ERRONKAK 1
COLLECTION

General Secretariat for Social Transition and the 2030 Agenda

Our Common Agenda and the renewal of the social contract

The **2030 Agenda** and efficient, local multilateralism

Mariano Aguirre

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2030 Agenda
Basque Country Commitment

2030

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ERRONKAK 1
COLLECTION

Presentation of **Erronkak**'s collection of publications

This study, authored by Mariano Aguirre, inaugurates the Erronkak collection of publications which, starting in 2023, the Basque Government's General Secretariat for Social Transition and the 2030 Agenda intends to promote. The author devotes this first edition to analyzing the content of the report *Our Common Agenda*, presented in September of 2021 by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres.

As a statement of intent from Erronkak, it is a good starting point. The UN Secretary General's report is a very relevant document. It provides a compendium of the major political, economic, environmental and social challenges we face, as well as their interrelation. It allows us to reflect on multilateralism, globalisation, localisation, youth or the concept of the social contract in the early years of the Decade of Action.

The main objective of this collection of publications is, precisely, to offer arguments to understand and better face the main challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda at this specific moment in the history of the planet. In other words, to create a reflective space for shared deliberation, in the face of the current crossroads. This *mission* led by the Erronkak collection will be developed in line with a series of criteria that will mark each of its editions.

Firstly, and as mentioned above, the subject matter included in each issue will address one of the major challenges linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. The coverage of each topic will meet the following criteria: help to understand its meaning and relevance, and contribute to understanding the practical transformations it suggests.

The style of the texts published as in this collection should focus on exposing and "breaking down", in a pedagogical way, issues that, although they may be complex, must be understandable because of their relevance as important and or urgent objectives for society as a whole. These are objectives that deserve to be known and understood so that citizens can engage with them and they can become part of a useful social contract.

In line with this same objective of dissemination, the maximum length of the documents reproduced by Erronkak will be of 11,000 words. This equals a maximum of 20 pages of text in this format, as is the case in this first issue.

This collection is conceived to be of use to the activity of councillors, mayors, public officials of all institutions, technical staff of all administrations, teaching staff in any educational field or people who form part of civil society organisations in any of their expressions. Ultimately, this collection of publications aims to serve as a source of information and documentation for any person or entity interested in learning more about everything relating to the 2030 Agenda framework.

With this in mind, the Erronkak collection will suggest precise criteria regarding the presentation of topics to the authors of each publication. The Basque Government has been defending and reiterating that commitment to the SDGs must be approached through the "methodology of the concrete". "Fewer abstractions and more realisations" could be an adequate formulation that sums up the urgency of the "Decade of Action".

It is within this framework and with this set of criteria that the Erronkak collection of publications is launched. The first four issues are expected to be published in 2023. In addition to this one, the next three will focus on trying to decipher the keys to three major challenges that accompany sustainable human development and solidarity: social transformation, energy-climate transformation and economic-digital transformation.

The analyses, considerations, arguments or proposals set out in each publication do not necessarily represent the point of view of the Basque Government, but only that of their authors. In any case, it can be guaranteed that all of them will constitute an honest exercise in reflection that will serve as a basis for discussion and shared deliberation in the search for spaces for concerted action.

General Secretariat for Social Transition and the 2030 Agenda

6 February 2023

Our Common Agenda and the renewal of the social contract

The **2030 Agenda** and efficient, local multilateralism

Executive summary

In September of 2021, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, presented *Our Common Agenda,* the programme for his second mandate, "designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

Our Common Agenda synthesises and correlates a series of political, economic, environmental and social challenges and proposes *lines of action from a multilateral perspective* for States, the private sector, international organisations and agencies, sub-national and local authorities and civil society, with the United Nations at the centre.

The aim of these actions is to complement multilateralism from the top down and vice versa by *renewing the social contract* in a way that is adapted to the realities and multiple problems yet to be resolved in the 21st century. The Secretary General had previously made reference to a new social contract, for instance, in South Africa in July of 2020.

This study analyses the political, economic and social context that gave rise to Our Common Agenda, the methodological perspectives it is based on, and the prominent role it gives sub-national and local actors. In the case of the SDGs, many of the recommended actions are decided, executed and managed at the local level, although it is the State that reports back to the United Nations. Within this framework, this paper highlights the case of the Basque Country and the role it plays in the development and fulfilment of the SDGs 2030 Agenda. It also devotes special attention to the Secretary General's proposal for a new social contract as a central axis for structural change policies.

The Secretary General's report is based on *the theory of complexity*, which analyses the connections among multiple actors, their dynamics, the unpredictable effects that take place, the uncertainty to which they give rise and the challenge of making decisions about non-linear processes.

It also uses the *theory of the Anthropocene*: it is the first time in the history of humanity that the present and the future of the biosphere depend on human action, which impacts even the most remote corners of the planet, causing undesirable effects, some long term, some irreversible, on *public goods and global commons.*

The report also has a *strong focus on prevention*, of armed conflicts as well as pandemics, environmental impacts and financial crises, with strong concern for youth and the world we are leaving for future generations.

Our Common Agenda is based on a series of reports and analyses developed by experts and organisations over the past decade, with which it coincides directly or indirectly. Some of them are presented in this report as examples of the need to make changes to the prevailing economic model, the role of the state, governance and to put people at the centre of public and private sector policies.

1. Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

In September of 2021, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres presented *Our Common Agenda,* the programme for his second mandate, aimed at States and other sectors of the international system: "designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".[1]

Our Common Agenda emerges in the context of the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Although the war had not yet started when it was published, the UNSG devoted special attention to the issue of peace (Goal 16 of the SDGs) and on establishing a global conflict prevention system. "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals are at the core of Our Common Agenda" he explains. Those objectives are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. Many of the actions proposed in this report thus seek to accelerate achievement of the Goals, not least in the light of gaps and delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic".

In his report, the UNSG addresses six priority issues:

First, *to re-embrace global solidarity* and find new ways to work together for the common good. This must include a global vaccination plan to deliver vaccines against COVID-19 into the arms of the millions of people who are still denied this basic lifesaving measure. Moreover, it must include urgent and bold steps to address the triple crisis of "climate disruption, biodiversity loss and pollution" destroying our planet.

