



Jayathma Wickramanayake (left), Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, addresses the Security Council meeting on the maintenance of international peace and security, with a focus on youth.

Opportunities and Pitfalls in Practical Translation of Youth Inclusivity for Sustainable Peacebuilding in Africa

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2018 has been a landmark year for youth and a time full of milestones on the UN's Youth, Peace and Security agenda. By passing resolution 2250 in 2015 the Security Council acknowledged for the first time that young people drive change but that they are not in the driving seat. This resolution has inspired confidence in youth across the globe who are working persistently towards addressing conflict as well as violent extremism and are demanding peace. Young peacebuilders have been using this resolution to engage their national governments and support the important work they are already championing on the ground. On June 6, 2018, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2419 on increasing the role of youth in negotiating and implementing peace agreements, stressing the importance of including the views of youth in discussions relating to peace and security and calling for the full and equal participation of youth at decision-making levels. Although ample positive work has been realized on the basis of resolution 2250 and 2419, much remains to be done in fully translating their provisions into practice. The recently 2018 progress study on the youth's positive contributions to peace processes and conflict resolution mandated by resolution 2250 offers important recommendations and tangible responses at local, national, regional and international levels that can feed future policy-making of UN member states. This paper takes a closer look at the two Security Council resolutions pertaining to Youth, Peace and Security as well as the independent progress study and identifies opportunities and pitfalls for practical translation of youth inclusivity with regards to economic participation, gender inclusion and access to social services in Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania, respectively.



1. The UN's Youth, Peace and Security Agenda

The share of Africa's youth in the world is expected to increase to a staggering 42 percent by 2030 and is projected to continue to grow throughout the remainder of the 21st century, more than doubling from current levels by 2055. Data on direct conflict casualties suggests that more than 90 percent of all deaths occur among young adult males. Today, some 50 percent of the 1.4 billion people living in countries impacted by crises and fragility are under the age of 20. The Security Council has recognized that an estimated 408 million youth (ages 15-29) reside in settings affected by armed conflict or organized violence whereby 1 out of 4 youth globally are affected by armed conflict. These figures are gut-wrenching but indispensable for our understanding of peacebuilding in today's age. With a global population of over 1.8 billion, young people—though disproportionately affected by armed conflict and organized violence—could potentially employ the unique capacity and ability to take on our planet's most deep rooted conflicts. Their inclusion and leadership are therefore imperative to the successful pursuit of peacebuilding.

The UN's Youth, Peace and Security agenda provides a holistic and inclusive approach to security comprised of five main pillars: Participation, Protection, Conflict Prevention, Partnerships, as well as Disengagement and Reintegration. Addressing all five pillars is critical to respecting human rights and dignity and in tackling the root causes of conflict to create sustainable peace. Although the Security Council has addressed related thematic issues such as Civilians in Armed Conflict, Children and Armed Conflict or Women, Peace and Security, it only fully took on Youth, Peace and Security as an official agenda item of the Council—some say somewhat reluctantly—after the adoption of resolution 2250 in late 2015. Many have underlined the importance of Jordan's leadership in the making of

this agenda item. A groundbreaking event and turning point towards a new international agenda on Youth, Peace and Security was the Global Forum on the Role of Youth in Peace and Security that was held in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under the Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, resulting in the Amman Declaration which propelled the momentum for a resolution in the UN's Security Council. Resolution 2250 constituted the first Security Council resolution fully dedicated to Youth, Peace and Security and acknowledged for the first time in the existence of the Council that youth deserve a seat at the table when peacebuilding is up for discussion. Although the Youth, Peace and Security agenda came into existence during the tenure of the previous Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon the agenda item fell on fertile ground with Secretary-General António Guterres, who declared early on that his vision for the United Nations will focus on conflict prevention.

On April 23, 2018, the Security Council, on the initiative of Peru, convened its first open debate on Youth, Peace and Security. This open debate is a clear indicator for the changing narrative within the Security Council. Youth was often dismissed as a topic that should be discussed by the General Assembly or ECOSOC, not the Security Council. If there was any debate on young people in the Security Council, youth was often regarded as a risk to be contained or merely spoken about in terms of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). Although much work remains to be done, this notion is clearly evolving. The understanding that the international community can reap the fruit of youth working towards peace by investing in young people and tapping into their potential is finally being cultivated in the Security Council. The Council's open debate in April 2018 was hailed as a success with all Council members speaking, several foreign ministers in attendance, over 70 interventions by UN member states as well as numerous civil society organizations and observers taking the floor.

The landmark resolution 2250 (2015) acknowledges that youth play an important and positive part in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security and urges member states to give young people a greater opportunity of participation and decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels. Furthermore, it considers setting up mechanisms that would enable young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes. It also urges countries to raise their political, financial, technical and logistical support by taking the needs and participation of youth in peace efforts in conflict and post-conflict situations into account. The resolution provides a set of parameters on the basis of which policies and agendas should be developed by member states, the UN and civil society.

Security Council resolution 2419 (2018) calls on member states to safeguard educational organizations as spaces free from all violence, ensuring that they are accessible to all youth and requests steps to address young women's rights to equal education. It also recommends that the Peacebuilding Commission helps guide national efforts to include youth in peacebuilding. At its core it urges the implementation of resolution 2250.

Resolution 2250 mandated the Secretary-General to appoint experts to carry out an independent study on young people's positive contributions to conflict resolution and peace processes. Notable about the progress study, first and foremost, is its research process. The aspiration of the author to make the many voices of the global youth heard and represented in this study is palpable throughout the report. For this participatory research process over 4000 youth were turned to in regional consultations as well as focus groups conducted by UN agencies or civil society partners across the globe. The lead author, Dr. Graeme Simpson, paid particular attention to ensure the youth being consulted are not only from privileged backgrounds but also target *hard-to-reach* young women and men from all regions of the world. As

the UN's Youth, Peace and Security agenda is directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Sustaining Peace agenda; it is not an agenda that is just meant for post conflict countries but rather a global set of objectives for both hemispheres alike. Youth, like gender, is a cross-cutting issue. Every SDG therefore, as noted by Dr. Simpson, is a youth SDG.

