extreme poverty (under \$1.90/day) in 2020 compared to 2019”. Meanwhile, “new research estimates that by 2030 more than two thirds of the global extreme poor may be living in fragile and conflict-affected economies” (THE WORLD BANK GROUP, 2020).

Climate change brings negative impacts on people who live in poor countries, since they already face socio-economic inequalities and lack of basic human rights, including the rights to food, adequate housing, water and sanitation, and health. It is estimated that around 120 million people

can be pushed into poverty by 2030, and those numbers can rise if urgent measures to mitigate climate change impacts are not taken (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 4).

Poor people are more exposed to droughts, higher temperatures, and other impacts of climate change. In India, as well as in many countries in Africa, for instance, poor people in urban areas who live in risk zones are more exposed to climate change impacts, such as extreme weather events that cause floods and other hazards. In addition, climate change threatens the right to health of poor people, especially children. Malaria and diarrhea are the main diseases that affect them and tend to expand due to climate change effects. Consequently, “children can suffer from irreversible impacts that affect their lifetime earnings and lead to the intergenerational transmission of poverty” (INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT, 2016, p. 9).

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirms that States have obligations regarding the prevention of the effects of climate change on peoples’ lives, as well as the responsibility to mobilize the necessary resources in order to do so. In its General Comment N° 36 concerning the right to life, the Committee recognizes that “environmental degradation, climate change and unsustainable development constitute some of the most pressing and serious threats to the ability of present and future generations to enjoy the right to life” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 6).

According to the OHCHR, instead of meeting their international obligations regarding the protection of human rights and the mitigation of climate change impacts, some countries “are taking short-sighted steps in the wrong direction” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 8). The United States, for instance, embrace politics of obfuscating and silencing climate change scientists and advocates. Following the same pattern, the government of Brazil, for instance, promised to authorize mining in the Amazon rainforest, as well as to end the demarcation of indigenous lands and dismantle environmental national agencies. The Chinese government, although transitioning to clean energy resources, continuing to export “coal-fired power plants abroad and failing to implement its regulations for methane emissions at home” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 8).

The private sector, supported by governments, plays a key role in combating climate change effects. However, this sector commonly uses climate change to justify privatization, which opens the path to exploitation of natural resources, such as water. In this sense, corporations claim that public-private partnerships are ways of ensure access to water services to all, but privatization “inevitably prioritizes profit”, preventing poor people and communities to have access to safe, clear and affordable water (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 12).

Regarding the economic consequences of climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change affirmed that the rise of 2°C in global temperatures would lead to economic losses of “13 percent of global GDP”, as well as “reduce average global incomes by roughly 23 per cent by 2100 and widen income inequality” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 10). The International Labour Organization stated that 1.2 billion jobs “rely on a sustainable and health

environment”, and in a best-case scenario, “heat stress will reduce global working hours by 2 per cent by 2030”, which means “72 million full-time jobs” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 10).

In order to alleviate the impacts of climate change on poverty, a human rights-based approach is needed, as well as “deep structural changes in the world economy”, so that States can protect peoples’ social and economic rights, including “social security, water and sanitation, education, food, health care, housing and decent work” (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019 b, p. 13).

## **Final considerations**

The OHCHR have been advocating for a human rights-based approach to guide the global response to climate change, stressing the obligation of all duty-bearers – such as States and businesses – to respect and promote the full realization of all human rights without any discrimination (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020 b).

In this context, although much progress has been made in addressing the impacts of climate change on peoples’ lives, one of the main challenges is the development of mechanisms to support the inclusion of civil society in environmental decision-making processes, focusing particularly on how to ensure the meaningful and informed participation of those who are the most vulnerable to climate change adverse effects – such as indigenous people, migrants, persons with disabilities, women, children, and persons in situation of extreme poverty (OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020 a).

Nowadays, the COVID-19 outbreak poses one of the greatest challenges concerning human rights protection, since it exacerbates the vulnerability of poor people and migrants, who are already facing lack of basic human rights. In this sense, the need for a human rights-based approach to address climate change not only means the mitigation of its effects in order to protect human rights, but also the active participation of civil society in the elaboration of national policies towards a more sustainable and just world.