Second, *to renew the social contract between Governments and their people*, so as to "rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights", with a special focus on the inclusion of women and girls. It should also include updated governance arrangements to deliver better public goods and usher in a new era of universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet.

Third, *to end the 'infodemic' that affects politics, communication and scientific advancement* by defending a common, empirically backed consensus around facts, science and knowledge. "The war on science must end", states the UNSG.

Fourth, to *correct how we measure economic prosperity and progress*. When profits come "at the expense of people and our planet, we are left with an incomplete picture of the true cost of economic growth". In particular, taking gross domestic product (GDP) as a main reference "fails to capture the human and environmental destruction of some business activities".

Fifth, *to deliver more for young people and succeeding generations and to be better prepared for the challenges ahead*. *Our Common Agenda* includes recommendations for meaningful, diverse and effective youth engagement both within and outside the United Nations, including "through better political representation and by transforming education, skills training and lifelong learning".

Sixth, to build *a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system*, from supranational to local levels, anchored within the United Nations. *Effective multilateralism* depends on an effective United Nations, one able to adapt to global challenges. Of particular relevance is the UNSG's proposal that international cooperation be guided by International Law.

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1 All quotes correspond to *Our Common Agenda,* Report by the Secretary General, New York, October, 2021. https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf

2. Multilateralism and localisation

In recent years, a strong consensus has developed regarding the crisis of multilateralism and the so-called liberal order based on rules as it was designed after World War II. This crisis is an existential problem for the United Nations and its agencies, which are in charge of promoting and managing an international society based on International Law and agreements.

Guterres' statement about multilateralism indicates that "More inclusive multilateralism is marked by a genuine possibility for States from all regions and of all sizes to engage in collective action, notably including a stronger voice for developing countries in global decision-making". It also must include a diverse range of voices:

> "In addition to intergovernmental organizations, this can include parliaments, subnational authorities (cities and local and regional governments), civil society, faith-based organizations, universities, researchers and experts, trade unions, the private sector and industry, and local and grass roots movements, including those led by women and young people".

The report suggests that, in order to achieve collaboration between the UN Secretariat and the various national, regional and global actors (including civil society), a UN Office for Partnerships will be created. On this topic, the UNSG proposes:

a. to adopt a *new agenda for peace*;[2]

b. to maintain multilateral dialogues concerning outer space;

c. to create a Global Digital Compact;

d. to celebrate a Biennial Summit with the participation of the members of the G20, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary General, and the heads of international financial institutions. And

e. to hold a Future Summit to forge new global consensus for the future.

To achieve these proposals, the UNSG highlights the need to for "a stronger involvement of all relevant stakeholders" and an Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments. In fact, as part of the multiple consultations held with different global stakeholders to develop this report and foster a "more networked and inclusive multilateral system", the Secretary General and his team held conversations with civil society, members of parliament, the private sector, subnational leaders and city networks, among others.

The interconnection of establishing a new multilateral system and the role of governments and local communities is giving rise to new theories and practices on the growing relevance of *localisation*. In the case of Spain, the constitutional structure of the country in autonomous communities favours this interconnection.[3] While the State, in Spain -and in general in states with a federal structure- is responsible for foreign affairs, there are experiences and studies that indicate that town halls, local governments and cities influence or could influence the design and practices of international relations.[4] For example, 61 cities in the United States, as well as 12 States and the Associated State of Puerto Rico, adhered to the Paris Agreement on climate change when former president Donald Trump decided to withdraw from it. Meanwhile, then governor of California Jerry Brown signed an agreement with the government of China to reduce carbon emissions.[5]

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2 The previous Agenda for peace was adopted by the UN Security Council in January of 1992. That Agenda addressed peace operations, peacebuilding in post-conflict situations and posed the dilemma of intervening in sovereign states if they failed to guarantee the human rights of their citizens. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, UN, New York, 1992.
https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749?ln=en

3 See Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda, *Impulso y fortalecimiento de la Localización de la Agenda 2030. Desarrollo de políticas en el ámbito local para implementar la Agenda 2030*,
https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/impulso-y-fortalecimiento-de-la-localizacion-de-la-agenda-2030-desarrollo-de-politicas; *Guía para la localización de la Agenda 2030*, Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias, 2022.

4 Benjamin Leffel, "Principles of Modern City Diplomacy and the Expanding Role of Cities in Foreign Policy", *Journal of International Affairs*, University of Columbia, Nueva York, 14 June 2022.
https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/principles-modern-city-diplomacy-and-expanding-role-cities-foreign-policy

5 David Freeman Engstrom y Jeremy M. Weinstein, "What If California Had a Foreign Policy? The New Frontier of States' Rights", *The Wash-*

Several South American countries have led experiences of articulation between the State and subnational institutions. Countries from the region have created spaces for joint work, coordinated by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, which functioned as the backbone for articulation between subnational and state levels to design/execute foreign affairs.[6]

Some experts call these experiences *para* or *proto diplomacy* or s*econdary foreign policy*. In the case of the SDGs, many of the recommended actions are decided, executed and managed at the local level, although accountability to the United Nations is held by the State.[7]

"In a context where national governments are preparing to protect sovereignty and access to resources –states Emilia Saiz, secretary general of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)– local and regional governments are the best allies to define an agenda of care that contributes to rebuilding the bases of the multilateral system towards a model of universal development, sustainability and inclusion".[8]

Euskadi and the 2030 Agenda

The Euskadi-Basque Country Programme of Priorities for the 2030 Agenda indicates that "the Basque Country has a harmonious coexistence and is among the most advanced countries, with some of the highest levels of social cohesion and human development index. It is essential to reinforce the social contract culture [...], while strengthening and broadening its consensus. In this way, the 2030 Agenda becomes –as did the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the face of violence–, a universal reference to share a sustainable world based on solidarity. The 2030 Agenda can be the basis and the focus for the renovation of our social contract". Source:

https://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/noticia/xiileg_planes_departamentales/es_def/adjuntos/Programa-prioridades-Agenda-2030.pdf