The progress study reflects on stereotypical conceptions of youth and debunks a series of policy myths that have misguided policy and programmatic approaches related to youth, violence and conflict. The report shows that widespread stereotypes have associated young people with violence, particularly young men, which can obstruct any well-meaning policy or programmatic investments into young people. Simpson notes that only a small number of youths ever actually engage in violence. This perception is also highly gendered whereby young men are portrayed as perpetrators of violence and young women are portrayed as helpless and passive victims. Simpson identifies three key areas of what he believes to be misapprehensions: i. Statistical bulges in a country's population consisting of youth lead to an increased likelihood of violence; ii. Refugees, migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)—many of whom are youth—are a burden and or threat for their host communities and drain economic resources and social services; iii. Youth are constantly at risk of recruitment by terrorist groups. The report assumes that these are misconceptions and have reinforced one another to prompt a policy panic whereby countries preemptively create repressive policy in anticipation of violent youth dissent, ultimately leading to overly oppressive tactics which unnecessarily alienate youth.

The report furthermore illustrates the breadth and diversity of young people's contributions to peace. Youth are engaged in peacebuilding at all stages of the conflict cycle (sustaining peace, ongoing conflict, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict) dealing with different types of violence (violent extremism, political conflict,

organized criminal violence as well as sexual and gender-based violence). They work towards peace in local youth-led organizations operating on a low budget and in large international organizations alike, cooperating with civil society and governments. Youth, furthermore, bring about social and political change by protesting peacefully, artistic expression as well as online mobilization.

The progress study also explores the social contract between young people and their governments as well as between youth and their communities offering insights on political participation, economic inclusion and education opportunities. The study identifies exclusion from peace processes, political participation, economic wellbeing and education as a form of violence itself. This violence of exclusion also has the tendency to be gendered whereby any form of youth programming often prefers male participants. The report calls for the involvement of diverse groups of youth in peace processes, especially those that are operating within civil society and are well connected to other young people. The report warns that exclusion from meaningful civic and political participation will raise mistrust in democratic governance itself, often leading to a complete withdrawal from formal politics. When it comes to economic wellbeing, the study cautions of putting too much emphasis on the correlation between youth unemployment and violent conflict, for which there is little reliable evidence. Rather, it is concluded that the root causes of violence lie within deep horizontal inequalities, injustice and identity-based factors. Youth in this regard want “more than just jobs.” Education is at the very core of peace and security concerns for youth with many believing that value-based education is potentially transformative in building peace.

The key assumption in the report is that nation states can reap the economic and societal benefits of their demographic dividend by recognizing the peacebuilding work of youth, nurturing and supporting it. If sufficient resources are invested

into youth, the demographic dividend cannot only be turned into a peace dividend, but silos of development, human rights and humanitarian work can be bridged. The study calls for a seismic shift in which governments reorient their policy and programming as well as the multilateral system towards young people, using resolution 2250 as the basis of their transformation.

To achieve this seismic shift the report presented to the Security Council recommends investing in young people’s capacities, agency and leadership by providing greater and more flexible funding. Further, prioritizing capacity-building for young people’s networks and utilizing their creative solutions towards sustaining peace as well as including young people in the implementation and evaluation of programs related to Youth, Peace and Security. Nation states and multilateral institutions should also transform systems that fortify exclusion to address the structural obstacles restraining youth participation in peacebuilding. The report recommends establishing partnerships and formal cooperation, in which youth are treated as equal and meaningful allies working on peacebuilding at all levels.

Both resolution 2250 and resolution 2419 were considered by the Security Council under Chapter 7, Article 39 of the UN Charter. Security Council resolutions under Chapter 7 are legally binding. While this constitutes a powerful tool, it should be noted that it is the individual responsibility of each member state to implement the resolutions at the national level. National Action Plans (NAP) as requested by the Security Council through Presidential Statements (S/PRST/2004/40 and S/PRST/2005/52) on the Women, Peace and Security agenda have not yet been requested for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. This means that Security Council resolutions 2250 and 2419 are greatly dependent to be used as an instrument by young people who are already building peace on the ground or who are aspiring to contribute to peacebuilding. They can be used to advocate, lobby, build partnerships, mobilize resources and

to build momentum for national implementation from the bottom up.

Something we can expect advocates for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda to work and call for is the mainstreaming of youth in Security Council resolutions that are not directly linked to the agenda item as such. Mainstreaming youth across the broader Council agenda would allow for the needs, concerns and views of youth to be considered and incorporated early in Council resolutions. Moving forward it would also be important for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda to receive a regular reporting cycle, like most of the other thematic issues the Council deals with. This would allow the Council to convene routinely on the issue and to hear expert testimony on the status of implementation for resolutions 2250 and 2419. The independent progress study recommends an annual cycle. Although this has not yet been agreed upon, Article 22 and 23 of resolution 2419 do request the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council on the implementation of resolution 2419 and 2250 by May 2020 and decides for the Council to remain seized of the matter. Until a regular reporting cycle is reached it will depend on the goodwill of the Council members to raise the issue to the agenda.