The protection of people in vulnerable conditions, including migrants and people living in extreme poverty, is linked to States’ responsibilities to guarantee social and economic rights to their population and to mitigate the impacts of climate change. These responsibilities must be seen in a holistic view, in which the protection of human rights will not be sufficient if there is no effort to combat climate change. The rights to water, food, health, housing and ultimately the right of a dignifying life depend on the existence and protection of natural resources.

In this manner, these are the main question that should be addressed regarding human rights and climate change:

1. What are the main steps the international community must take in order to mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change whilst protecting and promoting the full enjoyment of human rights?

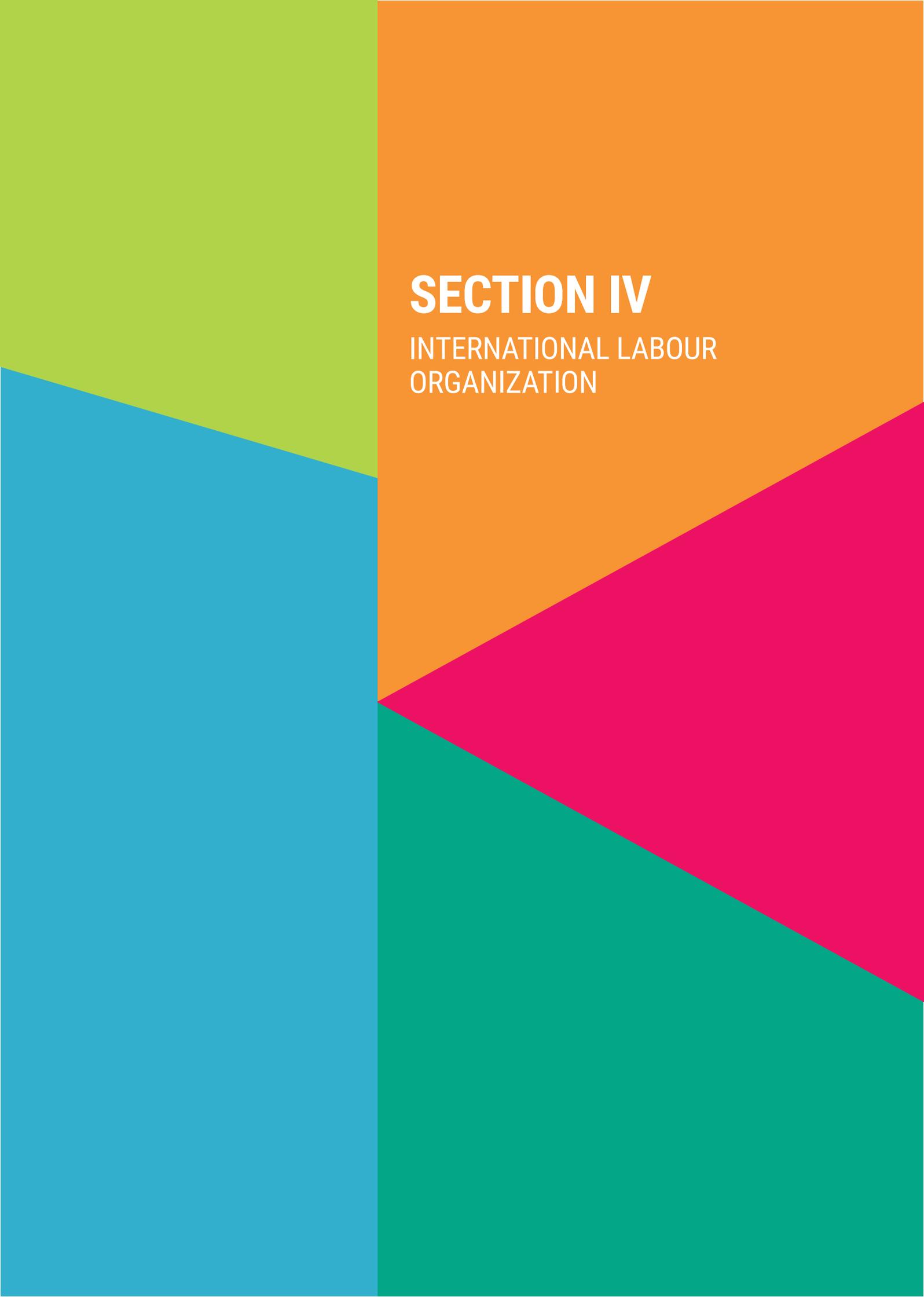
2. How can the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants be guaranteed when they face the negative impacts of climate change?
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# **SECTION IV**

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
ORGANIZATION

## ENDING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK

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### Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was created in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles and was turned into a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) in 1946. Its mandate is to guarantee decent work, protect workers' rights and promote social justice for all. The ILO has a unique tripartite structure, which is composed of three groups: Workers, Employers and Government representatives from each one of its 187 Members. Through this structure, the ILO promotes effective social dialogue between the most relevant agents in the world of work, and all major sectors of the labor market take part in the discussions (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2020 a).

