



UNITED NATIONS
**KOSOVO TRUST-BUILDING
FORUM**

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FORUM REPORT

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FOREWORD

10 August 2018

The United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum was designed to empower and bring new energy to support change-making societal forces whose success is central to building Kosovo's future. I was personally inspired by the powerful voices and fresh perspectives of talented leaders from across Kosovo, coming from a wide range of professions and backgrounds. Their commitment and determination to help Kosovo society grow now deserves equally committed and determined international engagement, embodied in the institutions and principles of the United Nations. The Forum marked not an end, but rather the beginning of new multi-dimensional work, with unlimited potential over the longer term.

Many months of preparatory work, including field visits and a series of coordinated focus group discussions, created the space for the exchange of perspectives we witnessed, exploring the most promising avenues for building deeper trust, and ultimately a more peaceful and inclusive society. It gave birth to a roadmap for future effort which is both practical and ambitious. As one of the participants put it "such efforts will help to move Kosovo from a divided past towards a shared future".

"I am inspired by the powerful voices and the fresh perspectives of young leaders and talent from across Kosovo."

Upon return from Ljubljana, UNMIK led a series of exercises to determine the way forward for implementation of the recommendations from the United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum. Through the organisation of follow-up workshops and consultations with international partners to identify relevant ongoing efforts and gaps, UNMIK mapped existing frameworks that could address some of the Forum's recommendations, and explored participants' ideas, means and motivation to implement, where possible, the recommendations on their own. A supplementary report describing follow-up work in more detail is being distributed separately to help guide the implementation of some of these recommendations.

I wish once more to thank all partner entities who joined us to support this initiative, including United Nations agencies, funds,

and programmes (UNKT), the European Union, European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo.

Their insights contributed very significantly to setting the framework for future work. Finally, as projects continue and develop, all progress will be updated on the United Nations Trust-Building Forum section of the UNMIK website:

<https://unmik.unmissions.org/>.

Mr Zahir Tanin

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary - General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)



INTRODUCTION

The United Nations gathered from 6 to 8 May in Ljubljana more than 120 participants representing a broad cross-section of Kosovo society, including civil society, media, youth leaders and municipal leadership from both majority and non-majority communities, to exchange perspectives on building trust for a more peaceful and inclusive society.

The United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum was co-chaired by Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Zahir Tanin, and Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita. It was the result of months of preparatory work, including through regular visits to local municipalities and communities and a series of focus group discussions with experts and practitioners on topics of importance to the people of Kosovo. The event was supported by UNMIK and United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes (UNKT), with the participation of other international partner organizations such as the European Union, European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), and the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo.

Through plenary and breakout sessions, and presentations from resource people with valuable experiences in other parts of the world, the Forum focused on producing lasting positive effects for all communities in Kosovo around issues of common concern. Participants shared their experiences in working hand-in-hand to resolving issues of common concern; developing practical and workable solutions to issues affecting their lives; and nurturing deep connections with their neighbours and constituencies.

The Forum identified practical ways of ensuring constructive engagement towards the greater good, and ways of supporting local and grassroots-level processes that can complement higher-level political discussions. Among the major outcomes of the Forum was the adoption by consensus of a series of recommendations in the areas of (I) Good governance and access to services, (II) Access to justice, (III) Inter-religious trust-building, (IV) Economic empowerment and the environment, (V) Media and communications and, (VI) Education.









OPENING SESSION

In his welcoming remarks, Forum co-chair **Zahir Tanin**, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, told participants:

"We embark together on an initiative to create and define a framework of support for trust-building and cooperation [...] you are the people with the power to make it happen. Leading with compassion, understanding, and clarity is what is needed to build a better future, a future which can only be shaped by you. It is time to organize the future, not simply to mourn the past".

The event's other co-chair, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations **Bintou Keita**, in her opening remarks drew an essential connection between the objectives of the Forum and Goal Number 16 of the UN Sustainable Development agenda, calling for peace, stability, justice, human rights and effective governance, based on the rule of law.

United Nations Secretary-General **António Guterres**, sent a welcoming message, saying to participants:

"You carry an important role and responsibility: to shape the prospects for a genuine and durable peace ... as important innovators and catalysts for change, representing a wide spectrum of Kosovo society, including local government, civil society, religious, academia, media, as well as youth and women's groups."

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The opening remarks were followed by a panel discussion of prominent Kosovo residents who discussed ways of crossing the boundaries of distrust in Kosovo and international experts who shared examples of trust-building from around the world.



PANEL DISCUSSION 1

Crossing the boundaries of distrust: Experiences from around the world

The first session was chaired by Representative of the Secretary-General and Director of the United Nations office in Belgrade **Simona - Mirela Miculescu**. Retired United Nations Assistant Secretary-General **Julian Harston** told participants that conflicting narratives needed to be abandoned and referred to Northern Ireland in describing the necessity of grassroots involvement to build lasting peace. He also noted the vital role of women in building peace, as they are too often treated as victims rather than agents in their own right.

Nagwan Abdelmaboud Mohamed Soliman, from the European University Institute spoke about her experience working to bring reconciliation and peace to Christian and Muslim communities in Egypt. She pointed to the importance of multi-dimensional approaches that address social, economic, and religious differences and the value of creating safe spaces for dialogue between communities. **Renata Avila**, Senior Digital Advisor of the World Wide Web Foundation spoke about the potentialities of digital tools for conflict prediction and resolution. She noted that such tools could be enablers of communication among people of different backgrounds, although there are dangers if they are misused. Participating as a panelist, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Christopher Coleman, spoke from his long experience in conflict management, telling participants: “*Conflict between identity groups is almost never what it looks like on the surface. For example, even though mistrust and hostility are often ascribed to ethnic differences, they can't really be explained by ethnicity. There are many underlying causes*”.

