GPW22 Thematic Track Blurbs

1. **<u>Rights, Inequalities and Peace: navigating tensions, finding opportunities</u>**

The 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* explicitly combines the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies in its Goal 16, which 'seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.'

In that same vein, both the UN Security Council and the UNGA acknowledged, for the first time in 2016, the crucial relationship between human rights, development and peace through the twin resolutions on *Sustaining Peace.*

The work of peacebuilders, development and human rights actors on the ground, often touches on one another and may even produce *ad hoc* innovative collaboration. Yet, if people working on devising solutions to problems operate with a specific analytical frame in mind and only use approaches they are familiar with, operational collaboration, finance and reciprocal learning across these fields is likely to sustain siloed practice and offer opportunities for collaborative synergy and innovation supporting the work of both fields.

This thematic track seeks to explore the following questions:

- <u>Integrating human rights and peace at the multilateral diplomacy and policy level</u>: How do current peacebuilding practice integrate human rights analysis and approaches?

- <u>Experiences and exiting practice</u>: What innovative practices, experiences, and stories from the field are there of how confronting human rights violations, injustice and exclusion has contributed to sustainable peace?

- <u>Lessons learned and guidance</u>: What are the lessons learned and how can we improve our practices?

2. **<u>Moving beyond securitization: Risk management and new horizons for peacebuilding</u>**

Narratives around humanitarian, development, environment and peace concerns are increasingly framed in the language of existential security threats. These threats, according to such narratives, justify a variety of extraordinary measures and militarised responses that go beyond the bounds of normal political procedures and processes. From evoking "states of emergency" to counter violent extremism, to articulating ecological, health or migration concerns in security terms, a variety of international issue areas are being conceived as arenas robust stabilisation efforts.

Arguably, these securitisation dynamics are particularly pronounced in settings in which a variety of conflict and disaster dynamics intertwine to produce chronic socio-economic, political and environmental concerns to which there are no quick-fix solutions.

This thematic track seeks to critically reflect on some of these trends, raising the following questions:

- Security approaches and human rights: Where do such "securitisation moves" leave notions of human rights, sustainability, inclusivity or solidarity?

- The impact of fear in practices and policy making: What are the challenges of constructing programming narratives around discourses of fear?

- Including the peacebuilding framework: And what roles can peacebuilders play in turning the tide on the way threats are perceived and instrumentalised for political or economic purposes?

3. The Power and Limits of Innovation in Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding has traditionally been viewed as a human-centered activity that supports societies in their quest for conflict resolution. Today's efforts to prevent, manage and end violent conflict are supported by a range of new methods and technologies. In particular, the digitalization of almost all aspects of our lives today has created new drivers and dynamics of conflict, requiring responses to phenomena such as online hate speech, disinformation and cyberwarfare. Unequal access to digital infrastructures, varying digital literacy, and new forms of cybersurveillance and authoritarianism threaten to marginalize a substantial part of those affected by conflict and reduce their agency in peacebuilding efforts.

However, digitalization also increasingly shapes how international and local actors design and implement peace support activities, as they aim to leverage the power of innovation to respond to violent or armed conflict. This ranges from data-driven conflict analysis and early warning, to online dialogues and computer-supported facilitation, to fighting online polarization and violent extremism, enabling participatory peacebuilding, and promoting 'cyberpeace'.

Innovation also brought a range of new actors to the fore, including social media companies, PeaceTech labs, accelerator initiatives, and the scientific community, which must work jointly to leverage both technological and social forces for peacebuilding.

This thematic track will shed light on the power and limits of innovation in peacebuilding and will address the following questions:

- Human-machine relations in peacebuilding: How does technological innovation change how peacebuilders, conflict parties and conflict stakeholders interact with one another in the quest for peace? What new constellations of agency emerge when peacebuilding organizations

increasingly rely on complex digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence? What new forms of expertise are required and how can they be accommodated in peacebuilding organizations? And how can technology be employed to enable meaningful and sustainable peacebuilding measures?

● Global power relations in innovation: How does innovation in peacebuilding help mitigate global inequalities that drive conflict – and how might it exacerbate them? What role does the global digital economy play in shaping peacebuilding dynamics and outcomes and what can be done to mitigate or transform detrimental power relations, including between the private sector, international organizations and average citizens? How can marginalized groups, women and youth leverage innovation to become active agents of change?

● Normative commitments for digital peacebuilding: How can digital peacebuilding approaches be strengthened and sustained through joint norms, standards or principles that safeguard the potential of innovation while mitigating possible negative effects? What normative commitments currently sustain peacebuilding practice and how can they be updated to make peacebuilding efforts fit for innovation? How can peace-supportive theories and paradigms, including decolonial, post-colonial and feminist thought, be brought to bear on innovation in peacebuilding?

4. **Cultivating cooperation: Environmental challenges and opportunities for peace in a new age of insecurity**

The multiple and complex situations of armed violence pose great challenges, especially to the world's most fragile environments and the most vulnerable communities. In addition to mounting civilian casualties in those contexts, life-threatening challenges to the sustainable and equitable access and management of basic vital natural resources require us to rethink paradigms of action and formulate responses at the international, state, and local levels. Where, and how, is peace possible?

This thematic track will address the following questions:

● Effects on the environment: How has the reemergence of large-scale warfare and the growing weaponization of the environment affected the climate, ecosystems, and natural resources? What does it mean for food and energy security? What specific threats does state confrontation pose to the environment (WMD, infrastructure targeting in particular)? How can the environment be safely and fairly restored during, and after conflict, and reinforce the prospects of durable peace?

● The evolving nature of peace: How can peacebuilders harness environmental issues in the search for peace? What best practices can be integrated across the field? Where do we fall short? What have we learned about meaningful participation at the intersection of environment, climate, conflict, and peace?

- <u>Cross-sectoral approaches to environment and peace</u>: As the growing fields of climate security and environmental peacebuilding have continued to mature, how might we better engage business actors? Policymakers? Funders, both public and private? Which examples of inclusion of Indigenous peoples, youth, women, and/or marginalized communities can we learn from? Who must take responsibility for action, and how?