One of the main challenges to promote decent work and the respect for workers' rights and their dignity globally is the widespread of violence and harassment in the world of work. These acts can cause significant and long-lasting physical and psychological damages to worker victims, compromising their security, well-being, health, and dignity. Violence and harassment can also severely damage companies' reputation and lower workers' productivity. Therefore, widespread occurrences of these acts can negatively affect societies and countries as a whole (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, p. 1).

Since 2016, the ILO has worked on mapping the main gaps at national and international levels concerning the prohibition, the prevention, and the protection against violence and harassment in the world of work. In 2018, the International Labour Conference<sup>1</sup> (ILC) established a Standard Setting Committee with the purpose of drafting a new international framework to address the issue of violence and harassment in the world of work. On one hand, a Convention, which is a legally binding instrument, would address the principles, definitions, measures of prevention, enforcement, and monitoring. On the other, a Recommendation would serve as a guide to States, Employers, Workers, and other stakeholders to implement good practices and other measures to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the ILC discussions in the period of 2016-2018 for the creation of a new integrated and inclusive approach on the issue. The first section presents the gaps in the existing ILO Conventions and Recommendations that address violence and harassment. The second section analyzes the first ILC negotiations to establish a new ILO instrument on the issue. The third section discusses the principles that guided the drafting of this new international framework. The fourth section addresses the position of blocs on the key elements of an ILO

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<sup>1</sup> The International Labour Conference (ILC) is the annual meeting of the ILO, and it gathers all its constituents. The mandate of the ILC is to discuss measures to promote labor rights and decent work and adopt international labor standards. That is why it is known as the "international parliament of labour".

Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. The chapter concludes with some remarks on the main contemporary challenges regarding the topic.

### **International standards addressing violence and harassment in the world of work**

Some ILO instruments mention issues related to violence and harassment in the world of work, as part of both fundamental standards concerning decent work in general, and specific instruments about groups and sectors in particular. However, these instruments present gaps when addressing the issue, especially because they lack measures on how to prevent or combat these practices.

The ILO Constitution (1919) establishes the rules of procedure of the organization, the obligations of its Members, and the relationship between social justice, peace and decent work. Countries had the responsibility of granting dignified working conditions for their workers and preventing harmful situations against them (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 g). Based on the same principles, the Declaration of Philadelphia (1944) defines the obligations and actions States have to undertake in order to promote ILO's core values. It affirms that States have responsibilities towards workers, including the protection of their well-being and spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 1944, pp. 1-3). Although violence and harassment are not mentioned in any of the two instruments, they outline States' obligations of promoting dignifying and safe working conditions, which include protecting workers against violence.

The ILO has also adopted a series of Conventions concerning workers' rights and focusing on specific occupations and groups that can be generally related to situations of violence and harassment. The Forced Labour Convention (1930) establishes strict prohibitions to compulsory labor, a practice that harms workers' fundamental human rights to freedom and dignity. The Convention affirms that ratifying States must suppress all forms of compulsory labor and all relevant authorities must respect workers' rights, as well as their safety and well-being (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 a).

The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958) states that situations of discrimination in the workplace not only damage workers' professional development and their overall well-being, but is also a violation of human rights. Thus, Member States have the responsibility to prevent situations of discrimination, as well as to foster equal opportunities for all workers (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 c).

These two Conventions, aforementioned, do not address violence and harassment; however, they determine States' obligations of protecting workers against situations that compromise their dignity and safety. In this sense, they encompass provisions to protect workers from dangerous situations and any kind of discrimination, which would indirectly contribute to prevent violence and harassment.

The ILO has also created standards to prevent discrimination against specific groups, such as migrant workers, indigenous and tribal peoples, domestic workers, and workers with HIV/AIDS.