PANEL DISCUSSION 2

Understanding trust-building – crossing boundaries of distrust in Kosovo

A second panel, moderated by head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo Ambassador **Jan Braathu**, gave a platform to prominent residents of Kosovo to speak about that context. Managing Director of the Centre for Research Documentation and Publication **Besa Kabashi Ramaj** said that her organization's research suggested that steps towards overcoming myths surrounding identity included effective rule of law and better coordination between the judiciary and police, as these are immediate concerns of all residents of Kosovo.

Kosovo Language Commissioner **Slaviša Mladenović** discussed the enormous role of language in contributing to mutual trust, including in the provision of services in all official languages. He described language as a medium to increase understanding among communities rather than a marker of difference.



Journalist **Una Hajdari** reflected on the role of media in bringing communities together and noted the limited collaboration between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb journalists and the need for them to resist stereotypes and prejudice.

Hasime Tahiri Hasani, Executive Director of the NGO Mundësia shared concrete experiences of women in civil society who are striving to build trust and peace and referred to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Another civil society representative, **Milica Andrić**, spoke about the role of youth and the difficulties in addressing received narratives. She said "[...] now we should be able to start to create different, more positive memories."

FOCUS GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Intensive focus group sessions discussed possible solutions to challenges affecting the lives of the people of Kosovo in the following areas:

- Good governance and access to services
- Access to justice
- Inter-religious trust-building
- Economic empowerment and environment
- Media and communications
- Education

Gender, youth, language and human rights were incorporated as cross-cutting issues in all of the topics. Each of these focus groups had already convened twice in Pristina for preparatory meetings before the Forum.

At the conclusion of the Forum, each group developed a set of recommendations for moving forward on issues of common concern.

Disclaimer: The recommendations are the direct result of consensual agreement amongst all participants at the United Nations Kosovo Trust - Building Forum in Ljubljana. UNMIK will ensure a multilateral approach and continuous consultation with partners with regard to implementation of the recommendations. In the interests of inclusion and transparency, the implementation progress will be updated and reported on UNMIK's website and the upcoming trust-building digital platform.





RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Good Governance and Access to Services

Language compliance

1.1 At the central level help from international institutions and organizations is needed for financing engagement of more interpreters. Also, measures at the disposal of the Office of the Language Commissioner must be increased and utilized. Furthermore, (to overcome the poor quality of translations) a reorganization of the documents' translation process is required and all documents should be translated at one office by qualified and skilled interpreters / translators. Proof Reading Officers should check all documents prior to its release to the Parliament.

1.2 Roster of licensed, qualified interpreters should be created. Additional testing and verification of diplomas should be introduced.

1.3 At the local level more funds are needed so additional interpreters could be employed, or the translating services could be outsourced.

1.4 Recommendations published in the 2017 Report of the Ombudsperson for the Office of the Language Commissioner must be implemented.

1.5 Public servants speaking two languages should be paid more. Scholarships for studying language of other communities should be introduced.

1.6 Public University should introduce Serbian Language Studies Department.

Civil registration

1.7 Administrative Instruction (A) on the Law on Civil Registration has to be amended or rewritten providing clear instructions for implementing the law and enabling citizens to get identification documents at municipal registry offices. It should provide documents issued in Serbian system to be recognized by Kosovo institutions, so Kosovo documents could be issued.

1.8 Northern municipalities still miss the civil registry books that have been sent from Serbia to the central level. MLGA to support this process.

1.9 Technical capacities in municipalities have to be improved through projects of international organizations by providing better technical conditions and education of staff.

Transparency

1.10 Institutions should be encouraged to meet minimum prescribed standards for public participation. They are to improve mechanisms for transparency by engaging NGOs in public debates where all issues will be discussed, and citizens will be active participants. That way the citizens will be involved in reaching conclusions and bringing decisions.

1.11 All institutions must keep their web pages updated.

1.12 All local institutions have to closely cooperate with the Official Gazette so it could be updated regularly.

Gender equality

1.13 All institutions that have not delegated clerks to the office for gender equality have to do it.

1.14 Training of the staff to be financed by the international community.

1.15 Municipalities should not delegate only one person to deal with the gender equality issues, but offices with several staff should be created.

1.16 International community to finance workshops and projects aimed at increasing gender awareness.

1.17 Municipalities to address sexual harassment at the workplace through workshops, info sessions, thus increasing security and decreasing discrimination of women in the workplace.

1.18 The Law on Gender Equality to be strictly implemented.

1.19 Encourage cooperation of women in: media, NGO and politics.

1.20 It is necessary to increase awareness among politicians so women can have more executive power.

1.21 Political parties should allocate more funding resources for women during political campaign.

1.22 Municipal Assembly Caucus groups have to be more functional.

1.23 Culture projects, such as documentaries, enable rising awareness among people and are the best way to promote gender equality and women's rights.

Culture, Sport and Youth

1.24 Brain-gain, young people that graduated abroad should be encouraged to return by different programs, they should be offered positions without conditioning them to become party members.

1.25 A list of employment positions that are in deficit should be created and young people encouraged to pursue their education in that direction.

1.26 Encouraging volunteerism and paid internships.

Monitoring

1.27 Monitoring mechanism has to be established to follow up on development of all recommendations reached at this Forum.

1.28 The Council for Cooperation between the Government and the civil society is one of the mechanisms for addressing the recommendations from this Forum.

2. Access to Justice

2.1 Implement relevant legislation and policies addressing use of language in rule of law systems, including through a) verification of accuracy and quality of translation of laws from Albanian to Serbian language and vice versa and their approximation; b) provision of resources (sustainable funding and adequate staffing) for translation / interpretation purposes; c) development and / or procurement of dedicated translation software; and d) provision of language training (courses Albanian, Serbian and other(s) where needed) to all justice system personnel.

2.2 Raise the public awareness about the judicial system (and how to better avail of the integrated system i.e. how is the court structured, what citizens expect from the integration of judiciary and what are the functions, etc.).

2.3 Enhance significance of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms aiming at reducing the backlog of cases. Increasing the funds to be used for these mechanisms and the payment for mediators. Provide sufficient funds to be used for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms aiming at reducing the backlog of cases.

