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Strategy 2021 - 2025
A Resilient Peace

Abbreviated Version

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President's Foreword

Interpeace's Strategy for the next five years comes at a time of profound change and stress at the global level, but equally of opportunity for peacebuilding and for Interpeace as an organization. The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated a multi-faceted global crisis, causing a sharp global economic decline, straining multilateral cooperation, and triggering new conflicts while exacerbating existing ones. Even as reliable vaccines start to emerge in 2021, we can state with some certainty that the next five years - the period of this Strategy - will be profoundly influenced by the secondary effects of the pandemic and by tensions related to the response effort.

In the midst of such volatility, our intention is to enhance *Resilience for Peace* - at the grass-roots, at the level of States, and within the international system at large – in order to underpin more peaceful and prosperous societies worldwide. The dividend of this emphasis on resilience is a peace that delivers on the aspirations of citizens, that is tailored to its context, and that outlives our own involvement.

We will work with a wide range of partners to *Rethink Peace*, both to influence how the world conceives and implements peace processes, and how peacebuilding is financed. We will also ensure that we demonstrate, with evidence, the central relevance of trust, resilience and inclusion to the social contracts of our societies.

In that pursuit, we will *Enhance Resilience for Peace* and inspire governance systems to become more connected and accountable to the communities they serve. We will seek concrete changes in people's lives by enhancing safety and security and ensuring that our peacebuilding efforts deliver tangible improvements to their lives and livelihoods. To that end, Interpeace will dedicate its efforts to improving relationships of trust within divided communities and between citizens and their State institutions.

We will seek to *Embed and Institutionalize Peace* in institutions of the State in order to take our impacts to scale and ensure their sustainability. And we will have a multiplier effect by seizing opportunities to influence the work of other, larger organizations in fields such as health, food security, education, human rights and humanitarian affairs.

All of this will require us to work as *'One Interpeace'*[1], with a greater presence on the ground, and to build on our International Organization status, which enables us to secure stronger political engagement at national and international levels. Innovation, adaptability and accountability will be the guiding principles of our organization's management. We will not achieve this alone and plan to expand our partnerships internationally and locally, and to diversify and grow our resource base.

This document reflects a *careful prioritization* grounded in a realistic assessment of anticipated resources and those we can grow with the support of our donors. This Strategy will be broken down in more detailed annual workplans, approved by the Governing Board, that will reflect the evolving context and donor environment, and will define more precisely our available resources, specific results and the evidence of impact to be achieved each year in progressing towards our five-year Aims and Objectives and our 2025 Vision.

We look forward with enthusiasm to implementing this Strategy with partners in order to achieve the positive, measurable peacebuilding impact that it offers to communities at the local level through to the international system at the global level.

Scott M. Weber

President
Interpeace

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1   One Interpeace is an Institutional priority designed to ensure that Interpeace and its various teams, offices and functions operate in a unified way.

Strategic Context

In the past ten years, the world has seen levels of conflict unprecedented since the Cold War. Two thirds of all humanitarian crises are now conflict-related. Several key measures of positive peace are in regression,[2] reflecting a decline in media freedom, rising levels of political polarization and increasing mistrust in economic systems and governance institutions. The perpetuation of systemic polarization, discrimination, exclusion and inequality is increasing social tensions within countries in the Global North and South. These trends have led to an erosion of shared commitment to a set of commonly held norms and values and especially commitments to fundamental human rights.

The multi-dimensional crisis unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated matters, having an impact not only on public health systems and livelihoods but on social contracts worldwide. In many countries, the response to the pandemic has been instrumentalized to curtail basic rights and freedoms, exacerbating existing inequalities and inducing new conflict.