Concerning migrant workers, the ILO adopted the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) (1949), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (1975). The 1949 treaty defines that Member States have the obligation to grant migrant workers the same rights as national workers, and the 1975 treaty affirms Member States' responsibility to take special measures to protect migrant workers from illegal working conditions and smuggling; and to protect their family members legally residing in the country (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 b; 2017 d).

Following the same principles, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) establishes the obligation to treat indigenous and tribal workers without discrimination. Besides, Member States are required to develop measures aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and treatment for indigenous and tribal peoples, and protecting their rights, culture, traditions, and way of life (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 e).

By highlighting the principle of non-discrimination and assuring decent and safe working conditions for migrant workers and indigenous and tribal peoples, the abovementioned Conventions contribute to protect these groups against situations of violence and harassment, even though they do not specifically mention or define these concepts.

The first legally binding instrument that referred to violence and harassment explicitly was the Domestic Workers Convention (2011). Its Article 5 states the necessity to protect domestic workers against violence and harassment in the workplace and affirms the obligation of ratifying States to create measures aimed at defending the rights of domestic workers, as well as protecting them against situations of abuse, harassment and violence (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 f).

Additionally, the Domestic Workers Recommendation (2011) outlines effective measures to deal with violence and harassment, such as the creation of complaint mechanisms in which domestic workers can report situations of violence and harassment; investigation of the cases reported; and mechanisms to both relocate domestic workers from abusive workplaces, and provide them with support and rehabilitation (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 i).

Other two ILO Recommendations directly mention violence and harassment. The HIV and AIDS Recommendation (2010) defines measures to be taken by States to combat situations of violence and harassment against workers living with HIV. It recommends that States establish effective measures for the eradication of discrimination against this group, including the creation of propaganda to extinguish the stigma regarding the illness and encouraging individuals affected by HIV to take part in policy-making processes, in order to effectively tackle situations of discrimination, violence and harassment (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 h).

The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation (2015) sets measures aimed at promoting gender equality and eradicating discrimination and violence in the workplace when transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. The Recommendation stresses the importance of access to judicial systems by all workers so they are able to report cases of discrimination, violence and harassment in the workplace. Additionally, it

recommends measures to eliminate forced labor and child labor, and to address the dangerous and unhealthy working conditions characteristic of the informal economy (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2017 j).

There are two main gaps regarding violence and harassment in the ILO instruments presented here. First, most of those instruments do not mention violence and harassment at all. Second, the standards that directly define measures to prevent violence and harassment do not provide definitions of both terms. This lack of clarity in international standards has created a situation in which measures to address the issue became diffuse, fragmented, and applicable only to specific situations, without giving proper protection to worker victims.

Recently, following an international mobilization of civil society, especially from women's movements and activists, the ILO addressed the existent gaps concerning violence and harassment in the world of work. In the next section, the first steps taken by the ILO to create a new international framework about the topic will be discussed.

### **The need for a new international framework on violence and harassment in the world of work: The 2016 ILC Meeting of Experts**

The initial impetus to create a specific international framework on violence and harassment in the world of work came from the discussions about violence against women at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in 2006. The UNGA understood that the increasing participation of women in the workforce required new regulations to address gender-based violence at the workplace (UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2006, p. 42). In parallel, many civil society movements<sup>2</sup> and NGOs started to raise awareness about the need for specific laws to protect women against sexual harassment and violence in the world of work (ME TOO MOVEMENT, 2018).

Cognizant of this movement, the ILO started to assess different national and international frameworks about the issue, noticing that there were gaps in the laws that were supposed to prevent violence and harassment against women at their workplaces. On the 98<sup>th</sup> session of the ILC, held in 2009, the ILO constituents adopted the "Resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work". The document includes measures for prohibiting not only violence against women but also all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2009).

Then, the issue gained more prominence in 2015, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Firstly, because the 2030 Agenda has fully incorporated the ILO's Decent Work Agenda<sup>3</sup> under target 8.5, which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". Secondly, together with other SDGs, the 2030 Agenda has provided a broad

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2 The most important civil society movements fighting violence and harassment against women are the "Me Too", which started in the United States and quickly went international; the Argentinean movement Ni Una Menos (Not one less); the French movement Balance Ton Porc (Denounce your Pig); and the American "Time's Up" movement.