2.4 Special measures should be taken to ensure meaningful access to legal aid for women, children, IDPs and groups with special needs.

2.5 Provide adequate funding to the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates for Legal Help telephone service in both official languages to give basic information/orientation about where people should address legal claims.

2.6 Further measures to guarantee the personal safety of judges and prosecutors and their families and provide adequate pension, health and risk insurance schemes.

2.7 Enhance implementation of Anti-Discrimination Law, particularly extra-judicial mechanisms.





- 2.8 Occupation and reoccupation of property should be emphasized as a priority for the judiciary, focus on the quality of judgments regarding application of sanctions, effective evictions and compensation (damages).
- 2.9 Improve cooperation and communication between the judiciary and the police, particularly in execution of judgements.
- 2.10 Assure interaction between different databases used by the judicial system in Kosovo, including police databases.
- 2.11 Ensure that draft laws are accompanied with assessment of their financial implications.
- 2.12 Provide free legal aid to women (e.g cases of divorce, domestic abuse and labor rights).
- 2.13 Increase cooperation between prosecution services of Serbia and Kosovo to tackle war crimes and cases of missing persons.
- 2.14 Expedite recognition of decisions from Serbian run courts as per Brussels agreement.
- 2.15 Provide adequate facilities to treat juveniles in conflict with the law that have problems with abuse of narcotics.
- 2.16 Enhance strategy to reduce case backlog.
- 2.17 Provide common database for hate crime data and fast track system to treat such crimes.
- 2.18 Follow up: this TBF meetings should be organized periodically and the focus groups should keep contacts to exchange ideas related to their topic.

3. Inter-religious trust-building

General Recommendations

3.1 Encourage government to adopt Law on Restitution and Law on Religious Freedom.

3.2 Encourage government to take into consideration religious communities' amendments proposed on the Law on Religious Freedom.

3.3 Implementation of court decisions regarding resolving the issues of contested religious community property.

3.4 Municipal authorities should promote programs that raise awareness on building inter-religious trust.

3.5 Religious communities should effectively work on sustainable programs that counter violent extremism and nationalist political rhetoric as well as different kinds of segregation.

3.6 Educate children on other communities and religious groups and on the multicultural and multi-confessional aspect of Kosovo through the formal education systems. Subsequently, organize regular workshops for pupils from, primary and secondary schools, on tolerance and non-discrimination.

Religious leaders narrowing ethnic divide – Reconciliation

3.7 Direct informal and formal communication between religious communities.

3.8 Prevent and manage incidents with religious connotation from escalating into larger conflict.

3.9 Increase number of joint meetings and public lectures of religious community leaders with the aim of improving inter-community understanding and serve as a good example of inter-community cooperation and educate younger generations on the importance of religious heritage.

3.10 Increase coordination between municipalities and religious communities to restore and maintain damage/destroyed graveyards and religious heritage sites. Municipalities should allocate more financial resources for the maintenance of graveyards.





3.11 Publically condemn all security incidents affecting religious cultural heritage sites and undertake timely outreach activities with the aim of reassuring affected communities.

3.12 Religious communities should openly support rebuilding / reconstruction of damaged and destroyed religious heritage sites; and building new ones.

3.13 Religious leaders should actively engage in request in resolving the fate of missing persons.

Religious leaders promoting human rights – With the focus on women's empowerment

3.14 Traditional practice is prevailing over the Law on inheritance / Women are disadvantaged in the process of property inheritance / Religious leaders should play a role in promoting women rights.

3.15 Religious communities should jointly advocate against domestic violence and in promotion of women rights, thus also targeting patriarchal norms in the society.

3.16 Religious communities should be more gender aware, respect for women rights, property rights.

How can the media and civil society do more in this regard?

3.17 Media organizations should engage in comprehensive communication and promotion of inter-faith dialogue and stress positive achievements of inter-religious cooperation.

3.18 Media should refrain from portraying religious groups as political instruments.

3.19 Religious communities should be more transparent toward the media.

3.20 Media and religious communities should engage in the common platform to promote positive stories.

3.21 Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) should coordinate its activities with religious communities and use good practices from inter-faith dialogue to increase overall inter-community understanding.

4. Economic Empowerment and Environment

Economic empowerment

4.1 Economic policies should take into consideration local specificity – north of Kosovo, enclaves and Kosovo in general.

4.2 Kosovo institutions to provide one-year paid internships to graduates of higher education to allow them to obtain first work experience: Tripartite Agreements – Company, Government and the Intern.

4.3 Establish link between expertise and the grassroots, specifically youth, to prevent need to import skills: database, skill pool, formalized mentoring by experts.

Responsible actor/s - Ministry for Culture Youth and Sport, Ministry of Labor and municipalities.

4.4 Streamline public institutions to eliminate barriers that hinder competitiveness of Kosovo businesses.

Activity: Working group between the private sector and the Ministry of Trade and Industry in identifying the specific barriers, which could be removed in order to improve business climate.

4.5 Increase focus on vocational education based on needs of the labor market.

Responsible actor/s -Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Labor, education community.

4.6 Provide support – mentoring, grants and networking for micro, small and medium.

Activity: to stimulate through funding ethnically mixed employment. Also to develop a strategy for increasing the number of small and medium enterprises.

4.7 Create a skill pool – a mechanism: Linking women entrepreneurs with a successful business company (knowledge transfer on marketing, finance and taxation). Government should subsidize or provide institutional support. Identify needs of enterprises in terms of marketing and others.

4.8 Municipalities of Kosovo could pay the interest for loans taken by local farmers.

4.9 To subsidize international business that come to Kosovo for five years.

4.10 The GoK should develop a long term inclusive economic development strategy, with concrete action plans and budget allocations.

4.11 Women are discriminated against in the labor market. Implement the 40% quota as per EU regulation throughout Kosovo.



4.12 Provide business advice about legal and hygienic requirements and standards. Responsible actor/s -Ministry of Trade and Industry to coordinate. Implement EU Standards.