Despite these troublesome trends, there is reason for hope. Poverty rates as well as rates of maternal and infant mortality have been decreasing over the last decade, the human development indices of nearly all countries are improving, and technological advances have enhanced social connectivity and access to information around the world. 'New power' social protest movements are intensifying worldwide and are emerging as a powerful force for social change. These shifts herald transformative opportunities for innovative peacebuilding that can leverage citizen participation and agency to shape new social contracts. And young people are making powerful demands for change and voicing priorities, such as the fights against climate change and for social equality, that transcend national borders and political parties.

But while we have become more connected and globalized, a wave of counter-globalization movements has fueled a rise in nationalism and populism, and a return to Great Power confrontation. Conflicts are more internationalized and this interference makes it ever more difficult for local stakeholders to drive their own peacebuilding processes. Other trends that will influence peacebuilding efforts in coming years include: the increasing securitization of peace, dominated by a focus on countering violent extremism; record levels of forced migration; the devastating effects of climate change; and rising food insecurity.

In a world in transition, the principles and operational models of peacebuilding will be compelled to evolve. Peacebuilding, and peacemaking more generally, must undergo an important process of re-appraisal. In our view, the success and sustainability of peace will depend even more than before on strengthening local and national *resilience for peace.*[3]

The time is ripe for this reset. International normative policy frameworks for peacebuilding have been strengthened in recent years. The Sustaining Peace resolutions of the United Nations, Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Youth Peace Security Resolution (2250) and follow-up to the Women, Peace and Security Resolution (1325), and the Triple Nexus discourse emerging from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, have all been significant bright spots that have sustained momentum and support for peacebuilding work.

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2 'Positive peace' refers to the attitudes, institutions, norms that support non-violent resolution of grievances and the legitimacy of political, social and economic systems. 'Negative peace' is the absence of violence or the fear of violence.
3 See page 8.

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The common thread in these positive policy developments is that they all position peacebuilding as a key approach that a much broader array of actors in other fields can adopt. Peacebuilding is indeed best understood as a way of doing which ensures that other priority issues (governance, justice, development) are carried out in a manner that improves people's lives, building legitimacy and trust. The opportunity now presents itself to establish partnerships to bring to each of these sectors a focused peacebuilding lens and an operational accompaniment designed to improve their actions and demonstrate their contribution to peace.[4]

Financing of the peacebuilding sector will be under great strain in the next five years due to the global economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and diversion of resources to domestic priorities and humanitarian imperatives abroad. Yet the global challenges referenced above will require more peacebuilding work, not less. Mobilizing political and financial support commensurate with these growing needs will require peacebuild-

ing organizations to demonstrate, with more evidence, that they are improving the lives of citizens and doing so on a larger scale.. There is also a growing donor interest in blended finance solutions that bring public and private sectors together by designing initiatives that achieve political, social and economic outcomes in support of peace.

If the current context and forecast can be described as complex, changing, and uncertain, then peacebuilders themselves need to become more flexible and adaptable in the years ahead. Successful and sustainable peace will continue to depend on effective engagement at all levels of society: grassroots, national, regional and international. In a resource-constrained world, peacebuilding actors will need to increase further their efforts to forge dynamic partnerships, innovate, and reach out actively and creatively to key audiences and actors in their domains. Such an approach will ensure that peacebuilding continues to be relevant, meaningful and impactful in its time.

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4   This is the focus of Interpeace's Peace Responsiveness initiative.

Mandate

Interpeace's mandate[4] has two dimensions, in order of priority:

1	To strengthen the capacities of societies to manage conflict in non-violent, non-coercive ways by assisting national actors in their efforts to develop social and political cohesion.

2	To assist the international community (and in particular the United Nations) to play a more effective role in supporting peacebuilding efforts around the world.

Vision and Strategic Aims 2021-2025

Vision

A world in which enduring peace is evident in the cohesion and resilience of citizens, the diversity and inclusion of communities, and the responsiveness and trustworthiness of State institutions.