3 ILO's Decent Work Agenda was created in 1999 and has four pillars: "employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue" (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2020 b).

support to address violence and harassment in a comprehensive matter. For example, SDG 10 has a target focused on abolishing practices and legislations that are discriminatory; SDG 3 calls for the promotion of well-being and health for all; and SDG 5, on gender equality, clearly states under target 5.2 the commitment to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 1).

With the impetus of the 2030 Agenda, the ILO Governing Body, at its 325<sup>th</sup> session in 2015, announced two main decisions with the purpose of advancing discussions on violence in the world of work. The first one was the realization of a tripartite meeting of experts in 2016, in order to assess the existing regulations on the topic and provide a background on the main problems that the ILO should address. The second one was the creation of a Standard Setting Committee, to be convened in 2018 with the objective of negotiating a new international standard on the topic (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 2).

In the background paper for the 2016 meeting, the International Labour Office (ILO Office – which is the ILO Secretariat) discussed the definition and the main components of violence in the world of work, since there was not a unified definition of the term. In 2003, ILO created a code of practice in services sectors, where it defined violence as “[a]ny action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured” (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, p. 6). Using this definition as a starting point, the ILO Secretariat established four components of violence at work: physical, psychological, sexual, and gender-based. The background paper also analyzed how power relations in the workplace trigger the main causes of violence at work, since those with more power or in a dominant position are usually the perpetrators of violence against those with less power or in a subordinate position.

The ILC Meeting of Experts took place on 3-6 October 2016, in Geneva, and it was attended by experts from governments, the International Organisation of Employers, the International Trade Union Confederation, and observers from other intergovernmental and non-intergovernmental entities. During their debate, participants discussed three main issues: the definition of violence; the causes and consequences of violence at work; and the main actions to be taken.

Considering the absence of a global definition of violence, the experts from the Employers’ group and the government of Belgium (on behalf of the European Union) stated that violence was a broad and vague term, and a universal meaning and understanding was needed in order to prevent it. For the expert from the Workers’ group, the definition of violence should consider the situation of different groups and sectors, since some of them were more susceptible to violence. In this realm, the expert from the government of Argentina outlined that the situation of informal workers should be considered in the definition (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 b, p. 4; p. 6; p. 8; p. 9).

The experts analyzed a variety of causes and consequences of violence in the world of work. Both experts from the Workers’ group and the government of South Africa stressed out that unequal power relations were at the roots of the problem, while the expert from the Employers’ group understood that it was a reflection of violence in societies as a whole. The expert from the government of Nepal

emphasized socioeconomic causes for violence, such as poverty, social inequality, and lower levels of education (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 b, p. 4; p. 6; p. 8; p. 10).

As for the consequences, all experts agreed that increasing violence in the world of work had negative results for families, workers, companies, and governments. The expert from the Workers' group called attention to the immense physical and psychosocial harm on the victims and their families. The expert from the Employers' group addressed the negative impacts on productivity and work security. The expert from the government of South Africa stated that violence at work had another negative consequence, which was raising socioeconomic inequalities (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 b, p. 4; p. 6; p. 8).

In terms of future actions, the Meeting of Experts came up with some conclusions. Firstly, that the ILO should include the term "harassment" in the title of the item, since not only physical violence but also all forms of harassment, including sexual and psychological harassment, were unacceptable behaviors in the world of work. Secondly, they discussed different solutions – such as reinforcing laws, awareness-raising, the strengthen of courts and tribunals –, but they agreed that an integrated and inclusive approach was needed to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work. Finally, they concluded that the existing international instruments did not provide guidance and specific instructions on how to globally address the issue. Therefore, they recommended that the ILC Standard Setting Committee on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work should draft a Convention on the topic, supplemented by a Recommendation (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 b, p. 42). With this historical decision, the Standard Setting Committee would first meet in 2018 to define the measures for protection, prevention, enforcement and awareness-raising that should be included in the first ILO instruments on the topic.

### **Creating a new integrated and inclusive international framework: The 2018 Meeting of the ILC Standard Setting Committee**

In the preparation for the first meeting of the Standard Setting Committee, scheduled to be held at the 107<sup>th</sup> session of the ILC, in 2018, the focus of the IL Office was to identify gaps in the existing national and international legal framework regarding violence and harassment in the world of work. Based on this gap analysis, the ILO Secretariat defined seven principles to guide the drafting of a new integrated and inclusive international framework, composed of an international Convention and a Recommendation on the topic.