4.13 Establish inter-ethnic projects in the agricultural sector and increase support to farmers and the food processing industry. Financially support with grants, equipment, seedlings, subventions, and tax reductions. Ministry of Agriculture, municipalities.

4.14 Organize a business fair with participants from throughout Kosovo from all communities to collect and share best practices. During the fair formalized dialogue between business communities and Government to incorporate environmental aspects, improve business conditions and trust between communities. Promote Public Private Partnerships (PPP).

4.15 Facilitate establishing contractual relations between Serbian and other communities' producers from Kosovo and large retail chains. This could be a follow up activity of the TBF.

Responsible actor/s -Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry Economic Development, business communities.



4.16 Strengthen Rule of Law. Kosovo institutions should be involved in speedy restitution of usurped property, with special emphasis on non-majority communities.

Responsible actor/s - Ministry of Justice, international organizations, municipalities, community representatives.

4.17 Stimulate young entrepreneurs through business incubators, business start-ups specifically on innovation and digitalization. Reduced taxation, sufficient grants for startups (especially the already established from different communities). Conduct a feasibility study with a SWOT analysis.

Responsible actor/s -Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry Economic Development, civil society, international organizations.

4.18 Technical assistance to communities to help draft business plans and develop technical capacities.

Responsible actor/s-Ministry of Labor, Chamber of Commerce, Business Associations, municipalities.

4.19 Kosovo institutions, in order to improve the economic status of non-majority communities, must respect the obligation to employ at least 10% of Serbs and non-majority communities in public institutions and companies.

4.20 The Kosovo institutions should fully implement the CEFTA agreement.

4.21 Improve transparency in the privatization process taking into consideration the community aspect and to improve trust among the communities.

Environment

4.22 TBF to highly recommend to the Government and the Assembly not construct Kosovo C power generating plant and focus instead on green energy, including through attracting relevant investors. Specifically, solar panels, wind mills, energy saving measures.

Responsible actor/s Assembly of Kosovo, Ministry of Environment, Municipalities, chamber of commerce, Ministry of Trade and Industries, Ministry of Economic Development.

4.23 Promote environmental protection as an asset for economic development and develop profit-oriented waste management. Stimulate and reward private businesses that are eco-friendly through reduced taxation and grants for eco-friendly start-ups.

Responsible actor/s -Civil Society, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Municipalities, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Education sector, use the existing mechanisms.

4.24 Increase understanding of the need for a better environment. Recommendation: Educate people for protection and better treatment of environment. Environment should return on the priority of the political agenda. Environmental protection needs to be integrated into the education system and thus at the very early stage.

Responsible actor/s -Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Municipalities, Civil Society, International organizations.

4.25 Waste management in Kosovo needs to be addressed. There is no recycling plants for waste in Kosovo. Waste is a resource, which in Kosovo is lost in landfills instead of being recycled. Riverbeds a full of plastic bottles. Recommendation: Create a law on plastic bottles recycle/treatment introducing a deposit fee, which is returned. The same goes for the use of plastic bags, which in EU countries you have to pay for.

4.26 Vehicle tax as an environmental measures. Recommendation: Funds collected from vehicle taxation should be used for establishing the eco-fund.

4.27 To solve the waste water treatment between Gazivoda Lake and Mitrovica. So the new artificial lake in Mitrovica would be clean. Positive environmental impact for all communities. Cost implications are reasonable. Recommendation to construct black water treatment facilities for the villages along the Ibar River.

Responsible actor/s -The Ministry of Environment should coordinate among the municipalities, international organizations for supplementary funding.

5. Media and Communication

Issues: Central-level media rarely cover municipalities, e.g. Viti/Vitina; Not enough reporting on positive examples of multiethnic collaborations; More focus on political reporting and negative issues; Not enough inter-ethnic collaboration.

5.1 To strengthen cooperation between the local and central media.
5.2 To develop incentives for increase in qualitative multi-ethnic reporting.

5.3 All media in Kosovo should have joint efforts to increase the presence of non-political topics of mutual concern, such as artistic and cultural events and environmental issues in public media in all official languages, while simultaneously insisting upon professional (objective, impartial and unbiased) reporting.

5.4 To increase collaboration between Albanian and Serbian-language media; For example, to have cross-training or “exchange” programs for journalists, whereby one or more journalists from one Albanian-language media outlet would work for a while with a Serbian-language outlet and vice versa.

5.5 Donors should consider media as a priority area, thus enabling joint coverage of issues of mutual concern.

5.6 To encourage the public broadcaster to continue having qualitative programs in the languages of the communities, thus increasing the access to information and exchanges between the communities and regional public broadcasters.

Issues: Media Ethics-related problems: fake news, sexism, hate speech, not enough understanding/training on dealing with marginalized groups, as well as a lack of accountability, responsibility and professionalism in media.

5.7 Independent Media Commission, Associations of Journalists and Press Council of Kosovo have to provide capacity-building trainings on media ethics (inter alia: critical thinking, balanced fact-based and impartial reporting, work with marginalized and sensitive groups, coverage of non-majority communities and gender-awareness for journalists and students of journalism).

5.8 The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport in cooperation with other local and international actors should invest in educating youth on how to identify, react to and prevent hate speech / intolerance online and offline, as well as to withstand fake news and propaganda through human rights education, counter and alternative narratives. The initiative should be broaden to any other age, whenever possible.

Issues: Language barriers, Lack of enough education in terms of language, not knowing to properly write even in one's own language, let alone knowing the other languages. Language often creating a barrier. For example, press releases issued in Albanian only.

5.9 To encourage the Ministry of Education and all relevant institutions in Kosovo to provide opportunities to Kosovo residents (in particular journalists in order to strengthen their capacity to report on the issues pertaining to the non-majority communities) to learn any of the official languages regardless of place of residence through formal and non-formal education.

Issues: Lack/shortage of true financially independent media in Kosovo.

5.10 To encourage municipalities to allocate funds to media outlets in a given area, in a transparent and legal manner, to report on issues of general importance in municipalities and improve multi-ethnic reporting, without interfering in their editorial independence.