What's next on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in Africa? In September 2018, the AU Commission's Peace and Security Department launched the Youth for Peace Africa (Y4PAfrica) Program in Lagos, Nigeria. Y4PAfrica's objective is to effectively involve African youth in promoting peace and security, with special consideration to the AU's target of *silencing the guns by 2020*. Currently the AU Commission's Peace and Security Department and the AU Youth Division in cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs' African Governance Architecture, are collaborating on a tangible action plan for Y4PAfrica. This framework will be the next major milestone on Africa's Youth, Peace & Security agenda and is expected to propose clear ways in which the AU can work together with those aged

between 15-35. An official definition of youth across Africa will additionally aid in the production of coherent data on young people, a vital precondition for enacting resolutions 2250 and 2419. Starting in March 2019 Y4PAfrica is launching five regional youth consultations to produce a study on the role and contributions of youth in the promotion of peace and security in Africa. The AU Commission's Peace and Security Department is expected to base further actions on the Y4PAfrica agenda on the findings of this study.

Within the UN, the Youth Strategy is a top priority for Secretary-General António Guterres who wants to incorporate youth into all UN pillars, including his prevention plan and the 2030 agenda. On Monday, 24th September 2018 during the High-Level week of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly Secretary-General António Guterres introduced the world to *Youth2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy*. An ambitious strategy, Youth2030 is intended to guide the UN system in expanding support for the empowerment of youth as well as making sure that the organization's work fully benefits from the unique abilities and insights of youth. The strategy has three thematic priorities that reflect the main pillars of the UN system: sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights. The UN has set five priorities for the next 12 years in order to operationalize the UN Youth Strategy, a commitment the community of member states ought to support, nourish and scrutinize.

A dedicated group of around two dozen countries unofficially referring to themselves as the "Champions League" are looking to raise the issue of youth during the upcoming sessions of the General Assembly's subsidiary organs, especially within the work of the six committees. Here, interested observers can discern whether or not high-ranking government officials prioritize young people in peacebuilding and if youth

mainstreaming in General Assembly resolutions will progress.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that even before the United Nations Security Council recognized the Youth, Peace and Security agenda as one of their thematic issues, young people were already leading impactful peacebuilding initiatives on the ground. Fundamental to the objective of sustaining peace is the appreciation for locally-owned peacebuilding initiatives informed by stakeholders of the community. The sustained effect of inclusive approaches to durable peace are substantial and reinforce the notion that instead of imposing peace strategies designed by outsiders, the focus should be on building capacity for local youth with special attention to the inclusion of the most marginalized. For this reason, this paper identifies opportunities and pitfalls for the practical translation of youth inclusivity for sustainable peacebuilding with regards to economic participation, gender inclusion and access to social services in Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania, respectively.

2. Economic Inclusion in Nigeria

Youth economic inclusivity, defined as fair access to meaningful and reliable employment for youths, is a key issue in relation to sustainable peacebuilding in Africa. With limited access to formal economic opportunities, a vast majority of young people are forced to depend on the informal sector, and on illicit sub-sectors to a lesser extent, for livelihood. Existing estimates show that youths account for 60 percent of all of Africa's jobless. In North Africa, the youth unemployment rate is 25 percent, but the rate is higher in many Sub-Saharan African countries. Underemployment is indeed the bigger problem in Africa: for instance, over 70 percent of the youth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda are either self-employed or contributing to family work. Nigeria's labor force statistics for the third quarter of 2017 showed that a total of

67.3 percent of young people aged 15-24 years were either underemployed (engaged in work for less than 20 hours a week or low skilled work not commensurate with their skills and qualifications) or unemployed (have no work at all but willing and actively seeking to work). Indeed, statistics often neglect those underemployed in the informal sector.

Within the youth cohort, interconnected horizontal inequalities or exclusion (in economic, social and political forms) persist among individuals and between social groups that further dampens economic prospects for many young people. Low and unfair access to economic opportunities in turn lengthens the process of youth transitioning to adulthood and affects young people's ability to partake in the decisions that affects their lives. While the lack of economic opportunities does not necessarily or solely motivate violent conflict, it leaves many young people feeling aggravated and distrustful of the economic systems that have continued to exclude them. In Nigeria the feeling of marginalization and exclusion necessitated the "Not Too Young to Run" campaign that seeks to reduce the age limit for running for elected office, an initiative spearheaded by a Nigerian university student group.

The need for youth economic inclusivity in promoting sustainable peace and progress is emphasized by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2419 (2018) and 2250 (2015). Specifically, UNSCR 2419 (2018) states that "inclusivity, including by ensuring full and effective participation of youth without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex [...] or other status is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes and objectives". In most of Sub-Saharan Africa and in all North African countries, for instance, young women find it harder to get jobs than their male counterparts do, even if they have equivalent skills and experience. Aside from gender-based youth exclusion, other categories of young people (refugees, ex-combatants, disabled, and ethnic minorities) often face several barriers

of exclusion from economic opportunities in Africa. Such prohibition in access to economic opportunities for many young people is contrary to positive and sustainable peace.

UNSCR 2250 (2015) also recognizes that “a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies are in place.” Africa has the fastest growing and most youthful population in the world with over 20 percent, about 200 million people, between the ages of 15 and 24. The current trend indicates that this figure will double by 2045. With the right programs and policies, the youth bulge offers hope of a “demographic dividend” as young people contribute towards economic growth and well-being.

However, most peace and security programming and policies for youth economic inclusion are not appropriately designed and implemented for effectiveness. In Nigeria many of these policies and programs provide young people with temporary or marginal stake in the formal economy, with little focus on their needs, aspirations and yearning for dignity. The Nigerian and Ghanaian governments, for instance, run a mandatory one-year national youth service program designed to equip college graduates with requisite job experience and skills that will help them transition from students to workers. However, these graduates are often given work placements outside their field of study and are unable to acquire the appropriate skills for their desired career path. Most young people are placed to teach in secondary schools or work in traditional farms under poor working conditions. Hence, after graduation from the youth program, many remain without the requisite skills to find their desired jobs. In many cases, only graduates who hail from wealthy backgrounds or have the right connections are able to obtain desired work placement. In Nigeria, this often leaves the economically disadvantaged youths unable to gain the right experience to improve their economic prospects.