The first gap concerned the scope and definition of the terms "violence and harassment" and "workplace". The definitions of violence and harassment in the ILO legal instruments were absent, vague, or restricted to a specific occupation or situation. "Workplace" was also a problematic term because it only addressed the physical place of work, being narrow and restrictive (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, p. 49).

In order to solve this issue, the IL Office established that the first principle to guide the drafting of the new instruments would be a comprehensive definition of those terms. Concerning "violence and harassment", the ILO Secretariat recommended that the definition should mention both

victims and perpetrators. Additionally, it should specify the four types violence and harassment: physical, psychological, sexual, and gender-based. The Secretariat also advised to replace the term “workplace” to “world of work”, which encompasses all work-related situations of violence and harassment, such as when commuting to work, or during work-related communication, trips or social activities (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, p. 49; INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, pp. 96-97).

The second gap referred to groups in situations of greater exposure to violence and harassment. Vulnerable groups – such as women; workers from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual community (LGBTIQA+); persons with disabilities; domestic workers; among others – are disproportionately affected by situations of violence and harassment and are usually not protected by States’ labor laws and regulations. Besides, many countries do not prohibit domestic/intimate partner violence, which can reinforce abusive relationships and prevent victims from leaving those violent situations (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, pp. 49-50; INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, pp. 97-98).

In this context, the second guiding principle would be guaranteeing the rights of all workers to a world of work free of violence and harassment, including specific rights to protect vulnerable groups, because they can experience violence and harassment in a unique way. As such, the protection of all workers’ rights should be directed towards the development of a non-harmful, decent, and safe work environment (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 97).

The third gap was the lack of national and international legislations that clearly prohibit violence and harassment in the world of work. Although some countries have criminal laws prohibiting situations of violence and harassment, there is a legislation gap regarding situations that are normalized or considered of lesser gravity, such as bullying and sexual harassment (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 97).

Addressing this gap would require following the third guiding principle, which was a broad and integrated legal framework that prohibits all types of violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work and guarantees their rights. National and international legislations should reach all sectors and occupations in the world of work, and be integrated with specific provisions to protect groups that are more harshly affected by this problem (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 45; p. 52).

The fourth gap involved the lack of prevention mechanisms. Even though companies have prevention frameworks for their employees, the majority of occupational safety and health management systems (OSHMS) only focus on sickness and injuries in the work environment. Few national legislations address the obligations of employers to protect workers from violence and harassment. Because of that, companies usually do not have mechanisms to prevent and deter these situations (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, p. 49; INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 97).

Thus, the fourth guiding principle was the need of creating an effective prevention strategy, in order to inhibit actions or conducts that originate or perpetuate situations of violence and harassment. The prevention strategy should include the investigation of cases of violence; safe hotlines to offer guidance and support to victims; awareness-raising and training programs; as well as gender-responsive curricula. Another important element of a prevention strategy would be education, fostering a culture of non-violence and zero-tolerance to violence and harassment in the world of work (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 6; p. 11; INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 93; pp. 100-102).

The fifth gap concerned the lack of proper dispute resolution mechanisms, enforcement bodies and data collection. When companies do not have complaint or dispute resolutions mechanisms that are accessible to workers, they end up resigning and trying to seek compensations through national tribunals, which takes time and money. Besides, many judges, labor inspectors, and other public officials are not trained to deal with situations involving violence and harassment in the world of work. Another problem is that many complaint mechanisms are not anonymous, and workers are susceptible to victimization from co-workers and employers. Not to mention the lack of information on violence and harassment in the workplace, which makes it more difficult to address the problem effectively (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 98; INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2016 a, p. 50).

The creation and strengthening of complaint, dispute-resolution, enforcement, and monitoring mechanisms, therefore, is the fifth guiding principle to overcome this gap. Complaint mechanisms should be safe, confidential and protect not only victims but also whistle-blowers and witnesses. Dispute resolution mechanisms strengthen law enforcement, with the participation of workers, employers, national tribunals, human rights organizations, and labor inspectors. Enforcement mechanisms, organized on judicial or non-judicial basis, contribute to fight a culture of impunity by supporting victims and providing them with remedies. Monitoring mechanisms allow data collection and access to important information to guide the implementation of policies and laws (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 79; p. 84; p. 98; p. 102).