In October of 2022 the platform Local 2030 Coalition was inaugurated in the city of Bilbao. Its aim is to localise the Sustainable Development Goals that are part of the 2030 Agenda, with the support of Amina J. Mohammed. Mrs. Mohammed is the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable DevelopmentGroup. UN-Habitat Executive Director and Permanent Co-Chair of the Local 2030 Coalition Maimunah Mohd Sharif explained during the opening that "the drive towards localisation started with Agenda 21, evolved with the Millennium Development Goals and has become a driving force to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. We hope that in the post-2030 Agenda, localisation will be a central element and not just an implementation tool, a true manifestation of the principle of inclusive multilateralism". The Local 2030 Coalition is a shared space to mobilise, engage and empower all local actors to help foster the localisation of the Development Goals. Source: "Amina Mohammed inaugurates the Secretariat of the Local 2030 Coalition in the Spanish city of Bilbao", *UN News*, 31 October 2022.

ington Quarterly, spring of 2018, p. 27. https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/TWQ_Spring2018_EngstromWeinstein.pdf

6 Stella Juste, "Repensando la política exterior desde la mirada subnacional", *Equilibrium Global*, 12 December 2020.

7 Martin Klatt and Birte Wassenberg, "Secondary foreign policy: Can local and regional cross-border cooperation function as a tool for peace-building and reconciliation?", *Regional & Federal Studies*, Volume 27, number 3, 2017. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13597566.2017.1350652?journalCode=frfs20

8 Emilia Saiz, "The Moment of Local Multilateralism", *SDG Knowledge Hub*, IISS, Winnipeg, 26 June 2022. https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/the-moment-of-local-multilateralism/

3. Twelve key commitments

The report also suggests that the international community meet twelve commitments:

1. Leave no one behind, through a renewed social contract with human rights at the centre.
2. Protect the planet.
3. Promote peace and prevent conflicts.
4. Respect International Law and guarantee justice.
5. Focus on women and girls.
6. Build trust through a global code of conduct that promotes integrity in public information, and to improve people's experience of public institutions and basic services.
7. Improve digital cooperation.
8. Modernize the United Nations.
9. Ensure sustainable financing for the organisation.
10. Promote partnerships through annual meetings between the United Nations and the leaders of regional organisations. Foster systematic engagement with parliaments, subnational authorities and the private sector. Create civil society focal points in all UN entities. The UN Office for Partnerships will be responsible for strengthening access and inclusion, including digital accessibility.
11. Listen to youth and work with them.
12. Organise an Emergency Platform to respond to complex global crises. Publish a UN report every five years on strategic foresight and global risks. Promote global public health.

The UNSG takes as reference the concepts *global public goods* (those that benefit global society, such as global health, information, the global economy, a healthy environment, science, peace, digital heritage) and *global commons* (the natural or cultural resources shared by humanity that benefit all people, the main ones being the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica and outer space). He links these concepts, on the one hand, to social protection systems that enable the attainment of the SDGs and, on the other hand, to prioritising human rights and gender equality.

4. The context

The report *Our Common Agenda* has a series of conceptual characteristics that make it particularly relevant in different fields at the regional, national and international level. The report does not directly take on the economic model commonly known as neoliberal, which has caused negative impacts in the social and labour fields as well as a disproportionate increase in inequality over the last four decades. Nevertheless, the fourth point on ways to measure economic prosperity does address the prevailing economic model.

Meanwhile, in the chapter on the 12 Commitments, the report establishes a connection between certain key issues and changing the current economic pattern: taking the environment into account in economic models, reforming the international tax system, creating a joint framework for financial integrity and against illicit financial flows, and ensuring sustainable financing for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy.

By jointly addressing these issues, the Report is part of the trend of proposing structural changes to economic models. While already a trend in the world of political and economic critique, this position gained ground since the financial crisis of 2008 and the 2020 pandemic.

Over four decades, neoliberalism has promoted limiting the role of the State, deregulation to enable the private sector to operate freely, restricting the space of trade union organisations, and encouraging individual initiative. David Harvey defines it as "a theory of economic policy that suggests that human wellbeing can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial capacities and freedoms within an institutional framework marked by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve that appropriate institutional context for such practices".[9]

Neoliberalism has opposed Welfare State policies, a pact born out of social dialogue between the private sector and labour sectors (represented by trade unions) with the State acting as mediator and service provider through a progressive tax system and public policies. The result has been an increase in inequality along with a precarization of labour and a decline in the provision of public health, education, housing and employment services.

This model was applied worldwide, with few exceptions. The impact was very strong both in countries with a consolidated Welfare State, such as the United Kingdom, as in countries from the South with deficient public policies and infrastructure, where the impact was much more severe. At the same time, a new relationship was established between parts of the North and South of the planet: in advanced economies, the industrial sector was partially or totally dismantled in order to move production plants to China, Vietnam, Mexico, India and other countries with lower wages.

In the case of the United States and several European countries, the delocalisation of production, coupled with robotization as a substitution for human labour, profoundly altered the lives and the intergenerational employment cycle of millions of individuals and families. At the same time, the development of leading high technology industries, especially in the field of information and digitalisation, caused inequality between areas of high economic growth (such as Silicon Valley, in California) that compete internationally, and less wealthy areas, home to the unemployed, where work is precarious and poorly paid and public services are inadequate.[10]

Internationally, in the context of globalisation, the neoliberal model adopted what is known as the Washington Consensus. Globalisation was presented as the irreversible fate of the planet which would end up including and benefitting everybody. Instead, the gap between the more advanced countries and the less wealthy ones widened (even when the latter possessed coveted natural resources). The Washington Consensus, promoted especially by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, "recommended development strategies centred on privatisation, liberalisation and macro stability (mainly price stability); a set of policies preached on the basis of great faith (more than is justifiable) in unfettered markets, and aimed at reducing the role of the government to the minimum possible". It showed no interest in equity, employment and the impact the reforms would have, while it focused more on obtaining a high GNP than on the living standards of workers or the sustainability of an economic model that uses natural resources as if they were infinite.[11]

Since the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of economists, political scientists and philosophers have been proposing, from different perspectives, reforms that put people and their needs at the centre of economic and political activity.[12] Economist Thomas Piketty, an expert on inequality, believes that "a reflection on economic systems from a long-term perspective" is necessary. The aim is for each State to build an economic and political regime in line with its particularities. "However, it is essential that this form of sovereignty be built upon universalist and internationalist objectives, explicitly mentioning the criteria of social, fiscal and environmental justice that are potentially applicable to all countries equally".[13]

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9 David Harvey, *A short history of neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p.