Some employment interventions for youth inclusion tend to offer non-skilled and casual employment or “necessity” menial self-employment skills for lack of alternatives. Such programs and policies ignore young people’s desire for meaningful and dignifying jobs with access to social protections. For instance, as part of the national youth service program in Ghana and Nigeria, technical and vocational training is offered during orientation weeks to help graduates pursue self-employment. However, these trainings are disconnected from the needs of the labor market, the private sector, and the economy. Despite the growth and development needs in information and communications technology (ICT), manufacturing and services sectors as well as young people’s desire for white-collar careers, vocational trainings in tailoring, hairdressing, craft-making, soap-making are often the only options provided in such programs. A major pitfall for youth employment and inclusiveness interventions is therefore the failure to consider the need to align skills training and job experience with private sector needs.

Going forward, to practically translate youth economic inclusivity contained in UNSCR 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), future employment interventions should take a transformative approach, rather than offering short term and misaligned access to economic systems. Beyond just jobs, the transformative approach entails expanding the long-term economic stake of young people for meaningful and dignifying jobs, while cultivating spaces for their political and civic engagement. The strategy for youth economic inclusivity should entail the following:

Fostering young people’s education and employability training

A transformative approach to youth economic inclusivity will require forms of quality and affordable educational and employability trainings that reflect modern times and future trends. In South Africa, for instance, engineering graduates were found to be unemployable in the

automotive industry because of the low quality of their training. It is important to address the mismatch between educational training and skills of young Africans and labor market needs by creating linkages between educational curricula and the realities of the productive sectors of the economy. Employability, enterprise and personal development skills, should become part of the post-primary educational curricula. Such skills include: leadership (courage and confidence as initiators), hands-on problem-solving (creativity and critical thinking), teamwork, empathy, as well as appropriate internships and short-term job placements. This would position young Africans to contribute to the health, wealth and sustainability of the communities from which they come. Given the fiscal constraints of African governments, strategic private-public partnerships beyond corporate social responsibility, are essential in developing effective new educational curricular for post-primary schools.

Investing in industrial growth, formalizing the informal sector and alleviating cost of doing business

Paradoxically, there is an overproduction of graduates in many African countries beyond the number their labor markets can absorb. Thus, interventions for youth economic inclusivity should seek to grow the industrial sector. One might consider a focus on manufacturing as it is the industrial sector that is most closely associated with employment-intensive growth. Investment in the agriculture value chain, construction as well as services (such as tourism) and projects that employ young people are also vital. However, such interventions should not only focus on the formal economy but also on the many young people who may be working but are in the informal sector or underemployed. While a job in the informal sector is better than no job at all it can limit long term productivity per worker as well as possibilities for sustainable employment and an escape from the cycle of poverty.

Improving the investment climate by reducing the cost of doing business is especially important to industrial growth, formalizing the informal sector, and creating jobs for Africa's youths. An investor in Mozambique, for instance, would typically undergo 14 separate procedures over an average of 153 days in order to register a business, while in Sierra Leone a company may have to spend 164 percent of its gross profits to pay all its business taxes. Going forward, exemplary reformers in the continent should be emulated. For instance, Rwanda—which has reformed its courts and customs procedures, as well as Mozambique—which cut property transfer tax from 10 to 2.4 percent of the property value, the largest of such reduction in the world.

Targeted rural and urban youth entrepreneurship promotion

Encouraging rural and urban entrepreneurship through the provision of business development training and skills upgrading, with an emphasis on access to microfinance services for all categories of young people, is vital for youth economic inclusivity in Africa. Such programs should give attention to rural development given that Africa still has a majority of its population (61 percent in 2017) living in rural areas and engaged in small-scale farm activities. Thus, investment in mechanized agriculture driven by young agropreneuers and rural industrialization (involving rural infrastructure expansion) is important. However, attention should also be paid to urbanization trends: Africa has one of the fastest growing urban population that is projected to increase to 75 percent by 2050, at a growing rate of 65 million urban dwellers annually. In some African countries, such as Gabon, urban residents already represent 87 percent of the total population. Thus, sensitivity to the growing migration of youths to urban areas in search of white-collar careers is essential. To promote young urban entrepreneurship, there is a need to consider the unique challenges behind urban entrepreneurship and provide appropriate support (such as land or electricity subsidies and

tax exemptions) for start-up businesses run by all categories of young Africans.

Promoting constructive youth political and civic engagements

Supporting the participation of African youths in the design, implementation and evaluation of youth policy and programs as well as in the management of community organizations is essential to transformational youth economic inclusion. In implementing the UNSCR 2419 and 2250, African governments should aim to align public institutions with good international practices and establish functional structures, such as consultative committees, with a mandate to influence governments on youth issues. To promote greater trust in the interaction with public institutions, it will be essential to ensure that youth leaders are selected through transparent and democratic processes, rather than a top-down approach that may be perceived as tokenism and ultimately discourage genuine participation. Successful initiatives would respect the value of young people in public problem-solving and provide young people with information, tools and support to work effectively together as partners; allowing opportunities for youths to take ownership of parts of the process, mobilize other youths, and become powerful role models. For instance, electoral commissions and political parties can organize candidate forums with youth to directly engage youth in the electoral process and hold candidates accountable to their youth constituents. Such forums enable youth to identify issues of importance to their community and peers, educate themselves on the voting process, question candidates and constructively engage their community.

