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**T7 Task Force International cooperation
for the global common good**

POLICY BRIEF

A GLOBAL RESILIENCE COUNCIL AS A “UN SECURITY COUNCIL” FOR HUMAN SECURITY ISSUES LIKE CLIMATE AND PANDEMICS

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Abstract

The world lacks an equivalent body to the UN Security Council with the authority to lead large-scale collective responses to non-military crises that are significantly impacting humanity and planetary stability, including the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the reason that today's crises cannot be adequately addressed is that the post-World War II global governance system is organized on the basis of agencies specialized by sector / corresponding to national ministries. To address this, the establishment of a "Global Resilience Council" (GRC) is proposed as a mechanism to bring the various multilateral players together, involving also non-state actors, and ensure coherence in responding to the multi-dimensional and interconnected challenges of today. The G7/T7 has long expressed an interest in improving the global governance system. Supporting the proposal for a Global Resilience Council would be an opportunity to initiate a major upgrading of the UN system and signal support for the UN Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report (September 2021) and its follow-up.

Challenge

In recent years, certainly after the end of the Cold War and before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, non-military threats have acquired prominence over traditional military threats, in view of their increasingly catastrophic consequences across borders. Threats like the rapidly deteriorating impacts of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and other diseases, food and water insecurity, are significantly affecting human security and the functioning of ecosystems that sustain life on Earth. These threats and the crises they cause are multidimensional and interconnected. They cannot be classified as just environment- or health-related, as they also have clear socio-economic consequences and trigger secondary crises in other sectors. They are interconnected, as for example zoonotic diseases like rabies, zoonotic influenza, anthrax, and Rift Valley fever that have “major impacts on health, livelihoods, and economies” occur “at the human-animal-environment interface” and “cannot be effectively addressed by one sector alone”,¹ while the availability of food and water is directly impacted by the advance of climate change.²

Such crises cannot be adequately addressed neither by individual governments or other actors alone, as they cross borders and have planetary dimensions, nor by the post-World War II global governance system, reflected in the structure of the UN system, that is organized on the basis of agencies specialized by sector which correspond and liaise to sector-specific national ministries. For example, the climate crisis is not an issue that can be solved only under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Paris Agreement reached under UNFCCC in 2015 provides the overall goals and framework for climate action but implementation rests with practically all specialized agencies, in their respective areas of expertise, and with multiple national ministries. The UNFCCC has neither the mandate nor the capacity to oversee implementation and to dictate necessary course corrections to these international agencies and national ministries, nor to international firms which generate or finance the generation of a big part of the greenhouse gases that cause anthropogenic climate change.³ Attempts to bring the issue of climate change, and even of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the UN Security Council, have not led to any significant results, because the Council does not have the mandate, nor does it have the expertise or the political legitimacy, to take over such issues, which well exceeded its armed-conflict-oriented mandate.

Proposals

To address the above-described challenge, the establishment of a “Global Resilience Council” (GRC) is proposed as a mechanism to bring the various multilateral and national players together, to ensure coherence in responding to the multi-dimensional and interconnected challenges of today. The proposed new Council’s structure would also provide for enhanced engagement of non-state actors.

A Global Resilience Council would have assigned to it a set of functions that would correspond to some of those assigned to the Security Council under Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter. They would include the determination of the existence of a serious threat to global ‘human security’ and the taking of initially non-

compulsory measures, like deploying fact-finding missions, making mitigation suggestions, issuing voluntary guidelines. In the event of non-compliance of state and/or non-state actors at the root of the problem, the Council could decide to impose sanctions on entities and/or individuals that could include financial penalties, severance of trade links, or other restrictions.

An important innovative element of a GRC would be the close engagement with constituencies of non-state actors that would serve as advisors during the Council consultation phase and as implementors during the implementation phase. Such constituencies could include scientists, parliamentarians at all levels, local authorities, business associations, worker unions, think tanks, civil society / activist organizations, youth groups, women groups, indigenous peoples' groups, religious groups.

The establishment of a GRC would not require a UN Charter amendment, as it could be established as a joint subsidiary body of several UN system intergovernmental bodies, such as the UN General Assembly and the governing bodies of agencies like the WHO, UNFCCC, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). For more on the GRC proposal see the dedicated web page and relevant articles.⁴

Implementation

- The G7 brings together key members of the international community, including several UN founding members and some of the UN system's main financial contributors.
- It has an interest and in fact a duty to play a role in the direction of improving the global governance system.
- By supporting the establishment of a Global Resilience Council, the G7 would be seen as leading the re-invigoration of the multilateral system, as part of the process of UN reform that got started with the UN member state Declaration on the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in September 2020 and intensified with the UN Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report issued in September 2021.
- Focusing on non-military threats and ways to effectively address them, the G7 final communiqué could send a positive signal from these major powers to the democratic world that now is the time to re-build the structure of multilateral cooperation particularly following the very negative experience and the disruption brought about by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.
- The positive signal could be sent by including in the G7 communiqué a reference to the need to effectively address today's multidimensional and interconnected challenges, and expressing support for the establishment of a representative and inclusive forum within the United Nations to do that, as part of the process leading to the 2023 Summit of the Future.

Endnotes

¹ See “Tripartite Zoonoses Guide: Operational tools and approaches for zoonotic diseases”, available on the WHO website at <https://www.who.int/initiatives/tripartite-zoonosis-guide>

² See, for example, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*, 2019, available online at <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

³ For a discussion of the various elements of global climate governance and ways to improve its effectiveness see Michele Betsill, Navroz K. Dubash, Matthew Paterson, Harro van Asselt, Antto Vihma, Harald Winkler, “Building Productive Links between the UNFCCC and the Broader Global Climate Governance Landscape”, *Global Environmental Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (May 2015), available online at <https://direct.mit.edu/glep/article/15/2/1/14825/Building-Productive-Links-between-the-UNFCCC-and> and Tapio Kanninen & Georgios Kostakos, “Global Governance of Climate Change: A Comprehensive Assessment Through a Functional Approach”, *Mother Pelican*, Vol. 8, No. 8 (August 2012), available online at <http://www.pelicanweb.org/solisustv08n08page9.html>

⁴ The link to the FOGGS web page dedicated to the Global Resilience Council proposal is the following: <https://www.foggs.org/grc-global-resilience-council/> See also recent overview article available here: <https://globalgovernanceforum.org/welcome-global-resilience-council-security-council-non-military-threats/>

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Georgios is Co-founder and Executive Director of the Brussels-based Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), which focuses on the need for a new globalization narrative, the establishment of a Global Resilience Council, rethinking education for the digital era, and supporting SDG implementation. About half of Georgios' thirty-year work experience has been with the UN, including with the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and field missions for political affairs and human rights. Georgios has also held various positions at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), organized courses at the University of Athens, was a visiting lecturer at the Brussels School of International Studies / University of Kent, and served as LIFE Climate Action Sector Coordinator at NEEMO EEIG. He is a Mechanical Engineer by training and has a PhD in International Relations, specialising in global governance, sustainability including climate action, conflict resolution and resilience.

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