Strategy 2021-2025: A Resilient Peace

Think	**Rethink Peace.** The ways we build, assess, and fund peace.
Do	**Enhance Resilience for Peace.** We will broaden our reach; seek to strengthen the resilience of communities and the trustworthiness of State institutions; and champion inclusion, justice, and the economic dimensions of peacebuilding.
Sustain	**Embedding Peace.** We will seek to institutionalise peace in State behaviour and in the international system, and put self-sustainability at the core of every peacebuilding strategy.

4 At the request of the Governing Board, Interpeace is revising the language of the mandate. Once approved, changes will be reflected in the organization's statutes and other policy documents.

Resilience for Peace
A red thread

Resilience for Peace is the 'red thread' throughout Interpeace's Strategy 2021-2025. It is manifest in our programmatic engagements in conflict-affected societies and in our efforts to create systemic change at international level.

Unlike a natural disaster such as an earthquake or an extreme weather event – external shocks – conflict is an *internal shock* to society, affecting relationships of trust and collaboration between groups and between the population and the State. In countries affected by conflict, the traditional approaches to resilience advanced by the disaster recovery field seek restoration of the *status quo ante*, an outcome that is neither possible nor desirable because it would represent a return to the dynamics that contributed to, or were caused by, the conflict in the first place. *Resilience for Peace* should ultimately be about *transforming* one's circumstances for the better while also anticipating new risks, thereby achieving conflict transformation and more effective prevention. *Resilience for Peace* is not a narrow concept that merely equips individuals and communities to cope with, endure or survive adversity, but is rather about positively leveraging and complementing their capacities to grow from adversity and 'build back better'.

Resilience for Peace can be defined as an outcome and process that addresses sources of risk by identifying and enhancing the diverse attributes, capacities and resources that enable individuals, communities, institutions and societies to deal peacefully with grievances in a non-violent way while preventing new patterns of conflict and violence.

We also know that in the absence of available channels for the positive expression of resilience – and even where these may exist – resilience has the potential to take *negative forms* that can foster rather than prevent violence and conflict. Examples include entrenched systems of corruption that trade on crisis, cohesive forms of belonging maintained by violence (such as gangs, and militarized and repressive responses to crisis), and the 'othering' of groups held responsible for one's situation of precarity. *Resilience for Peace* requires an approach that recognizes and enhances positive sources of resilience but also intentionally focuses on the transformation of negative forms of resilience as well.

Practically, Interpeace's *Resilience for Peace* lens means that our programmes and policy will continue to focus consciously on what is positively functioning in society, will aim to look forward to the future rather than just backward, and will leverage the local agency and capacities of communities to take the lead in transforming their situations.

Interpeace's "Track 6" Approach

Local communities, civil society and political elites often try individually to resolve problems and conflicts that need to be addressed collectively if solutions are to endure. In the absence of such collaboration, success is fleeting at best. Most peacebuilding efforts are pitched at one or another of these levels, but they rarely focus on them together, let alone on the crucial links between them. Consequently, impactful local processes can lack political buy-in, influence and sustainability, and national policies can be seen as illegitimate or disconnected, stymieing implementation. External actors, too, can only foster real change if their work is rooted in the alignment of local and national stakeholders.

Interpeace's "Track 6" approach overcomes this deficiency in peacebuilding strategies by (a) ensuring local voices are not only audible but influential in shaping policies at national and international levels, while at the same time (b) supporting leadership to engage citizens in the policy process.

A "Track 6" approach deliberately and systematically connects people and their perspectives in various "tracks" (1 + 2 + 3 = 6):

Track 1: Political elites and decision-makers at both national and international levels.

Track 2: Civil society and local government, influencers, think tanks, the private sector and researchers.

Track 3: Local communities and individuals in the broader population.

By this means, citizens gain experience of governance processes that affect them, and have the opportunity to speak up and contribute to them. Civil society, local government and informal institutions play a bridging role and compress the distances between authorities and the people. And leaders recognize that their own success and accountability is realized and enhanced by the depth of ownership of those most affected by national policies.

