

Global Futures Forum: Civil Society Perspectives on the Summit of the Future

A proposed international civil society gathering

Suggested date: 20-22 March 2023

Draft Concept Note for Discussion

The Summit of the Future (SOTF) is proposed for September 2024 in New York to “advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in this report, and potentially others where arrangements are nascent or require updating.”¹ This gathering will take place a year after the SDG Summit and the Ministerial Meeting on a Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2023 and set to define the scope and ambition of SOTF. In order to ensure diverse civil society perspectives in raising the SOTF’s ambition to build the UN we need to deliver on the world body’s agenda for peace, sustainable development, and human rights, a civil society-led Global Futures Forum (GFF) is proposed for early 2023 within or near UN headquarters. The forum is proposed to comprise two days of discussions in a hybrid format to ensure global reach, preceded by multiple consultation tracks (e.g., regional & national forums, e-consultations, an open call for short global governance innovation briefs, and a monthly OCA dialogue series) and immediately followed by a “Civil Society-UN Missions Engagement Day.” The proposed principal objectives of the Global Futures Forum include:

1. Explore the design, feasibility, and potential impact of wide ranging proposals, from the unique vantage point of civil society, as a contribution to the Summit of the Future’s preparations.
2. Finalize and widely socialize a “People’s Pact for the Future” (name to be determined), as a civil society declaration of both principles and advocacy to feed into the General Assembly’s negotiations on an intergovernmental Pact for the Future and related instruments for adoption at the September 2023 Summit of the Future.
3. Raise awareness, build ownership, and mobilize energy around the promise of the Summit of the Future to deliver on an ambitious set of outcomes that reinforce and help to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement.
4. Model true partnership and creativity worldwide among civil society to ensure active and equal participation across age groups, geographic representation, professional disciplines, and other forms of global diversity.

Background:

UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ [Our Common Agenda \(OCA\)](#) report, released on 10 September 2021, presented world leaders with some ninety recommendations to strengthen and renew the United Nations system. After a consensus resolution [recognizing](#) the OCA report, Member States participated in a five-part series of multi-stakeholder consultations on its findings and recommendations, convened by the President of the General Assembly and supported by the UN Secretariat. The consultations lent support for the Secretary-General’s proposed September 2023/24 Summit of the Future in New York, which is expected to result in world leaders endorsing a far-reaching “Pact for the Future”, and related global policy frameworks, including a Declaration on Future

¹ UN Secretary-General António Guterres, [Our Common Agenda](#), 10 September 2021.

Generations, a New Agenda for Peace, and a Global Digital Compact. The Summit has the potential to consider system-wide reform in ways not seen since UN60 in 2005, when the Human Rights Commission was upgraded, Responsibility to Protect norm adopted, and Peacebuilding Architecture introduced.

To advance the Secretary-General's call to action for a more networked and inclusive approach to multilateralism, a **Global Futures Forum: Civil Society Perspectives on the Summit of the Future (GFF)** is proposed to take place at UN HQ (NY), if available. It will aim to:

1. **Finalize and widely socialize a “People’s Pact for the Future”** to feed diverse civil society ideas and insights into official discussions on the Pact for the Future. This will be drafted by a core group and based on: online exchanges to commence during UNGA High-Level Week (September 2022), regional forums, an open call for short global governance innovation briefs, a C4UN-BIC OCA Dialogue series, a GGIN Global Policy Dialogue series, recommendations from CSO campaigns, etc. The main pillars for the People’s Pact for the Future and Global Futures Forum will be aligned and should run parallel to the focus of the Summit of the Future agenda. For example:
 - a. Future Generations: Addressing today’s urgent matters while bearing in mind and taking into consideration impacts on future generations
 - b. Reform the global financial architecture to reduce global inequality and achieve the 2030 Agenda & Paris Agreement
 - c. Build inclusive, just, and peaceful societies through a New Agenda for Peace and an Emergency Platform
 - d. Adopt a Global Digital Compact for an open, free, and secure digital future for all
 - e. Promote meaningful engagement in governance, especially for youth, women, and vulnerable populations in the Global South
2. **Feed diverse, intergenerational perspectives into the Summit of the Future consultative processes and negotiations.** We aspire for a youth engagement track parallel to the Global Futures Forum. Additionally, we are considering a “Civil Society-UN Missions Engagement Day” in New York immediately after the gathering. Beyond the forum, these tracks could aim to:
 - a. Champion the innovative, concrete, and research backed voices of youth through a series of written inputs from young authors, researchers, and activists, including from indigenous communities.
 - b. Support CSO advocacy and Member States with tools for effective engagement in the Summit’s preparations through a regular bulletin, steady stream of policy briefs, an interactive, web-based outreach platform, and other knowledge products and resources in support of the intergovernmental negotiations.
3. **Encourage the convening of diverse civil society-led coalitions and networks worldwide** through, for example, National and Regional Forums, thematic “deep dive” Global Policy Dialogues, and global policy-oriented research in the lead-up to the Global Futures Forum, each ensuring proportionate representation from Global South actors.

Facilitating Universal Participation:

- Establish a Global South Travel Fund as a key “ask” of foundations and government donors.
- Those organizations and individuals with the means to do so are expected to fund their own participation.
- Well-resourced organizations attending will be encouraged to sponsor CSO delegates from the Global South who require assistance with travel and accommodations, including through NYC homestays.
- To the extent possible, align the gathering with a major convening in New York when participants are already planning to be together, for example, by building directly on the CSW or ECOSOC Youth Forum.

The Organizing Team

The Global Futures Forum: Civil Society Perspectives on the Summit of the Future will be facilitated by a large and diverse Advisory & Support Council (i.e. ensuring regional as well as thematic and other forms of diversity) with a small core organizing team driving the process. At UNGA High-level week in September 2022, we “launched” preparations for the Global Futures Forum during the Global People’s Assembly. In the coming weeks, exploratory meetings will be held to build consensus around the forum’s aspirations, objectives, and approaches and pursue new partnerships.

For more information, please contact Nudhara Yusuf, GGIN Facilitator (nyusuf@stimson.org) and Jeffery Huffines, C4UN Senior Advisor (jeffery@c4unwn.org).

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