Addressing the information and data gap

The right data can guide appropriate and practical interventions for youth economic inclusion in line with UNSCR 2250 and 2419. However, one of the biggest challenges of developing economically

inclusive policies and interventions for youth is finding the appropriate data on economic trends among Africa's youth population. For instance, data on the extent of youth economic inclusion gaps by gender, ethnic and religious groups, refugee status across countries are not readily available. This is because such data are not routinely collected by government agencies, and partly because of the difference in the definition of youth by various African governments. There have been several youth development initiatives across Africa aimed at giving young people a real chance to find decent and productive work. However, data gaps make information on the development, implementation and progress of youth policies in Africa hard to monitor and evaluate. The dearth of data is exemplified in Nigeria, which is made up of about 186 million people, only about 16 million of which are covered by the national ID, and only 40 percent of which have any sort of financial account. The need to address the data gap to practically and effectively translate UNSCR 2250 and 2419 persists.

3. Gender Inclusion in Uganda

Uganda, located in the Great Lakes region which is characterized by a long history of protracted conflicts, has similarly been plagued by civil and political strife since the 1980s with 14 armed insurgencies recorded across the southwest and the greater north. The twenty-two-year conflict in Northern Uganda caused hundreds of thousands of deaths, over 1.8 million IDPs—60 percent of whom were women—and saw 25,000 abductions including 7,500 girls who birthed 1,000 children in captivity among numerous grave human rights violations. Ten years after the failed Juba Peace Talks between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the affected sub-regions continue to recover from the impact of this conflict.

Uganda is widely considered to have the youngest population in the world, with 78 percent of its 34.6

million population being under 30 years of age. 51 percent of Uganda's youth are women. Due to its location and progressive open-door Refugee Act (2006), Uganda is currently Africa's leading refugee-hosting country with over 1.4 million refugees, 82 percent of whom are women forcibly displaced from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Eritrea and others. This represents what has been lauded as one of the most favorable refugee protection environments. In the following elaborations this paper is mindful of the fact that young refugee women in their diversities display unique and distinct experiences after fleeing conflict and coping with life as refugees in Uganda.

Women's Role in Building Sustainable Peace

Despite conflict's unique and disproportionate impact on women, young women and girls; women in Uganda have played a significant role in influencing Uganda's peace and political processes from a gender perspective starting with the Juba Peace Process and the resulting post-conflict recovery framework, the *Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda* (PRDP). In August 2006, when the formal peace process was initiated without women's representation or consultation on their gender-specific experiences or negotiation priorities, the women's movement quickly composed the *Uganda Women's Peace Coalition* with community-based women's groups, women's rights organizations, professional bodies, and the *Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association*. With sustained support the coalition was able to consult women across conflict-affected areas, draft positions on specific issues such as inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence in the *Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities* and advocate for reparations for victims of serious harms in the *Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation*, to successfully lobby the Chief Mediator's Office and the government for a seat at the table.

The grassroots-driven Women's Taskforce for a gender-responsive PRDP in 2009 started the long-term advocacy that saw significant changes in the framework and its implementation to include and benefit women in addition to increase funds allocation for peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. This was considerably fueled by the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security and government's demonstrated commitment to support women's critical roles in peacebuilding and to address the gendered impact of conflict through the first National Action Plan (NAP) and Reporting Framework for UNSCR 1325 and 1820. While this has not been without its challenges such as insufficient funds allocation or imbalanced commitment to action there is clear value to the presence of a duty bearer charged with ensuring progress, exploring partnerships and budget financing; ensuring integration of indicators in the national consolidated framework and ultimately owing accountability to women.

Even with all these gains for the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Uganda, young women's roles in these processes or the profiling of their unique age-specific concerns have been and remain largely limited. As a result, young women continue in their efforts to organize across their demographic with the aim of accessing ongoing peace processes and ensuring that the specific challenges of their realities inform policy actions at national, regional or international levels. UNSCR 2250 therefore represents an important opportunity for young women to be meaningfully involved in formally influencing and promoting lasting peace and security.

Young Women's Participation in Formal Peace Processes: Opportunities and Pitfalls in Translating UNSCR 2250 into Practice

The Amman Youth Declaration accurately highlighted that while young women and men are capable and already engaged in peacebuilding, this often remains invisible and can be undermined due to the absence of participatory

and inclusive mechanisms to enable their partnership with decision-making bodies. The declaration also called for temporary measures to increase participation of young women in decision and policymaking. However, while resolution 2250 was a response to this and notes the primary responsibility of national governments, regional and international organizations, the absence of a clear mechanism for implementation, tracking progress and reporting against targets as well as providing a basis for advocacy and social accountability represent missed opportunities. This is particularly significant for young women who are excluded in the more general efforts of the women's peace movement while also being marginalized within the predominantly male youth movement.

UNSCR 2250 addresses the increase from radicalization to violent extremism, recognizing young people's capacity to contribute to shaping lasting peace if inclusive policies are in place and encourages member states to establish mechanisms to increase the meaningful representation of youth. Uganda's ongoing process of defining a national strategy for preventing and countering violent extremism, although it has not meaningfully included civil society, provides an opportunity to translate UNSCR 2250 into action by engaging young women in the design of a critical peace and security policy while challenging the gender stereotypes behind the exclusion of young women from security initiatives. However, in the absence of a concrete commitment from government and the international organizations supporting the policymaking process centered on young women — their specific concerns and contributions — UNSCR 2250 remains a largely rhetorical issue. Additionally, while the progress study mandated by UNSCR 2250 acknowledges ways in which policy responses on violent extremism repress the legitimate participation of youth in the peace process it does not address young women and men's necessary roles in defining and influencing these policies or how the Youth, Peace and Security agenda can advance this.