Strengthening the links, and understanding, between the different levels of society by means of this "Track 6" approach is an integral part of Interpeace's peacebuilding.
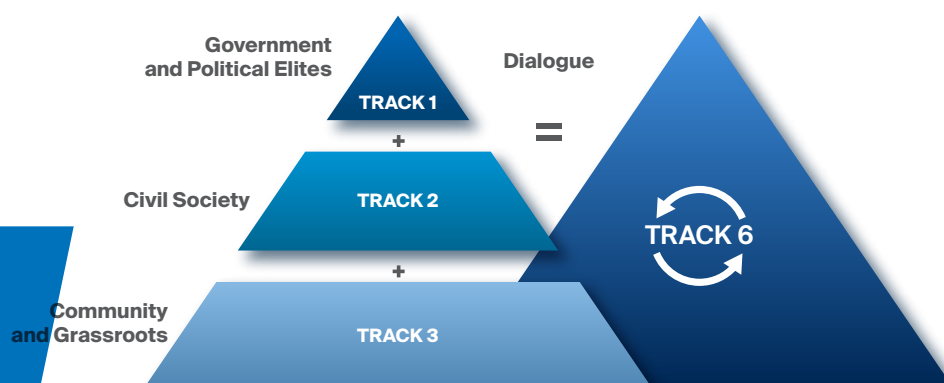
Strategic Aims: 2021-2025

Interpeace will assess its contribution in terms of how it saves or improves the lives of ordinary citizens in countries affected by conflict. This work will be done at scale, seeking to create systemic change that will positively affect the lives of as many people as possible. Whenever possible, Interpeace will embed and institutionalize change that is achieved (in traditional, local, regional, national and international systems) so that it outlives the organization's involvement

Strategic Aim 1: Rethinking Peace

The ways we build, assess, and fund peace.

Despite significant achievements in the peacebuilding sector over the last decade, the parameters that determine how peace processes are designed, implemented and monitored need to be reassessed and adjusted. Needed with equal urgency is a framework that can assess whether security, development and peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected countries truly contribute to resilience for peace and apply evidence to shape better actions. At the same time, funding for peacebuilding, currently of very limited scope and delivered in short-term increments, remains misaligned with medium and long-term peacebuilding processes and the scale of need. Innovative financing solutions will be required that incentivize the private and public sectors to work together to leverage their resources for change.

Objective 1.1 - Re-frame peace processes

Some of the fundamental underlying assumptions that govern peace processes are disproven by practice, yet they stubbornly perpetuate themselves from one context to another. As a result, countries become victims of peace processes that are poorly designed and executed. Subsidiary interventions, such as peacekeeping or stabilization missions, are then destined to fail because there can be no peace to keep. If we are to significantly improve the effectiveness of peace processes, a fundamental re-examination is needed to make them fit for purpose on the basis of lessons learned about what makes peace sustainable.

Our Principles for Peace initiative will seek to reset the parameters and reference points for the conception and execution of peace processes in the future. Having confirmed funding for the initiative, Interpeace launched the Principles for Peace initiative in 2020 just before the term of this Strategy began. The enthusiasm it has attracted from a wide spectrum of organizations and partners across the peacebuilding space confirms our analysis that the current frames of reference for the conduct of peace processes are often out of tune with what the field of peacebuilding and peacemaking has learned over the last 25 years.

Objective 1.2 - Assess trust, resilience and inclusion

At ground level in conflict-affected societies, efforts in the areas of governance, security, development, justice and peacebuilding are unable to assess whether their cumulative effect is to increase peace (understood in broad terms) or sustain instability. In the absence of such measurement, authorities (and donors) lack a method to assess what is moving in the right direction and what is not. Most important of all is to assess how the resilience of society evolves, for example by analyz-

ing the prevalence of core life skills, task-specific competences, access to resources, adaptive institutions, and social cohesion. Cutting across all of these are other factors, including trust between communities and between the people and their State, and the degree of inclusion of minorities or excluded groups, such as women and youth. If such a method were contextualized in each country, it would significantly shape our collective understanding of 'progress' and help us to prioritize effort and investment.