10 Carl Benedikt Frey, *The technology trap. Capital, labor, and power in the age of automation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2019, pp. 260-263.

11 Joseph Stiglitz, "Después del consenso de Washington", *Sin Permiso*, Buenos Aires, 30 August 2005. Also, Joseph Stiglitz, *Making globalisation work*, Penguin, London, 2006, p. 17.

12 The long list of authors includes the winners of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Krugman, the economists Thomas Piketty and James K. Galbraith, the philosophers and politicians Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. In Spain important analysis tasks are carried out, among other, by Asociación de Economía Crítica: http://www.asociacioneconomiacritica.org/; Grupo de Economistas Frente a la Crisis: https://economistasfrentealacrisis.com/; Economistas sin Fronteras (which has a group of economists from Euskadi) https://ecosfron.org/ See also *Nueva crisis: evitar los viejos errores. Manifiesto de Economistas Crític@s*, Asociación de Economía Crítica, 24 April 2020.

13 Thomas Piketty, *Una breve historia de la igualdad*, Ediciones Deusto, Barcelona, 2021, pp. 284-290. (English edition: *A Brief History of Equality*, Harvard University Press, 2022).

The financial crisis and the pandemic also impacted the rhetoric of financial institutions, leading them to suggest that the State should take back its initiative and leadership. In October of 2021, the G7 Panel on Economic Resilience recommended the implementation of what is known as the Cornwall Consensus (the site of a G7 summit in June of that year) to establish a different relationship between the public and private sectors to create a sustainable, equitable and resilient economy in the context of a new global consensus around a new economic paradigm. Economist Mariana Mazzucato, representing Italy on the panel, explained:

> "The world now confronts a future of unprecedented risk, uncertainty, turmoil and climate breakdown. World leaders have a simple choice: continue supporting a failed economic system or jettison the Washington Consensus for a new international social contract".

Mazzucato believes that the SDGs cannot be achieved without adopting "a new global consensus for the survival of humanity". Among the recommendations contained in the report by this group of experts, which are fully in line with the UN Report, are the following:

1. Revitalise the economic role of the State, directing subsidies to companies that implement decarbonisation, with a more proactive role in anticipating and preventing crises.

2. Create public-private organisations that generate a resilient, sustainable and equitable economy.

3. Strengthen the resilience of the economy against future acute (e.g. pandemics) and chronic (inequality) risks.

4. Shift from measuring growth in terms of GDP or financial profitability to measuring success based on the attainment of ambitious common goals.

5. Ensure equal access to vaccines against the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Gear more state investment towards long-term value creation rather than short-term private profit.

7. Create a research centre in Europe to work on the elimination of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the transition towards a green economy in sectors such as transport, aviation, steel and cement.[14]

5. The theoretical basis

El Informe *Nuestra Agenda Común* presenta las cuestiones antes resumidas vinculándolas de forma no lineal (aproximación muy bien reflejada en la serie de gráficos que acompañan el texto), y adopta tres puertas de entrada. La primera es metodológica, la segunda es conceptual, y la tercera, una estrategia ante futuros riesgos.

a. *First, the theory of complexity*, to analyze the dynamics and interactions of the various problems humanity faces. The global system (political, economic, social, cultural) must be understood as a unit composed of a network of elements that interact with each other and merge to produce new dynamics and behaviours that are not always predictable. Complexity refers to the nature of open, fluid and unpredictable systems, as explained by Brusset, De Coning and Hughes.[15] A system is a community of elements that form a whole as a result of their interconnections. *Complexity does not equal complication*; on the contrary, recognising that something is complex deters the perception of chaos and opens up the possibility of operating more effectively to understand and operate in given situations.

> Complicated systems are those in which the parts equal the sum of the whole. Each part can be isolated, analyzed and reproduced without this altering the whole. In con-

14 Mariana Mazzucato, "A New Global Economic Consensus", *Project Syndicate*, 13 October 2021, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/cornwall-consensus-rebuilding-global-governance-by-mariana-mazzucato-2021-10 Also see Mariana Mazzucato, *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism* Allen Lane, London, 2021.

15 Emery Brusset, Cedric de Coningy Bryn Hugues (Eds.), *Complexity thinking for peacebuilding. Practice and evaluation*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016.

trast, in complex systems the elements are interconnected in such a way that a change to one of them directly or indirectly affects the rest and can cause unexpected and unwanted consequences.

These complex systems, Coning explains, have the capacity to adapt and create new behaviours with non-linear interactions of their elements. "Because social systems are highly dynamic, non-linear and emergent, we cannot find laws or rules of thumb to help us predict with certainty how a particular society or community will behave (...) This uncertainty is an intrinsic quality of complex systems, not the result of imperfect knowledge or inadequate analysis, planning or implementation". Recognising interconnections and uncertainty make us think differently about problems.[16]

Daniel Innerarity, researcher of "Ikerbasque" at the University of the Basque Country and director of the Instituto de Gobernanza Democrática (Institute of Democratic Governance), states that one quality of complexity is "the interdependence of society's different elements, which are not only autonomous and different, but which also interact in many different ways. A system is a set of dependent variables. The rise in complexity is caused by the spread and densification of interdependence of events, actions and structures, particularly when followed by unexpected combinatorial effects. Complex systems are defined by the number of actors and factors acting in combination".[17]

b. *Second, theory of the Anthropocene*: it is the first time in the history of humanity that the present and the future of the biosphere depend on human action (big changes in the past were the result of geological impacts). Humankind has made its mark even in the most remote corners of the planet, causing undesired effects, some long-term, some irreversible.[18]

"Over the past 50 years, explains a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the externalization of environmental costs across time and space became so routine that those with power, education and money seldom have to take responsibility for the social and ecological consequences of their actions. Despite several decades of international environmental collaboration, institution building and governance, the spread of high-consumption lifestyles has cast long shadows over distant lands and resulted in melting glaciers, acidified oceans, unprecedented loss of natural habitats and mass species extinction".