Strategic Recommendations for Inclusion of Young Women

UNSCR 2250 highlights youth as a majority among refugees and IDPs whose marginalization as a result of conflict has adverse effects on durable peace. In Uganda, young refugee women form a large cohort and have unique concerns and perspectives informed by not just their age and gender but by their experiences of conflict or exposure to sexual and gender-based violence in countries of origin, in transit or upon arrival as well as its distinctive impact including on their capacity to engage in peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives. In terms of their inclusivity, consultations with diverse refugee women (for their review of the UNSCR 1325 NAP) revealed that while several older women in settlements are involved in decision-making spaces (sometimes only symbolically), young women do not have access to the same leadership opportunities or to influence key decisions or local policies. UNSCR 2250 and the progress study's recommendation to prioritize young refugees and address their peace and security challenges, therefore, raises awareness to not leave young refugee women behind.

The progress study recommends a necessary substantial increase in funds to support youth organizations, initiatives and movements on peace and security. In order to support young women peacebuilders and initiatives addressing the specific peace and security priorities of young women, this should extend to diverse youth actors outside of the usual formal civil society players, for instance groups of young refugee women should receive sustained support to influence the gender and conflict sensitivity and responsiveness of humanitarian response, to influence decision-making and provide a more nuanced perspective to current conflict mitigation and development responses.

The need for a clear and common comprehensive strategy for implementation and monitoring of UNSCR 2250 at the national level is becoming

more apparent, ensuring a multi-stakeholder approach with the primary responsibility of the national government in partnership with other actors including young women and young men and youth-led organizations. In the absence of concrete commitments from all stakeholders and ownership by government actors to not only implement 2250 but to ensure a gender-responsive approach, it is notable that young women and men lack a single shared platform to gather and discuss specific policy issues and define actions the youth peace movement can take to drive UNSCR 2250 implementation, track gaps and demand accountability.

A coordinated approach would lay out linkages to the implementation and tracking of UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan, Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16 targets, advocating for the need for age disaggregation in reporting on the indicators already integrated in the national development-planning framework in order to track progress for young women.

4. Access to Social Services in Tanzania

Poor government performance in the delivery of public services has contributed to dissatisfaction among youth in Tanzania. According to Afrobarometer only 5 in 10 Tanzanians are satisfied with education and health services. With an annual per capita income of US\$1,034 in 2017, Tanzania is one of the world's poorest nations. Similar to most developing countries it has an overwhelming number of young people. Over half of its population today is under the age of 15 and currently possesses the eighteenth highest population growth and birth rates in the world. Tanzania not only faces high birth rates (37.25 per 1,000 people) but also high fertility rates of over 5 children born per woman, and widespread inadequacies in social service provisions. Approximately one million youth enter the job market every year, but only between 50,000 and 60,000 manage to secure jobs in the formal sector. The shortage of formal employment means that a

majority of youth graduating school end up in low paying, high-risk jobs without social protection and unable to organize together with others to demand or protect their rights. Most of these jobs are in the informal sector and lack most of the elements that characterize decent work such as regular and fair pay, social protection and the right to organize.

Resolutions 2250 and 2419 emphasize the need for improved and active participation of youths in the prevention and resolution of conflict by mainly focusing on the provision of alternative and adequate incentives for youths. However, consistent with most United Nations resolutions, 2250 and 2419 are careful with the applied rhetoric and offer little details on how member states can attain change. These resolutions resemble past inclusion initiatives of development policy, which despite having acknowledged the potential merits of enhanced participation, remain shallow on tangible details, something development specialists once famously coined "popularity without clarity". The absence of a National Action Plan (NAP) or at the very least a set of minimum criteria on how to promote youth's access to social services provides a considerable amount of discretion to UN member states. This poses considerable challenges as well as opportunities with respect to the extent to which member states can willfully drive social policy to meet their obligations.

Considerations for Increasing Young People's Access to Social Services in Tanzania

Social services are a crucial component of the state-society relationship. Adequate social service delivery is therefore a logical opportunity for states and institutions to bolster their legitimacy and exert efforts into regaining youth's trust. The unbiased delivery of social services, including sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial and other services that are particularly critical for young people, are indispensable to promote social cohesion and to guarantee that all young people

have an equal start in life. Discriminatory delivery of these services incites mistrust in democratic institutions and can nourish injustices that reinforce conflict. Investing in incentives that make youth feel wanted, useful, resourceful and depended upon, reduces social and economic alienation, also often key drivers of conflict.

While Tanzania is now successful in providing free primary and secondary education, the quality of the school system is still grossly inadequate. When considering the access of young people to social services, careful attention should be paid to the development of youth foundational skills related to reading, literacy and numeracy at the primary school level which impairs acquisition of appropriate learning skills at secondary and tertiary levels and also affect the quality of teaching at all levels. Quality education as a key component of human capital, is central to the empowerment of youths offering them social mobility, confidence and the ability to organize and articulate their concerns. Furthermore, basic democratic principles, tools like peaceful dissent, mediation, conflict resolution as well as values like respect, tolerance and gender equality should be included in curricula to strengthen the capacity of youth to engage in peacebuilding efforts.

The Tanzanian government tends to overemphasize the vulnerability of youths to violence and extremism while missing out on the opportunity of equipping youths with transferable skills to aid their productive civic participation. Member states can use UNSCR 2250 and 2419 to fill this policy void by designing and funding youth-skill training, counseling, apprenticeships, internships, fieldwork and other work experience programs (WEPs) that will impart transferable skills including the capacity for critical, analytical, creative and innovative thinking, team work, as well as self-directed and group leadership skills.