Interpeace will establish and roll-out a Trust, Resilience and Inclusion (TRI) Barometer in its countries of intervention and will use TRI findings to support its own programming. Increasingly, it will also use the findings to assist governmental authorities, local communities and international supporters to adjust their strategies to enhance the same factors. A special emphasis will be placed on the inclusion of women and youth. Interpeace will develop a TRI Barometer methodology, building on (a) our Frameworks for Assessing Resilience work and its more recent enhancement, (b) our Governance Barometer methodology, and (c) our SCORE methodology for assessing the quality of reconciliation, and other relevant methods.

Objective 1.3 - Changing the way peace is funded

As development cooperation budgets shrink, it is projected that in coming years funding for peacebuilding will be curtailed. Given this trend, and the fact that donor and recipient countries alike are prioritizing transitions from aid to trade and to other counter-dependency entry points for growth and development, now is the time to create opportunities for the private sector to invest in peaceful change. Drawing in the private sector as an investor as well as a donor, and creating incentives for economic development strategies to complement social and political ones, can have a catalytic effect. To achieve this, innovative structures, new programming approaches and new partnerships will need to be established.

Over the next five years, Interpeace will build on existing and new partnerships to promote innovative financing for peace and peacebuilding. In particular, it will explore the possibility of drawing in private and institutional investors as well as stimulating development agencies to orient funding towards peace-related development and growth.

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Strategic Aim 2: Enhancing Resilience for Peace

We will broaden our reach; seek to strengthen the resilience of communities and the trustworthiness of relevant State institutions; and champion inclusion, justice and the economic dimensions of peacebuilding.

Resilience for peace is central to the ability of communities to manage their divisions and tensions legitimately, inclusively and non-violently. Peacebuilding at community level could be far more impactful if it harnessed, organized and supported the energy and commitment of local people to make their own communities more cohesive and prosperous. At the same time, Interpeace will not invest its efforts solely at local level, but will also seek to enhance transformative resilience at institutional and national levels, giving special attention to the relationship of security services and citizens.

Overcoming the barriers to inclusion that keep youth and women from participating fully in society - and from making their contributions to peace - will be another important focus. Long overlooked, inclusive economic and development solutions to buttress peacebuilding efforts will be integrated into our work. Similarly, Interpeace's programmes and policies will focus more on the central importance of justice and human rights to the pursuit of lasting peace.

Objective 2.1 - Expanding our global scope of our engagement and the breadth of our local networks

As the number and complexity of conflicts increase in the next five years, Interpeace's Track 6 form of peacebuilding, linking bottom-up engagement with top-down political influence strategies, will have greater relevance and potential. Interpeace will broaden its geographic engagements beyond Africa and diversify the contexts in which it contributes to peacebuilding and enriches its learning. Interpeace will prioritize exploration in the Middle East, but will also give attention to opportunities in Asia, Latin America and developed countries.

Community resilience for peace requires an embedded capacity to identify tensions early and facilitate processes of conflict prevention or mitigation. Government structures and strategies for conflict prevention are important, but so too are comparable capacities at local level where problems often begin. Interpeace's experience, and that of other organizations, shows that local community members are very ready to contribute their time and reputations to the work of local peace committees and other forms of conflict management.

In the last 15 years, Interpeace has successfully piloted a range of country-specific models of local peacebuilding. They include: (a) Permanent Dia-

logue Clubs in Rwanda and in the Democratic Republic of Congo; (b) The *Espaces Régionaux de Dialogue* in Guinea-Bissau; and more recently (c) a national network of local Change Agents across Libya. Carefully composed of trusted members of local communities, these networks have successfully defused or resolved local conflicts before they could escalate. A longitudinal evaluation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund's programming since its creation in 2005 echoes this experience. It revealed that the UN Peacebuilding Fund's most consistently impactful work embedded conflict resolution capacities in local communities. Building on these positive experiences, Interpeace will formalize this practice and establish networks of local change agents across local communities in our countries of intervention.