The *Anthropocene* explains the study "is a term coined at the turn of the millennium to describe these profound environmental transformations. It is a concept that refers to a new and dangerous era in planetary history, when the social and economic activities of humankind are undermining and fundamentally altering the planetary life-support systems upon which we all depend".[19]

The green agenda being discussed by governments, business and civil society in regions and spaces such as the European Union proposes a transition and transformation of production and consumption systems to achieve sustainable economic growth, reduce emissions, scale up adaptation efforts and improve financial flows, in addition to expanding renewable industries, promoting energy-saving technologies and achieving a carbon-free planet by 2050.[20]

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16 Cedric de Coning, "Insights from Complexity Theory for Peace and Conflict Studies", *Complexity 4 Peace Operations*, 25 July 2020. https://cedricdeconing.net/2020/07/25/insights-from-complexity-theory-for-peace-and-conflict-studies/

17 Daniel Innerarity, *Una teoría de la democracia compleja. Gobernar en el siglo XXI*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Barcelona, 2020, p.87.

18 Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Overheating. An Anthropology of Accelerated Change*, Pluto Press, London, 2016, pp. 16-17.

19 Eva Lövbrand, Malin Mobjörky Rickard Söder, "One earth, multiple worlds: Securing collective survival on a human dominated planet, in Eva Lövbrandy Malin Mobjörk (Eds.), *Anthropocene (In)securities Reflections on Collective Survival. 50 Years After the Stockholm Conference*, SIPRI Research Report Nº 26, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 2-3.

20 "The UN Security Council and Climate Change", Security Council Report, *Research Report*, New York, June 2021. www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3- CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/climate_security_2021.pdf; See agenda, declarations and documents of the COP 27 event organised by the United Nations and celebrated in Egypt in November of 2022. https://unfccc.int/

Our Common Agenda shows that "atmospheric pollution deriving from burning fossil fuels, chemicals and other pollutants causes seven million deaths every year and costs an estimated $5 billion annually. Shifting to a green economy, rather than maintaining the current situation, could deliver a direct economic benefit of $26 billion by 2030 and create more than 65 million new low-carbon jobs".

c. *Third, prevention as a basic principle* to be developed in the face of pandemics, environmental catastrophes and armed conflicts. In line with modern medicine and the analyses of institutes specialising in global health, the Report recommends adopting an approach that combines the preparedness of states and communities to build response capacity and resilience with prevention.[21]

On the subject of prevention, the Secretary General devotes special attention to how to anticipate armed conflicts. This is an issue he focused on since the beginning of his mandate on the basis of multiple statements, recommendations and proposals made by the UN General Assembly and expert groups, which recommended not to wait for conflicts to break out, but to use existing mechanisms and experiences in the multilateral, national and regional system to prevent them.[22]

In order to protect and manage peace as a global public good, the report calls for approaching it as a continuum, seeking to understand the underlying factors and systems of influence that sustain conflict, redoubling efforts to agree on more effective collective security responses, and adopting a set of measures to manage emerging risks. Among others, develop a New Agenda for Peace focusing on:

I. Reducing strategic risks;

II. Strengthening the anticipation and the detection of new risks to peace and security;

III. Addressing violence holistically, including violence against women and girls and their security, in coordination with SDG goal 16.1;

IV. Investing in prevention and peacebuilding;

V. Supporting regional prevention activities;

VI. The UN conducting regular reports on strategic prevention and global risks, early warning exercises, creating an emergency platform for complex crises, and holding a Future Summit.

21 Elizabeth Diago-Navarro, Oriana Ramírez, Marta Rodó, Gonzalo Fanjul, Elisabeth Cardis, "¿Cómo podemos estar mejor preparados para la próxima crisis de salud pública? Lecciones aprendidas de la pandemia del COVID-19", *Documento de análisis*, ISGlobal, Barcelona, 21 November 2021. www.isglobal.org/documents/10179/9837294/Isglobal_informe_NextCrisis_A4_ES/f01ce4cf-498f-454c-9432-d01c555c817f; Bill Gates, *How to Prevent the Next Pandemic*, Penguin Random House, New York, 2022.

22 The United Nations and the World Bank published a joint report on conflict prevention that coincided with Guterres' appointment as Secretary General: *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict,* UN-World Bank, New York, 2018

6. Basis for a new social contract

A particularly relevant section of the Report is the proposal to promote a renewed social contract that preserves democracy, while laying the foundations for an economic system that makes use of technological advances (such as Artificial Intelligence) to put people and solidarity within societies at the centre.

The social contract – Two definitions

The social contract is the basis of modern constitutional systems. Among other definitions, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) explains that:

"The social contract emerges from the interaction between a) expectations that a given society has of a given state; b) state capacity to provide services, including security, and to secure revenue from its population and territory to provide these services (in part a function of economic resources); and c) elites will to direct state resources and capacity to fulfil social expectations. It is crucially, mediated by d) the existence of political processes through which the bargain between state and society is struck, reinforced and institutionalised. Finally, e) legitimacy plays a complex additional role in shaping expectations and facilitating political process. Legitimacy is also produced and replenished (or, conversely, eroded) by the interaction among the other four factors. Taken together, the interaction among these factors forms a dynamic agreement between state and society on their mutual roles and responsibilities) a social contract". Source: *Concepts and Dilemmas of State-building in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience*, OECD, Paris, 2018, p.17.

For its part, a document by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) states that "The social contract refers to processes by which everyone in a political community, either explicitly or tacitly, consents to state authority, thereby limiting some of her or his freedoms, in exchange for the state's protection of their universal human rights and security and for the adequate provision of public goods and services. This agreement calls for individuals to comply with the state's laws, rules, and practices in pursuit of broader common goals, such as security or protection, and basic services. The validity and legitimacy of a social contract may be gauged by the extent to which it creates and maintains an equilibrium between society's expectations and obligations and those of state authorities and institutions, all amidst a context of constant flux". Source: Engaged Societies, Responsive States: The Social Contract in Situations of Fragility, UNDP-NOREF, New York, 2016. See: Marco Mezzera, "Social Contracts: How are they linked and where do children, youth and future generations fit in?", UNICEF, Issue Brief, September, 2022.