While young women and men face many of the same challenges regarding youth-based constraints in accessing social services and social

inclusion, they experience these barriers differently. Education is at the very core of including young people in peacebuilding and in order to ensure equitable access the hurdles of Tanzanian girls and young women need to be understood and addressed. In Tanzania as in many other parts of Africa, while *education for all initiatives* record higher rates of female enrolment at primary school level, the rates of advancement and completion continue to decline in favor of males at secondary and advanced school levels. Then as learners progress, the tertiary education system channels women into courses that prepare them to participate in society as clerical, service, junior managerial and lower professional workers for which openings are very few while providing more opportunities for young men to take courses in technical, engineering and other dynamic disciplines that prepare them for better paying jobs, for which there are more openings (and social prestige) in the labor market. Other discriminatory policies exclude young women from furthering their education like the expulsion of pregnant girls from schools. According to a new policy, schools must refuse to allow young women to return to the classroom after childbirth. The ban is both illegal and unlawful under Tanzania's penal code, and its international obligations as a signatory of among others, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Protocol on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and Goal 4 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which all focus on inclusive and equitable education for all. Further the ban is asymptomatic of the policy panic detailed in the progress study on Youth, Peace and Security, accomplishing nothing but further alienating young people and diminishing their trust in their governments.

Grassroots efforts, including by youth organizations, have led to the abolishment of user fees for schools in Tanzania, where compulsory primary and lower secondary education nowadays is generally free as mentioned above. While teacher knowledge, teacher-pupil ratios and

teacher absenteeism from schools remain serious shortcomings in Tanzanian service delivery, the fact that the gross enrollment rate in primary education is 93 percent for both girls and boys combined is a clear case in point proving what persistent local advocacy along with international encouragement can achieve. A similar advocacy approach as seen in the improvement of education should be taken by Tanzanian youth to call for easier and fairer access to health services. A minority of health facilities in Tanzania have clean water, power, and appropriate sanitation, circumstances that prohibit youth from receiving adequate care. Especially for youth living in rural areas, health care workers are prohibitively hard to come by. Geographical inequalities of health services can be especially dangerous for young women living in rural areas seeking maternal care. While basic maternal care is more frequent, access to hospital care and caesarean sections can be unachievable for many young women. Experts have found deep rooted socio-economic and geographical disparities in child mortality, largely due to inequities in the use of health services. Another consideration in the access of Tanzanian youth to health services are healthcare costs. Only a fraction of Tanzanians have health insurance and this is often only attainable for those working in the formal sector, which is a part of the economy that is prohibitively hard to penetrate for young people. Cost can therefore be a major financial barrier for young people seeking health services. Studies have shown that Tanzanians tend to have lower trust in public health facilities as opposed to private services. Private healthcare however is associated with even higher cost, and thus often unattainable for young people. Furthermore, a health priority for many young people - sexual and reproductive healthcare - is inadequate in Tanzania, with many reporting that confidentiality is often not respected, and services are not youth-friendly. Medication is also in short supply. These experiences and concerns specific to youth in Tanzania need to be considered in any efforts to make health services more accessible to young people.

The Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security details that “an excessive focus on strengthening public security not only diverts funds away from social services that are necessary to tackle the drivers of violence but is also costlier when compared to alternative prevention-based harm- and risk reduction models.” In the last few years, Tanzania has seen an increasing number of government crackdowns via violent police operations on LGBTQ persons, journalists and young protestors. Overly repressive and aggressive policies will only lead to hostility and increasing frustration among youth, foregoing the possibility of the Tanzanian government to utilize the unique abilities of youth towards peacebuilding and economic growth.

Like other East African countries Tanzania deals with threats to its national security from violence-inciting faith leaders, networks of Islamic radicals, and secessionist ambitions on the Zanzibar archipelago. Additionally, experts say that al-Shabab, the Somali-based al-Qaeda arm, is operating in Tanzania. As the progress study on Youth, Peace and Security clearly states, the most effective weapon against the recruitment of youth by extremist groups is to provide young people with a dignified way of life, including by fulfilling one of the core tasks of a functioning government — providing adequate social services.

The Tanzanian government needs to enhance social protections for young people who often face inadequate living conditions, e.g. consisting of a set of policies and programs designed to reduce vulnerabilities of youth. Social protection interventions such as social security (currently only available for children and elderly) can not only remove economic and social barriers that prevent youth from accessing services, but also strengthen the capacity of young people to withstand, adapt and mitigate shocks to their livelihoods. Currently the UK Department for International Development (DFID) is funding an ILO project that aims to help develop an

affordable social protection system that provides broader coverage to the Tanzanian people, by realizing targeted social assistance. Tanzanian youth should mobilize and utilize UNSCR 2419 and 2250 to ensure that their interests are represented in any new social protection system.

The progress study on Youth, Peace and Security rightly identifies lack of data as a major challenge in advancing the inclusion of youth. To advocate for seamless access to social services, youth should make use of publicly available data like the Service Delivery Indicators (SDIs) by the World Bank, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), and the African Development Bank, to hold the government accountable to equal access to education and health services.

Scholars observe that qualitative gains in one's social and economic disposition leads to greater understanding of one's rights and responsibilities as citizens, further increasing one's commitment to the very institutions producing them. In other words, member states should have little to fear about providing youth with greater incentives and/or alternatives to their status quo, despite the potential for ceding ownership of the peacebuilding agenda to youth. Therefore, for resolutions 2250 and 2419 to have meaningful impact, Tanzania needs to address youth's special characteristics and vulnerabilities by ensuring adequate health care, social protections, education and other social services.

5. Conclusion

Given the unique set of circumstances and breadth of lived experiences for youth in different parts of the world, the country specific observations captured in this paper by no means claim to comprehensively explain the multifaceted and complex road towards practical translation of youth inclusivity. The purpose of this paper is rather to highlight certain opportunities and pitfalls that hold true for economic participation,

gender inclusion and access to social services in three African country examples, and might be applicable to other country contexts. What are the lessons that can be drawn for practical youth inclusivity in peacebuilding?