Issues: Safety of journalists (threats, attacks, etc), 8 K-Albanian, 7 K-Serb journalists missing since 1999.

5.11 To promptly condemn all attacks and violence against journalists and other media workers such as intimidation, threats and harassment, including online attacks and smear campaigns against journalists.

5.12 To urge judicial authorities to promptly investigate and prosecute all attacks and violence against journalists and other media workers such as intimidation, threats and harassment, including online attacks and smear campaigns against journalists, as well as the cases of disappearance and murder of journalists.

5.13 To urge the public institutions to provide ongoing support for the investigation of cases of journalists who were murdered or kidnapped. To acknowledge the specific risks faced by female journalists and the importance of a gender-sensitive approach when considering measures to address the safety of journalists.

Issues: Lack of municipality leadership in dealing with media and communications (Local authorities do not understand the importance of outreach to residents. Municipalities often have nothing to say).

5.14 To ensure that the staff at the municipal level have received appropriate training with regards to timely provision of access to official documents and to ensure proper implementation.

5.15 Improve cooperation between municipalities and media with no discrimination on any grounds.

5.16 To improve the quality and regular updates of information provided on the web pages of municipalities in all official languages, as well as the prompt response to requests.

Issues: Lack of transparency in institutions. Journalists have a limited access to official documents, municipalities often do not respond to requests for access to official documents.

5.17 To strengthen cooperation between the Ombudsperson, media and civil society in order to develop and institutionalize implementation of the existing legal frameworks on access to official documentation.

Issues: Youth, women and marginalized groups together?

5.18 To strengthen partnership between youth-led initiatives and media actors in order to amplify the positive role of youth in building sustainable peace in their communities through building inter-ethnic trust, promotion of responsible citizenship and awareness-raising on diverse human-rights related issues.

5.19 To provide incentives for involvement of young people in awareness raising campaigns offline and online on societal issues, including as key actors in disseminating information.



5.20 To undertake efforts to provide media coverage and space for youth-led activities at the key public broadcaster and other media in order to raise the attention of local and central institutions to the problems that Kosovo youth face on a daily basis (education-related issues, bullying in schools, prevention of peer-to-peer violence, employment opportunities and socio-economic empowerment, air pollution, etc.) and empower youth by giving them a stronger voice in their communities.

Issues: Gender

5.21 To undertake efforts to increase the number of women in media, including in leadership positions.

5.22 To present women as leaders and role models and avoid portrayals that reinforce discriminatory and patriarchal attitudes and social norms about the role of women (especially before and after elections).

5.23 To avoid sexist and homophobic language on media.

5.24 Include gender-related issues in the media and do more to reflect gender equality within reporting.



6. Education

To Ministries of Education from both systems:

6.1 Ensure that education reform addresses discriminatory content aimed at other societal groups based on their ethnicity, religion, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, etc. and devise an oversight mechanism.

6.2 Introduce curricular and textbook changes, enabling sufficient and more objective cultural and historical representation of all non-majority communities in both education systems in Kosovo.

6.3 Reinforce incorporation and further development of human rights education in the curricula of primary and secondary education institutions with a strong focus on ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as impetus for attitudinal change.

6.4 Encourage exchange of views between educational practitioners from both systems on the issues of discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying etc.

6.5 Make sure that psychosocial support is readily available in all schools by contracting qualified practitioners.

6.6 Ensure that teaching materials are affordable and produced and distributed in the quantities needed to meet the requirements of school staff.

6.7 Advocate for the enactment of administrative instructions that would expand the diploma verification process to vocational schools and high schools.

6.8 Include civil society in the oversight of the existing mechanisms in high education (i.e. assessing compliance with the existing regulations).

6.9 Advocate that recommendations from Consultative Council for Communities be fully taken on board, particularly those that relate to increasing access of vulnerable communities to quality education and fighting institutional discrimination.

6.10 Conduct needs assessments/evaluations more often to understand the gap between the needs of the labor market and current educational outputs and create feedback mechanisms with the private and public sectors.



6.11 Integrate elective courses for learning regional languages into elementary/secondary school curricula.

6.12 Reinstate Faculty of Languages in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë and Pristina a separate department for Albanian/Serbian language and culture.

To other grassroots activists/academic institutions:

6.13 Offer more opportunities for educational practitioners and students from both systems to come together and discuss education-related matters (science, technology etc.).

6.14 Train teachers from all communities on values of tolerance and non-discrimination and extend such knowledge to parents through regular consultations or group meetings.

6.15 Prevent youth-based violence by educating young people on mediation and dialogue as alternative ways of dealing with conflict.

6.16 Increase efforts of informal education initiatives in challenging existing narratives through innovative and creative approaches, such as digital and state-of-the-art technologies in conveying positive narratives.

Follow-up mechanism:

6.17 The group failed to provide concrete proposals on the follow-up mechanism, but broadly suggested that a task force should be established to oversee the implementation of small-scale projects at the grassroots level in close partnership with municipalities, central authorities, and international community.

FORUM CONCLUSIONS

After the focus groups finalized their recommendations, the moderators presented them to plenary in a session facilitated by Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary - General **Chris Coleman**.

There was broad consensus on the following:

- The Forum provided a unique setting that facilitated exchanges amongst a large and diverse group of participants on significant issues of common concern.
- The Forum was an effective platform for interaction across Kosovo's communities, supporting the capacities of civil society, municipal, and community leaders to play pivotal roles in trust-building.
- The impetus generated by this Forum should be maintained in future cooperative actions and undertakings, supported by the international community.
- To ensure this sustained momentum, follow-on mechanisms should be established for implementation of initiatives deriving from the Forum.
- The recommendations would collectively form a living document that would be updated and adapted as needed, in consultation with the participants.

Follow-up mechanisms will include a digital platform which will, *inter alia*:

- Provide information about implementation of focus group recommendations.
- Engage individuals from all communities in shaping strategies for implementation of the recommendations.
- Promote collaboration on implementation of recommendations.
- Provide a space for officials at all levels to provide information on implementation of recommendations and interact with constituencies.
- Serve as a reference point for trust-building activities.