Our Common Agenda addresses the social contract as a response to the grave problems affecting global society: income inequality within and between countries and its consequences (including citizen disaffection with democracy); the gulf between citizens and the state institutions there to serve them; the environmental crisis; gender inequality; the possibility of new pandemics; the rejection of scientific knowledge; the use of technology to misinform and spread falsehoods promoting political and cultural hatred, ethno-nationalism, and wars.

For the philosopher John Rawls, one of the most important social contract theorists in relation to the theory of justice, a just society is one where its basic institutions are regulated effectively by two principles:

> "First, every individual must have an equal right to the broader system of equal basic freedoms, compatible with a similar system of freedom for all.
>
> Second, economic and social inequalities must be articulated in such a way that they are both a) to the greatest benefit for the least advantaged, in line with the principle of just saving, and b) attached to offices and positions accessible to all on the basis of equal opportunity".[23]

23 Quoted in M.A. Rodilla's introduction to John Rawls, *Justicia como equidad. Materiales para una teoría de la justicia*, Tecnos, Madrid, 2017, p. 33-34. See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973.

Secretary General Guterres addresses the social contract devoting special attention, first, to the fulfilment of human rights, beyond national space and proposing agreements for different levels of governance in the framework of *interconnected multilateralism*, linking global, regional and local levels.

Secondly, he calls for s*olidarity* as a fundamental value "by virtue of which global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes costs and burdens fairly, in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice, and ensures that those who suffer or benefit the least receive help from those who benefit the most". That solidarity must extend to youth and future generations.[24]

On the basis of these two issues, he proposes a path forward, centred on *a renewal of our social contract*, adapted to the challenges of this century, taking into account young people and future generations and complemented by a new global deal:

> "Now is the time to renew the social contract between Governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. People need to see results reflected in their daily lives. This must include the active and equal participation of women and girls, without whom no meaningful social contract is possible. It should also include updated governance arrangements to deliver better public goods and usher in a new era of universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet by 2030 as a basic human right".

Consequently, he invites "all countries to conduct inclusive and meaningful national listening consultations so all citizens have a say in envisioning their countries' futures".

The report stresses, however, that *any social contract that is renewed* in the 21st century must take into account that there is a generalized mistrust in the State and democracy, and should be based on three axes:

a) S*trengthen trust in public institutions* through citizen consultations (forums), provision of basic goods, improvement of public services and training for civil servants, and accountability.

b) Inclusion, protection and participation. In this section the improvement of justice systems is particularly relevant. The Secretary General explains that approximately 1.5 billion people in the world, particularly women, are marginalised, do not have access to *judicial systems* that protect their rights to settle disputes peacefully and deal with their criminal, civil or administrative justice problems. They cannot rely on the law to defend themselves against violence and crime, or against the State itself, which they perceive as corrupt and opposing their interests. There, he proposes to *review the concept of Rule of Law* and strengthen anti-corruption measures.

c) Adopt a series of measures to fight *discrimination and ensure the safeguarding of human rights* and enable people to satisfy their *basic needs*. Nutrition, healthcare, water and sanitation, education and decent work are fundamental human rights.

He proposes, therefore, to accelerate the measures to achieve universal social protection coverage, which approximately 4 billion people still lack. The objective is universal access to healthcare and basic income security for children, people who are unable to work and the elderly. He also suggests gradually integrating the informal sectors into the social protection framework. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is currently considering the creation of a Global Fund for Social Protection.[25]

He considers it crucial to implement *tax systems* with different perspectives. These systems should be progressive, transparent, based on the principle of solidarity, aimed at fighting inequality, used to finance public policies for all citizens, and linked to measures to fight corruption and capital evasion

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24 Philosopher William MacAskill, of Oxford University, argues in *What we owe the future* (Basic Books, New York, 2022) that we should be concerned about the world that our potential descendants will be born into. From a moral perspective, the decisions and actions of today, in fields such as science, economics or war, will determine what life will be like for our successors. His conclusion is that we have an obligation to change industrial and rural production methods, to halt carbon emissions, to avoid nuclear or biochemical warfare, and to monitor how artificial intelligence is used.

25 *World Social Protection Report 2020-2022: Social protection at the crossroads in pursuit of a better future,* International Labour Organisation, Geneva, 2022. https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2020-22/lang--en/index.htm

and its multiple channels. These measures must be coordinated with a reform of the international tax system and the illicit financial flows also mentioned in the Report. Its current shortcomings enable *evasion at the national level*, resulting in a huge loss of resources for the development of rich and poor countries alike.

Resources lost to fiscal evasion

Governments around the world lose around $500 billion in tax income a year to global tax abuse, according to the report *The State of Tax Justice 2021*, by the Tax Justice Network, Global Alliance for Tax Justice and the global trade union federation Public Services International. Countries fail to collect $312 billion annually due to tax abuse committed by multinational corporations and an additional $171 billion to individual tax evasion. These figures, which represent direct losses for governments, are probably only the "tip of the iceberg". Source: Sean McGoey, "Nearly $500 billion lost yearly to global tax abuse due mostly to corporations, new analysis says", *International Consortium of Investigative Journalism*, 19 November 2021. https://www.icij.org/inside-icij/2021/11/nearly-500-billion-lost-yearly-to-global-tax-abuse-due-mostly-to-corporations-new-analysis-says/ ; Gabriel Zucman, The Hidden Wealth of Nations. The Scourge of Tax Havens, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2015; Gabriel Zucman; Bastian Obermayer and Frederik Obermaier,*The Panama Papers. Breaking the Story of How the Rich and Powerful Hide Their Money*, Oneworld Publications, London, 2017.

The report allocates a special role to the private sector, given its "great capacity to tip the balance in tackling many of the toughest challenges we face. Private sector commitments to innovate responsibly and harness technology fairly are a good starting point, as are business models that support inclusion, human rights and sustainable development, such as investment funds that take environmental, social and governance factors into account".