The sixth gap is related to the lack of adequate sanctions against perpetrators, and remedies and protection for victims. Preventing new acts of violence and harassment requires that perpetrators be properly sanctioned or punished, in order to curb their behavior. Moreover, victims suffer from the consequences of violence and harassment long after these acts have occurred. These effects may be intensified if no reparative action is taken, causing greater damages to workers' lives (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 98).

Consequently, the sixth guiding principle is to include proper sanctions and remedies mechanisms. Sanctioning tools should encompass civil and criminal condemnations of both perpetrators and companies that do not fulfil their obligations of prevention and protection. Remedies should include a range of support and compensation mechanisms to victims and their families, such as "compensation for moral and material damages"; "legal fees and costs"; and "compensations in case of psychosocial or physical disability or inability to work due to work-related violence and

harassment” (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 83; p. 103). Specific remedies for victims of gender-based violence and harassment are also required.

The seventh gap was the weak social dialogue between governments, workers, and employers on the causes, consequences, and the course of action to prevent and protect workers from violence and harassment. On one hand, the fragmentation of existing national legislations inhibits the establishment of a comprehensive dialogue with all stakeholders to address work-related violence and harassment. On the other hand, workers’ and employers’ associations are deficient in assertive policies to tackle the subject beyond awareness-raising and campaigns (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE; 2016 a, p. 50).

Strengthening social dialogue with the purpose of consolidating an integrated approach to address violence and harassment in the world of work was the seventh guiding principle to the drafting of the new ILO instruments on the matter. Governments should be responsible for elaborating effective national policies and providing training and assistance to employers and workers’ organizations regarding all forms of work-related violence and harassment. Workers’ and employers’ organizations should promote codes of conduct that address not only all types of violence and harassment but also the specific needs of vulnerable groups of workers. Collective agreements between workers and employers should clarify the responsibilities of each party concerned (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, p. 99; p. 104).

Based on the seven guiding principles recommended by the IL Office, the Standard Setting Committee adopted, by the end of its meeting in 2018, a proposed conclusion indicating the key elements of an ILO Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **Position of blocs regarding the key elements of an ILO Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work**

The proposed conclusions of the ILC Standard Setting Committee in 2018 focused on outlining a draft structure for the new Convention and Recommendation, indicating their key elements. The ILO Convention would state the principles that encompass an inclusive and integrated approach to end violence and harassment in the world of work. It would also recall the Declaration of Philadelphia and other fundamental ILO Conventions that refer to the prohibition of situations of violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence. The main goal of the Convention would be prohibiting all forms of violence and harassment, since they are incompatible with human rights laws and the ILO Decent Work Agenda (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, pp. 101-102).

The Convention would set up the components of violence and harassment – physical, psychological, sexual and gender-based – and the components of the term world of work. It would address measures to prevent violence and harassment, such as enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms. Additionally, this instrument would state measures for providing remedies and support for victims as well as establish appropriate sanctions to perpetrators. It would also address the importance of cooperation among employers and workers on the creation of codes

of practice, guidelines, and awareness-raising campaigns to prevent violence and harassment (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, pp. 102-104).

The Recommendation would complement the Convention, focusing on detailed and effective actions to combat violence and harassment in the world of work. Some examples of those actions would be: the development of national legislation that protect groups of workers that are most affected by violence and harassment; the development of policies and measures aimed at specific sectors and occupations; the creation of workplace policies that address the responsibilities of both employers and workers; the development of appropriate remedies and sanctions, as well as support for victims of violence and harassment, including gender-based violence; and the establishment of training programs and awareness-raising campaigns (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, 2018, pp. 101-104).

It is important to highlight that ILO Members had different priorities concerning the key elements to be included in the text of the Convention and the Recommendation. For the Employers' group, both instruments should state that no individual should be subjected to violence and/or harassment while at work. However, for this group, a Convention should address "the objectives and principles" and "leave details of implementations to each country, based on national legal traditions" (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, pp. 16-17). A legally binding instrument should clarify the concepts, and, for that reason, the Employers' group proposed the separation of "violence" from "harassment" to avoid confusion of both terms. Besides, they affirmed the necessity of the use of the term "workplace" instead of "world of work" in both documents and their titles, because it was more specific. The group also stated the importance of equality and non-discrimination in employment and affirmed that the Convention should address explicitly the protection of employers. Regarding the Recommendation, the group defended a flexible and expanded instrument that considered countries' own contexts (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 17; 2019, p. 5).