This will include a collaborative digital platform through which projects and ideas and initiatives will be jointly tracked and managed.



UNITED NATIONS KOSOVO TRUST-BUILDING FORUM

Prishtina, 6-8 May 2018



ANNEXES

REMARKS

1. Address by Mr. Zahir Tanin Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of UNMIK

Good evening, distinguished guests, friends and colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the United Nations Kosovo Trust-building Forum. I thank you for taking the time to join us here in Ljubljana and for your dedication to Kosovo and building trust across communities. I also warmly welcome Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita, and my colleagues from the United Nations who have joined us from across Kosovo, including the UN Kosovo Team, Belgrade and New York. I would also like to thank our friends from the European Union, EULEX and, of course, the OSCE.

Today, nearly 19 years after the height of the conflict, the international community continues to support peace, stability, and security in Kosovo. Under a shared legal umbrella, all organisations are mandated and remain committed to working to address the real challenges Kosovo faces, not simply in political negotiations but also at deeper levels – fostering relationships between people and community groups.

This gathering convenes an exceptional group of distinguished leaders, including already - accomplished and emerging people - in - charge. We join together to contribute to fortifying the foundations of an enduring peace and a sustained stable society. We are not here at the negotiating table. The EU - facilitated political dialogue, aimed at the normalisation of relations, and seeking political agreements between Pristina and Belgrade, is not our focus here.

We are here to identify how, at the social, grassroots - level -- municipal leaders, civil society, and the communities of Kosovo can progress long-lasting trust and mutual cooperation for their own future.

Can we assist in cultivating trust and a future that belongs to all? We are here because we believe that the answer is yes, but the main question remains: *how?* Mistrust across multiple communities in Kosovo still divides many, and prevents them from contemplating mutual efforts aimed at building a shared social platform, rather than unilaterally disarming the other side. The imprint of conflict, and the subsequent waves of violence stays long in the minds of people and continues to complicate the way forward. Even the younger generation, is mostly not able to free itself from carrying inherited perceptions of the time of conflict and violence which occurred even before they were born or could be part of the hostilities. As we know, the history of loss of life, being uprooted and persistent trauma, cannot easily be put aside. People have their own opinions, perceptions and experiences -- they are not simply spectators of conflict. When a war or a conflict breaks out, it takes shape in *“the body of different ghouls”*, the noise of war deafens reason, and people are divided by their views and interpretation of the conflict. This is the foundry of mistrust.

If the organisation of post-conflict political and social life does not or cannot chart out a path for a future acceptable to all, it would be difficult to allow people to breathe, to live, to find the contours of a new coexistence, based on an acceptable, agreed - upon social contract. The work of this Forum, and the numerous meetings held last year and particularly by the focus groups over the last two months, will allow us to identify and better articulate issues of agreement, decipher zones of disagreement and blend the needs and responses in a coherent pattern, where acceptance, compassion and understanding would help to bring all together. Without detecting and designing a way forward, fewer people will be able to live in peace and prosperity in either the short or the long term. It will be difficult to overcome the impact of a sorrow-filled history and to settle the souls of people affected by conflict, but this forum's objective is to create such an agenda, a workable framework to build trust and help guide the future. Such a framework should capture social, political, cultural, and economic factors; all areas of mutual benefit and mutual interest. We focus on how to build lasting, sustained trust between all groups of people living in Kosovo, to restore normal relations between groups. This is imperative, as without social reconciliation and building trust, involving people, communities and civil society, despite best efforts and noble intentions for ending wars and conflicts, a post-rickety situation can easily turn critical and lead to a loss in the balance of stability.

Today the ghastly specter of war and conflict continues to torment the globe. From Ukraine to South Sudan, from Colombia to Libya, from Syria to Yemen, from Iraq to Afghanistan and beyond, we see the brutality of an age of catastrophe. In the past three decades, most of you in this room, and myself included, have lived through turbulent times that inform us from within, not something we learned through books and study. We have all endured tragedies, brought up in a traumatic era, and as we speak, have thus far survived! For us, this has at times been dispiriting, shocking, painful.

Let me share with you, my own observations and feelings, in a few words: I was born in peacetime, grew up in tempestuous times, came of age in war and I am now aging in the atmosphere of unending conflict in my native country and elsewhere. I lived during a number of wars in Afghanistan, the Soviet invasion, and I fled the country when the extremists took over. Waves of infighting destroyed people, country and state. I experienced arrest, torture, and suffered in different phases of war and conflict. I became displaced and homeless; lost everything that I had owned; turned into a refugee; adopted by another country; all despite my own ceaseless efforts to report, to write, and to fight as part of the greater effort to restore normalcy to where I lived. I joined efforts to end a continuous war and unite all groups after 2001, with hope for sustaining peace in a land that suffered immense devastation. Despite our best efforts, I witness, now again, the return of an unremitting war. I suffer, thinking whether or not I will live long enough to see peace and stability in my homeland. My intention is to express, that I understand what it is to survive calamity and the difficulties that must be overcome to build trust in a society in the wake of tragedy. I am no stranger to the pain which people may have experienced in this room; I say this with all my heart.

"Leading with compassion, understanding, and clarity is what is needed to build a better future, a future which can only be shaped by you. It is time to organise the future, not simply to mourn the past."

It is important to know how wars and conflicts affect people and how people can contribute collectively to shape a different future.