According to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the social contract must:

> "First, (...) ensure human rights for all—importantly, this means bringing in those not fully benefitting from previous social contracts, such as women, informal workers and migrants. Second, it must ensure larger freedom for all in a fast-changing world, including security and protection as new challenges emerge. Third, it must spur the transformation of economies and societies to halt climate change and environmental destruction".[26]

In June 2019, the national Economic and Social Councils and the European Economic and Social Committee met in Rome to discuss their role in Europe's sustainable development and the European Pillar of Social Rights. In the conclusions of the meeting, they stated that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development "could be the basis for the social contract of the 21st century". The 2030 Agenda, they said, "has to be the European Union's undisputed and overarching priority for the next decade, as it can provide answers to the five fundamental transitions we need to address: economic; energy and ecological; broad social transformation; participatory democracy; and geopolitics in international relations".[27]

26 UNRISD, "A New Eco-Social Contract. Vital to Deliver the 2030 Agenda for Development", *Issue Brief 11*, Geneva, March, 2021, https://www.unrisd.org/en/library/publications/a-new-eco-social-contract-vital-to-deliver-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development

27 "Sustainable Development Agenda could be basis for social contract of 21st century, say Europe's Economic and Social Councils to new EU leaders", European Economic and Social Committee, 17 June 2019.
https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/press-releases/sustainable-development-agenda-could-be-basis-social-contract-21st-century-say-europes-economic-and-social-councils-new

7. A different intersectoral association

The UNSG report does not elaborate on the history of the concept of the social contract in political philosophy. But it is linked to the ideas that a series of authors have put forth in recent years, particularly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are some examples that stand out.

Minouche Shafik, the director of the London School of Economics and former vice-president of the World Bank, devotes *What we owe to each other* to analyze the dysfunctions affecting a large part of global society in terms of inequality, unemployment or precarious employment, lack of access to public education and health services, and environmental impacts, among other factors. The author refers to the social contract as a partnership among individuals, businesses, civil society and the State to contribute to a system with collective benefits.[28]

For Shafik, there are three basic principles that must be guaranteed in order to achieve a social contract that is less about "me" and more about "us":

1. *Security for all*, guaranteeing minimum standards for a decent life.
2. *Maximum investment in capacity building*. Invest as much as possible in creating opportunities for citizens to be productive and able to contribute to the common good. To promote this, society must help to reduce carbon emissions or tackle social problems such as obesity.
3. *Manage risks jointly and efficiently*. A series of risks must be managed by individuals, families, employers and the State.[29]

Based on the experiences of different countries, Shafik believes that the basic elements for a decent life are a minimum income, guaranteed education, access to basic healthcare and protection against poverty in old age. Education systems must educate children qualitatively and democratically, including those from lower income sectors. They must also be inclusive of women and minority groups.

Meanwhile, better technology must be adopted, with a special focus on digitalisation and management practices, investment in education and infrastructure. States must invest in training and create spaces in which creativity and productivity can flourish. Likewise, they must shift the economy in the direction of generating ever-fewer carbon emissions. Education, healthcare and construction need to be digitalised at the same rate as information, communications, journalism and finance. The social contracts of the future must also balance flexibility and security.

In *Laberintos de la prosperidad* (Labyrinths of prosperity), professors of Economic Politics Xosé Carlos Arias (University of Vigo) and Antón Costas (University of Barcelona) present the four social contract models they identify in the post-pandemic period: the free market; nationalism and protectionism; income redistribution; and distribution. These economists favour the latter, which combines free enterprise with welfare policies so that no one is left behind "in enjoying the benefits of growth".

Arias' and Costas' proposal focuses, on the one hand, on "acting on distribution" through enterprise surplus (by improving salaries, for example) and, on the other hand, on educational and vocational training policies in the pre-distributive stage. This is combined with the defence of "new social rights linked to pre-school education, affordable housing, commitment to employment and the regulation of immigration". They also propose, through environmental tax policies, a new green pact, and a shift in globalisation away from finance and trade towards the management of global public goods.[30]

Ian Goldin, professor of Globalisation and Development at Oxford University and former president of the World Bank, considers it necessary to put policies in place that reduce systemic risks, such as pandemics and the effects of climate change. Among other measures, he suggests that "the provision of basic universal services and employment guarantees for all who can work must be at the heart of a new social contract". Radical reforms are needed, he says, and while this may sound "alarming",

28 Minouche Shafik, *What we owe to each other. A new social contract*, The Bodley Head, London, 2021.

29 *Ibidem*., pp. 164-165. This book offers an excellent synthesis of the history and development of the social contract in chapter 1.

30 Xosé Carlos Arias and Antón Costas, *Laberintos de la prosperidad*, Galaxia Gutenberg, pp. 207-209

it is less so than pandemics, increasing climate change, rising inequality, lack of employment and instability that will continue to grow if everything remains the same".[31] Those reforms include restoring a relevant role to the State in creating jobs, redistributing wealth and tackling climate change.

On this last point, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, Reinhold Leinfelder and a team from the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU for its acronym in German), produced a detailed paper in 2011 about the foundations of a social pact for a transition towards sustainability. For those authors, the idea of a new social contract:

> "Refers to the need for humanity to take collective responsibility for avoiding climate change and other threats to the planet. On the one hand, this requires a voluntary limitation of the usual options for economic growth, in favour of creating room for manoeuvre for the people living in the parts of the world that are suffering the consequences of our irresponsible behaviour and, particularly, future generations. The transformation requires a powerful State, counterbalanced by widespread citizen participation. The idea of a social contract takes the original concept found in modern history Natural Law theories one step further. The revised edition for today must address four major challenges:
>
> 1. Due to progressive economic and cultural globalisation, the nation State can no longer be considered the only basis for the contractual relationship. Its inhabitants must take responsibility for transnational risks and natural hazards, in addition to the legitimate interests of 'third parties', for example, taking into account other members of the global community.
>
> 2. The philosophy of the traditional contract presupposed the fictitious belief that all members of a society are equal. Given the disproportionate distribution of resources and capacities in today's international community, we must have global, effective and fair redress mechanisms.
>
> 3. The natural environment must be given greater consideration when revising the social contract.
>
> 4. The contract must factor in two important new actors: self-governed civil society, and the community of scientific experts.[32]

As to redress mechanisms, economist Jeffrey Sachs, president of the Social Solutions Development Network (SSDN) (a UN initiative) highlights the importance of developing a solid plan to finance sustainable development to achieve the 2030 Agenda. "If we want to make this global agenda a reality we need a strategy for poor countries", he explains. "This is necessary financing because these countries, on their own, are not going to be able to address the transformations".[33] The yearly SSDN report reveals that in the last two years, global financing to meet SDGs has been insufficient and there is a need for an urgent action plan led by governments and international financial entities.[34] Up until September 2022, only 19 of the 190 states in the international system had kept their promises of transformation in the face of climate change.