The Workers' group defended that the Convention should consist of a thorough prohibition, prevention and monitoring mechanism against violence and harassment in the world of work. This legally binding framework should also have a gender dimension, considering the situation of both women and gender non-conforming people. As for the Recommendation, it should provide guidance to concrete actions to protect all workers, especially those in vulnerable situations, such as domestic, street, and informal workers. For the Workers' group, the greatest challenge would be "to strike a balance between a Convention that was not so complex as to be seen as unratifiable and one that was not so limited in scope, such that it would be ineffective in addressing this most basic and pernicious of human rights violations" (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 5).

As for the position of governmental representatives, the government of Bulgaria, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), stated that both instruments, the Convention and the Recommendation, should address the three main causes of violence and harassment: "unequal power relationships, discrimination and gender inequality" (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 6). The EU also defended the need of an approach that could be sensitive to groups that are

more prone to be victims of violence and harassment, such as women, migrants, and the LGBTIQ+ community. Aligned with the EU, the United Kingdom defended that both instruments should make reference to the situations of forced labor, child labor, and modern slavery, which are unaccepted forms of work, but are very common throughout global supply chains (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 7).

The government of Nepal argued that the new instruments should cover the legislative gaps concerning the situation of workers that usually are more affected by violence and harassment and not protected by any laws, such as informal and precarious workers, including migrants. Whereas the government of Namibia mentioned other specific types of work relations that needed a specific approach, such as self-employed workers; remote, online, and virtual work; and disguised and triangular employment (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 9; p. 12).

A different issue was raised by the government of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group. This group defended that the new ILO instruments should consider cultural and religious differences. For the Africa group, “there would be a need for accommodation, understanding and tolerance regarding the meaning and scope of the word ‘gender’, particularly regarding the issue of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons” (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2018, p. 7).

The government of Uruguay, speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), stated that the Convention should provide a common framework for all social partners to promote decent work worldwide. Whereas the Recommendation should guide the implementation of policies and laws, considering national specificities and the diversity of situations in which violence and harassment may emerge (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 2019, p. 5).

These different perspectives regarding the key elements of the new Convention and Recommendation would be the last issues to be addressed in the final round of negotiations of the Standard Setting Committee, that would take place at the 108<sup>th</sup> session of the ILC, in June 2019. The responsibility upon the shoulders of the tripartite partners was huge, considering that all expected to adopt these milestone instruments at the eve of the celebrations of the ILO’s centenary in 2019.

## **Final considerations**

The world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is permeated by elements that intensify and perpetuate situations of violence and harassment all around the globe. The globalization of production has weakened labor laws and dismantled many rights that offered a security net for workers against violence and harassment. Besides, the expansion of informal economy has increased the number of workers without the protection of labor laws, which affects especially women, who compose the majority of informal workers and are more vulnerable to violence and harassment.

Not to mention the current situation of global economic crisis combined with the global health crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemics, which will require urgent actions “to ensure

everyone's right to a world of work free from violence and harassment, not only during and after the outbreak, but also to build a sustainable recovery and better resilience in the face of future crises" (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2020, p. 1).

Thus, it is imperative to have an integrated and efficient international mechanism to deal with violence and harassment that considers the rapid transformations in the world and covers all workers and situations. Even though the purpose of this chapter was to present the main discussions in the period of 2016-2018, it is important to mention that the ILO was able to adopt its Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190), supplemented by its Recommendation (No. 206) in 2019.

Both documents recognized that violence and harassment at the world of work is unacceptable, considering the ILO's core values of protecting human rights and strengthening its Decent Work agenda. The new instruments also established prevention measures, not only through legislations, but also through awareness-building efforts, as a way to halt the harmful effects that may derive from power relations in the world of work. Additionally, the Convention and the Recommendation highlighted the necessity for social dialogue among workers, employers, and governments, with the purpose of consolidating a stronger framework to combat all situations of violence and harassment in the world of work.

Finally, these are the main questions that should be addressed when dealing with this topic nowadays:

1. How should violence and harassment be addressed in order to wholly encompass all possible situations of violations of workers' rights?
2. Considering that vulnerable groups and sectors are disproportionately affected by violence and harassment, what measures should be taken to effectively lower their vulnerabilities and grant them the necessary protection and support?
3. What are the responsibilities of each ILO Member regarding their efforts to effectively prevent violence and harassment in the world of work and protect workers' rights?

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