Distinguished guests and friends,

War and conflict are not just personal experiences. It is important to know how wars and conflicts affect people and how people can contribute collectively to shape a different future. Let me start with a statement that is obvious: the most recent conflicts in the Balkans were triggered during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1980s and 1990s. Paradoxically, the situation followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union, in a period of the new optimism, which some even described as "*the end of history*". This incongruity shocked many people; the phantoms of conflict were the nightmare of Europe, in stark contrast to idealised hopes after the fall of the communist bloc. Of course, many factors contributed to the disintegration and wars of Yugoslavia, including a crisis of central-federal authority; the rise of nationalism and ethno-nationalism; and economic instability, and I will not try to rehearse the complexity of this history. What is perhaps most relevant today is to highlight that ideologies of the past, such as forming the country within ethnic national boundaries, nurtured new nationalistic movements; and that ethnic nationalism became the essential mobilising force of numerous wars. This pattern echoes in so many post-communist transitions and conflict zones over the last 30 years. Of course, some common misinterpretations from outside attributed Yugoslavia's wars to a unique "*Balkan logic*" – the "*otherness*" of the Balkans, with the wrong perception of seeing the region as lacking experience or disinclined toward tolerance. Such prejudiced opinions claimed the region was "*not really*" Europe that "*these people*" had killed one another throughout their history. To understand these wars without simplistic prejudices, it is vital to recognise how ethnic-nationalism functions, and acknowledge that ethnicity has become a prominent tool of politics, especially in the post-cold war era.

Managing difference through acceptable ways for people, including integration can be complex, but doable, and it is what governments should focus on.

As I have described, war and upheaval produce pain, hatred, and the breakdown of human relations. Conflict distorts the past; it breeds intolerance. While we cannot ignore history, what is most important is how we get to recognise and understand it truthfully. We must ensure that we do not reinterpret it at the cost of our present and our future. The past sometimes seems irrecoverable, but the future can still be imagined and designed. While it is wrong to invite people simply to forget the past, it is right to call for the possibility of a better common life and common future.

Wars and conflicts continue and persist, strangely in a time when humankind arrived at a historical peak of technologies and capabilities to shape the world; this is a paradox that requires collective wisdom and leadership to resolve. Despite the global leaps forward, ethnic-nationalism has become one of the major political factors driving calamity and challenging stability across the world. In our modern history, nationalist and ethno-national factors were behind multiple atrocious conflicts that wrought devastation, destruction, and tragedy.

A recent major study concluded that while only 20% of the wars between 1815 and 1919 resulted from ethno-nationalism; nearly 50% of the wars from 1919 to the start of the 21st century were rooted in ethno-nationalism. In the period since the collapse of the Soviet Union, 75% of all wars and conflicts are classified as largely ethno-national in character. As we can see, the impact of ethno-nationalism and nationalism in modern Europe is historical. As the saying goes, “The chickens of World War I came home to roost,” not only in Europe, but also in the Middle East, by the collapse of the multi-ethnic Hapsburg, Ottoman and Russian Empires in 1917-18, embodied in the very nature of the post-war settlements.

As one historian has underlined, the essence of this transition was the Wilsonian idea of “self-determination,” which determined the remodeling of Europe -- and in different ways Russia and the Middle East -- into ethnic-linguistic territorial states. The Leninist theory of nations, upon which the Soviet Union and later Yugoslavia were constructed, was also essentially the same. As a result, since 1989, we saw 16 new states emerge from the wreckage of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

These days, one can also easily see the identity politics in a combination of ethno-religious activities of Islamist jihadists and others in the Middle East, North Africa and other parts of the world. On the other hand, ethnic diversity does not necessarily result in war, as we can see from the presence of so many diverse ethnic groups in Europe, with a total population over 100 million, who have found a way to peaceful coexistence and prosperity. There are many other examples around the world. It is also telling that identity politics can be managed peacefully if a consensus emerges for a shared narrative of the past, along with a strong will for a collective existence.

What is the solution to deal with the destructive impact of ethnic nationalism as we arrive at this stage of “post-national constellation”? To draw sustenance for coexistence, a changing world requires a different thinking for a new era. We see in some parts of the world, how an egalitarian approach, preserving equal rights and separate identities, namely language and religion, has worked. This outlook has clearly been more effective, better than forcibly addressing the differences, organising a “group” or “groups” at the cost of disorganising the other. Managing difference through acceptable ways for people, including integration can be complex, but doable, and what I believe governments should focus on. I would like to underline the tremendous cooperative tendency of human kind, not to be underestimated; despite the historical facts of brutalities and atrocities by so many.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Achieving societal reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict can be even harder because the relationship between groups has been so severely fractured, not to mention the destruction of institutions. Moving from societal reconciliation to increasing trust, first and foremost, requires the acceptance of all individuals’ rights to co-exist. If tolerance and compromise cannot easily be achieved in the aftermath of conflict, they can be promoted within the process of trust-building.

The framework of trust-building should focus on fostering understanding and strengthening the means for conflict resolution. These are achievable objectives when people start to look forward and to free themselves from the burdens of the past. Enhancing trust between groups requires a strong faith in the need for reconciliation and often the prospect of a larger framework for working together, including among other things: the reinforcement of democratic institutions, free and fair elections, power-sharing, good governance and services, the administration of justice and the rule of law, respect for human rights, and meaningful discourse.

The main important lesson from all conflict is how to make sure that the political agreements will not end up simply as empty shells, leaving the conflict ready to resume at any time. Based on what we have learned from other global experiences, fostering societal reconciliation and trust-building are central to ensuring violent conflict does not recur. A widely cited example of this is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission framework of South Africa, a departure from the “victor’s justice” concept of Nuremberg after World War II. This new model focussed on restitution, and not revenge in the face of the violent past, offering its well-known tenet “forgive but not forget”.

In fact most significant were the negotiations that ended the Apartheid regime, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (“CODESA”), which preceded the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Columbia University Professor Mahmood Mamdani, highlighted in his close analysis that the “key to the post-Apartheid transition was not an exchange of amnesty for truth but amnesty for the willingness to reform”. It was that central reform that led to a way forward, juridically and politically, post-Apartheid. Mamdani emphasises that the CODESA negotiations changed the perspective of former combatants and led to a progression away from criminalising or demonising the “other” to treating it as a peaceful political adversary.