In a similar vein, a number of countries in the South that are being severely affected by climate change demanded, at the COP27 Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (November 2022), that the richest countries –those historically responsible for global warming– make deeper commitments to establish compensation formulas through a specific fund or mechanism for what is referred to, in climate change diplomacy, as "loss and damage" for irreversible impacts.[35] At the opening of COP27, the UNSG stated that there is a need for a *global deal* where all countries make "additional efforts to reduce emissions, and the richest nations and international financial institutions offer assistance to emerging economies".

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31 Ian Goldin, *Rescue. From a global crisis to a better world*, Spectre, London, 2021, pp. 255-256.

32 Hans Joachim Schellnhuber et al., *World in Transition – A Social Contract for Sustainability*, German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU), Berlin, 2011, p. 8.

33 "Spain presented the SDR in Madrid and org anised the event A New Social Contract to Address the SDGs", Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 28 June 2022.

34 Jeffrey D. Sachs et al., *Sustainable Development Report 2022. From Crisis to Sustainable Development: the SDGs as Roadmap to 2030 and Beyond,* Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Bertelsmann Stiftung, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2022.

35 Fiona Harvey et al.,"Cop27 agrees historic 'loss and damage' fund for climate impact in developing countries", The Guardian, 20 November, 2022.
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/20/cop27-agrees-to-historic-loss-and-damage-fund-to-compensate-developing-countries-for-climate-impacts

Support to combat climate change in the South

"Rich countries will also need to provide far more financial support for poorer countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change; financing is set to be the make-or-break issue for this COP. Wealthy nations pledged to mobilise $100 billion a year by 2020, but are still about $17 billion short. Last year, they committed to hit the target by 2023, and negotiate a new deal to start in 2025. They need to go much further.

A much bigger chunk of financing, moreover, should go towards adapting to the effects of climate change (from weather warning systems to climate-resilient infrastructure and new farming methods) for which the UN has said developing countries will need up to $340 billion a year by 2030. More should also come as grants, rather than loans that push poor countries even further into debt". Source: Editorial Board of the *Financial Times*, 6 November 2022.
https://www.ft.com/content/a43427ac-0e7e-48bf-8c3e-4165179afff4

8. Conclusions: a guide for political action

The various problems identified in *Our Common Agenda* and the measures proposed by the Secretary General are a guide for political action at the global, regional and local level.[36] This is one of its fundamental achievements. In most reports and recommendations developed over decades, the United Nations called upon States to incorporate them into their national legislations and policies, and into international agreements.[37]

Being bound by a legal obligation to the SDGs would entail consequences in case of non-compliance or actions that oppose the 2030 Agenda. By addressing state and non-state actors, the UNSG appeals to the political relationship between the two for a regulatory agenda to potentially be transformed into legal rules and political decisions, with consequences grounded in International Law in case of non-compliance. In turn, "the impacts of climate change challenge the traditional notions of International Law, particularly those related to the principle of territorial sovereignty, with their presumption of defined territory and fixed maritime boundaries, and State responsibility with its presumption of liability and compulsory reparations".[38]

The message in *Our Common Agenda* addresses a chain of actors in the international system, including recommendations to the Organisation itself, as well as others addressed to the participation of governments and local communities. "Any strategy for intervention, says Innerarity, if it is to be successful, must be presented as a strategy to be led not a*gainst*, but *within* systems that act in collaboration".[39]

The inclusive multilateralism proposed by the report recommends "States from all regions and of all sizes" to "engage in collective action, notably including a stronger voice for developing countries in global decision-making". It is a call to democratise multiple agencies and international bodies.

This extended multilateralism also means inclusion of a diverse range of voices beyond States: "intergovernmental organisations, parliaments, subnational authorities (cities and local and regional governments), civil society, faith-based organisations, universities, researchers and experts, trade unions, the private sector and industry, and local grass roots movements, including those led by women and young people".

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36 For more on the relationship between the SDGs' recommendations and their application in International Law, see Carlos Fernández-Liesa, "Sustainable development and theory of international law", *Iberoamerican Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 11, 2nd edition, 2022, pp. 54-77

37 International Human Rights Law and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", *Social Development Bulletin*, United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Volume 6, 3rd edition. https://archive.unescwa.org

38 Nico Schrijver, "The Impact of Climate Change: Challenges for International Law," in Ulrich Fastenrath (ed.), Rudolf Geiger (ed.), Daniel-Erasmus Khan (ed.), Andreas Paulus (ed.), Sabine von Schorlemer (ed.), Christoph Vedder (ed.), *From Bilateralism to Community Interest: Essays in Honour of Bruno Simma,* Oxford University Press, 2011. https://academic.oup.com/book/7421

39 Innerarity, *Una teoría de la democracia***,** p. 92.

The report recognises the central role of States in terms of policies for change and responsibilities, but it includes other non-State actors that "should be part of the deliberations and accountable for their commitments. The role of parliaments, cities and other subnational authorities is particularly being recognized in inclusive approaches, with, for example, voluntary local reviews of Sustainable Development Goal implementation providing a model on which to build. Civil society needs to remain part and parcel of our work across sectors and in multilateral forums".

In the case of the Basque Country, the Government's interest in the SDGs 2030 Agenda, the presence of the Secretariat for the United Nations Local 2030 Coalition platform, the interest in promoting a new social contract, and the presence of an active civil society are factors that contribute to work on a relevant experience of engaging a sub-state actor with the United Nations in the framework of active multilateralism.

The methodology and proposals presented in *Our Common Agenda* make it a particularly valuable document that should serve the development of public policy and work agendas by non-state actors, with the aim of fulfilling the SDGs, to the benefit of the global community.

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