Nigeria offers a unique country scenario for economic inclusion of youth. Not only is it the richest country in Africa if ranked by GDP, but it has also been investing in the human capital development of young Nigerians through government-led initiatives and programs for the past few years, making the identified pitfalls and opportunities especially interesting. While the two Security Council resolutions reckon that inclusive policies to promote youth participation are key to reaping the demographic dividend of the youth bulge towards lasting peace and economic prosperity, many programs and policies for youth economic inclusion in Nigeria are not appropriately designed and implemented for effectiveness. Specifically, a number of these policies and programs provide young people with temporary or marginal stake in the formal economy, with little focus on their needs, career aspirations and yearning for dignity. Some employment interventions for youth inclusion tend to offer non-skilled and casual employment or 'necessity' menial self-employment skills for lack of alternatives. Such programs and policies ignore young people's desire for meaningful and dignifying jobs with access to social protections. Going forward, to practically translate youth economic inclusivity demanded in the UNSCR 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), future employment interventions should take a transformative approach, rather than a short-term approach with misaligned access to economic systems. Beyond just jobs, the transformative approach should focus on expanding the long-term economic stake of young people for meaningful and dignifying jobs, while cultivating spaces for their political and civic engagement. Furthermore, investing in

industrial growth and improving the investment climate by reducing the cost of doing business is especially important for economic development, formalizing the informal sector, and creating jobs for Africa's youths. Encouraging rural and urban entrepreneurship through the provision of business development training and skills upgrading, with an emphasis on access to microfinance services for all categories of young people, is vital for youth economic inclusivity in Africa.

In Uganda, the Women, Peace & Security agenda offers excellent practical examples that the Youth, Peace & Security agenda can learn from. As detailed in this paper women mobilized through a bottom-up approach and managed to incorporate the gender perspective in the Juba Peace Process and the resulting post-conflict recovery framework, the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP). When the Juba talks commenced women's interests as such were initially not represented. However, women began to organize themselves, consulted women across the country and ultimately achieved the inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and reparations for victims of serious harms in the Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation. One important instrument that gave their advocacy international legitimacy: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security, which had been passed years before and until then, hadn't received much attention in Uganda. When comparing the two agendas one major difference is the lack of National Actions Plans (NAPs) on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Although UNSR 1325 was passed in 2000, the agenda only started to receive significant momentum once the Security Council specifically called on individual states to create NAPs, detailing how they will fulfill the requirements of the mandate in 2005. Not

only can this be a vital lesson for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, but additionally important is the success rate of the NAPs. Looking at countries who have presented NAPs it is evident that those countries that include an allocated budget for implementation in the NAP upon its release demonstrate the highest rates of practical translation. In April 2018, shortly after the first open debate on Youth, Peace and Security Finland announced that it would voluntarily implement a NAP for UNSCR 2250. While this commitment is a model response to the open debate and shows true goodwill, it will likely remain a rare occurrence. For member states to spearhead practical translation of youth inclusivity for sustainable peacebuilding, Security Council requested NAPs and a regular reporting cycle are key to monitor and evaluate progress. This should remain the priority of youth advocacy on the multilateral level. Furthermore, global youth can stay vigilant in the reporting and decision-making cycle of the Security Council on other agenda items, which provides several opportunities to assess the extent to which both the information and the decision-making is inclusive and responsive to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. In other words, youth needs to stay seized on the matter. Lastly, a lesson from the country example Uganda and a resulting opportunity for the implementation of UNSCR 2250 and 2419 is the inclusion of young refugees. As detailed in this paper the review mechanism of Uganda's NAP revealed that while more senior refugees were able to partake in peacebuilding initiatives, younger refugees were often left out. As UNSCR 2250 specifically calls for the inclusion of young refugees – especially women – this constitutes a major opportunity for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in Africa.

Tanzania is a striking case of a low-income country in which young people are disappointed and even frustrated by the government's ability to provide

social services. Social services are a crucial component of the state-society relationship. The unbiased delivery of social services, including sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial and other services that are particularly critical for young people, are indispensable to promote social cohesion and to guarantee that all young people have an equal start in life. Discriminatory delivery of these services incites mistrust in democratic institutions and can nourish injustices that reinforce conflict. While Tanzania is now successful in providing free primary and secondary education, the quality of the school system is still grossly inadequate. Young women face several layers of discrimination in the Tanzanian educational system that disadvantage them and can impact their professional trajectory long-term. Health services in Tanzania are inadequate for young people, fail to consider their specific needs and vulnerabilities and discriminate according to socio-economic and geographic disparities. In the social protection system youth are so far overlooked. However, Tanzania is currently working towards a new social security architecture, an opportunity Tanzanian youth should take up to mobilize and utilize UNSCR 2419 and 2250 to ensure that their interests are taken into consideration.

Cross cutting between all three areas of youth inclusion is the need for young people to mobilize, advocate and consult other youth that have a diverse set of experiences, including different geographical locations, genders, educational levels, socio-economic classes, ethnic and tribal backgrounds, social circumstances, religious affiliations etc. to attain a comprehensive

understanding of young people's vulnerabilities, needs and interests. Indispensable for progress on engaging youth in peacebuilding would be reliable and comparable data – an issue raised for all three country cases highlighted in this paper. Above all, this paper has reasoned from the conviction that youth are, in large, agents of positive change, tolerance, peace and inclusion. A lack of knowledge with regards to the rights of young peacebuilders, exclusion from decision making, oppressive policies, gender inequalities, a deficiency in basic social services as well as deliberate marginalization will inhibit meaningful peacebuilding and ultimately lead to more instability and conflict. Member states must prioritize their investment in young people, thereby thriving towards their economic inclusion, gender equality and adequate social services so their communities can benefit from the unique capacities and abilities youth possess to transform conflict affected settings into peaceful and equitable societies.

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