This involved both sides shifting from the best to the second best alternative for both sides in the conflict. In Mamdani’s view, this evolution was about different forms of justice and of reconciliation, criminal, political, and social. CODESA, in reality, prioritised political justice that focused on affected groups, whereas criminal justice targeted individuals. That allowed South Africa to move away from Apartheid by turning enemies into political adversaries. Mamdani’s view on focusing on political and social justice can provide a helpful basis for prioritisation of the future.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

However, if a people do not want to undermine their future it is more important to re-energise the focus on trust-building before creating a shared narrative of history. For Kosovo, and generally the Western Balkans, it may still be too soon to agree on a shared narrative of history. The focus is now on the present, and on building a better foundation for the future.

The world is big enough to live together and co-exist. We have a responsibility to ensure that our children will not go through the violent moments we have experienced. Let me re-emphasise that there is an intrinsic relation between overcoming mistrust and building trust, if conditions are created and mechanisms made available. A crucial step to overcome mistrust would be to better manage and not seek to eliminate differences, whether between majority or non-majority communities, large or small.

It is a big challenge to find the balance between peace and justice in all post-conflict situations. But in order to avoid any return to conflict and violence, the only answer is to establish a social climate conducive to better understanding, promoting dialogue among all groups, turning enemies into political rivals or even partners, based on acknowledging mutual needs, rights and obligations as well as justice in broad terms: criminal, political, and social. The international community helped the people and communities of Kosovo to take important steps after the height of the conflict: promoting dialogue, understanding, developing grassroots structures for peace, advancing collaborative activities and many more. It is now time to take these efforts to a new level.

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END

2. Address by the United Nations Assistant Secretary General Mrs. Bintou Keita

At the outset, I wish to thank the United Nations mission in Kosovo, UNMIK, as well as the UN Kosovo Team, and our international partners – especially the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – for joining hands in convening this Trust-building Forum. I would also like to thank the Government of Slovenia for their support and warm welcome to us in Ljubljana, and SRSG Zahir Tanin for inviting me to attend the Forum.

Above all, though, I would like to thank you – the participants, who came from all over Kosovo and spend a few days with us in Ljubljana, to discuss ways to build and strengthen mutual trust and understanding.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Bintou Keita. Since last November, I have been serving as Assistant Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, which means that I am responsible, at UN headquarters in New York, for providing guidance and advice to all 14 United Nations peacekeeping operations, including UNMIK. This is my first visit to the region in my new capacity, and I look forward to coming back again in mid-June, when I plan to visit Belgrade, Pristina and also, hopefully, Mitrovica.

What do we do in UN peacekeeping? Under the overall guidance of the Secretary-General, we strive to prevent conflict; help parties in conflict achieve peace, and create the conditions to enable peace to hold and flourish. These are ambitious goals that can hardly be achieved in the space of a decade. Based on my own experience in post-conflict settings, I can tell you that it takes at least a generation for the seeds of peace to grow roots and bear fruit.

There is no doubt that Kosovo has come a long way since 1999 – of which you should all be proud. Twenty years may seem like a long time. Yet, painful, traumatic memories can still be vivid in our minds after twenty years, making us still fearful of neighbors, who were once our enemies.



Wars can end, and peace agreements can be signed within a year, or less; but establishing trust between former opponents cannot happen from one day to another.

This is why UN peacekeeping operations sometimes remain in place for years after a conflict has ended: to help establish a culture of peace at all levels of society. If we are to succeed in building durable peace, we must ensure that individuals and communities of diverse backgrounds are able to live and to work together constructively. If they cannot learn to trust each other, peace will remain fragile and may not last.

No outside actor, however, – not even the United Nations – can build peace alone. We can only do it if we work in partnership with you – local community leaders and representatives.

I therefore welcome the efforts made by SRSG Tanin and UNMIK, over the past few years, to work more closely with community leaders, such as yourselves, in order to promote greater trust among communities from the ground up. And I thank you, our partners at the local level, for working with our mission in the service of all communities in Kosovo.

This initiative was designed for this purpose: for us to work together and develop recommendations for promoting tolerance, understanding and cooperation across all communities in Kosovo. In this respect, our Forum should not be viewed as a stand-alone event, but as part of an ongoing trust-building process in Kosovo. I hope that the recommendations that we shall develop over the next two days will translate into concrete initiatives that will put Kosovo more firmly on the path of inclusive and sustainable peace.

You have already been part of this trust-building process through your past efforts. I thus count on you to help us not only develop, but also implement concrete measures to build long-term trust and understanding among residents in Kosovo. The UN is here to provide further support but this is an event – and a process – that belongs to you, the community leaders and the people of Kosovo.

I look forward to speaking with and learning from you over the next two days. Wish you all a successful event.

UNMIK has re-calibrated its focus, shifting towards a greater role working with municipal authorities and communities at the local-level in promoting confidence and trust. I thus welcome this Forum – an initiative by UNMIK and the UN Kosovo Team, working together with Kosovo counterparts and international partners – aimed at promoting local-level intercommunal trust throughout Kosovo, through dialogue, engagement and mutual respect.

You, as participants in this Forum, carry an important role and responsibility: to shape the prospects for a genuine and durable peace in Kosovo. You have been identified as important innovators and catalysts for change, representing a wide spectrum of Kosovo society, including local government, civil society, religious, academia, media, as well as youth and women's groups. I acknowledge, in particular, the presence of many of Kosovo's mayors as well as government officials.

This is your event, and I wish you well in your efforts to chart out a roadmap for a lasting, trust-building process in Kosovo. I applaud you for your engagement and commitment to work together and I encourage you to do so harmoniously and constructively, with mutual respect and understanding, in ensuring that conditions of trust and mutual prosperity prevail in Kosovo.

I wish the Forum great success.

Thank you.

I place conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the core of the United Nations efforts to address peace and security challenges around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a sincere pleasure to welcome you all to the United Nations Kosovo Trust-building Forum.

As you are aware, I place conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the core of the United Nations efforts to address peace and security challenges around the world. It is precisely at the grassroots and local-level where effective preventive diplomacy can be forged.





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UNITED NATIONS KOSOVO TRUST-BUILDING FORUM

Prishtina, 6 May 2017