The growth of Interpeace's geographical coverage worldwide and the range of actors with whom it will engage in future, especially young people, will require the organization to adapt its methodological approaches and tools. In particular, the digital space has become a new geography and we will need to explore the options it offers to be meaningfully active, consultative and engaged, and reach target audiences and peacebuilding stake-

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holders. Interpeace will start to explore integration of peacebuilding strategies in the digital space at systemic level, and will also examine how the digital space can be navigated to the best effect and with the most impact in support of peacebuilding programming, policy and thought leadership.

Objective 2.2 - Safer communities and more trustworthy security institutions

Violence in communities can have complex, structural origins that must be understood and acknowledged if effective solutions are to be found. This is all the more important because violence mutates as circumstances change and misaligned security strategies can be counter-productive. Whenever possible, efforts must be made to engage the individuals who perpetuate violence with a view to transforming them into agents of peace. It is also imperative to work with local and traditional authorities to assist them to develop genuine human security strategies that align with national security plans.

At the same time, where government is absent or neglects to protect communities, a void is created that self-defence groups or violent extremists will seek to fill. The presence of such insurgent elements then sets off a chain reaction of hard-fisted interventions by the State, further reinforcing mis-trust and resentment and escalating the problem further. What may begin as a deficit in governance can quickly spiral into a multi-faceted conflict too complex for national actors to solve themselves, which can spill over porous borders into neighboring countries. Efforts to address deficient governance and security relationships between the State and communities make an essential contribution to conflict prevention and enhance resilience for peace.

Interpeace will build on its former work to establish partnerships with security institutions (police, military, etc.) and influence their behaviour vis-à-vis the population (especially youth). Effecting change in such institutions requires access to, and the trust of, their leaderships; the change process needs to be led by officials from within the institutions.

Objective 2.3 - Enhancing inclusion and justice

Recognizing that political, social and economic exclusion and injustice are at the origin of most conflict dynamics, it is important to identify and address the structural barriers to inclusion of different groups in society, especially youth and women. As envisaged in the UN's *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*, young people will be in the driving seat of efforts to encourage their engagement. Beyond any one form of exclusion, sustainable peace must be underpinned by determined efforts to advance pluralism and equality, eliminate discrimination, and promote justice and reconciliation.

Interpeace will assist countries to define and/or implement their Women, Peace and Security strategies and their Youth, Peace and Security strategies. We will build on our experience of youth programming and strengthen our ability to integrate entrepreneurship and skill-development with civic engagement opportunities and life-skills training as well as peace education. Interpeace will champion diversity and inclusion in all its programmatic and policy work.

We will also focus deliberately on the relationship between human rights and peacebuilding, both at the programmatic level and when shaping policy frameworks, in order to demonstrate their inter-dependence, overcome the separation between these two fields, and pursue opportunities to advance their common objectives.

Objective 2.4 - Integrating economic peacebuilding

Economic peacebuilding is the search to align the economic development vision of national actors with political peace and the greater social good of the community. It presumes a determined effort to economically include otherwise marginalized groups through the provision of tailored development and growth opportunities. Communities feel that their participation and commitment to the process of building peace has had positive outcomes if they obtain development outcomes as a result. They will also be motivated to defend and protect the peace from those who may seek to destabilize it.

Interpeace will integrate an economic peacebuilding dimension in its Country Strategies and will explore partnerships to advance this agenda. In addition, Country Strategies will include development components in their dialogue processes, while taking care to ensure that our change processes are never driven by an economic or development imperative, so as not to create negative incentives. Partnerships with national and international development agencies will also be explored.

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Strategic Aim 3: Embedding Peace

We will seek to institutionalise peace in State behaviour and in the international system, and put self-sustainability at the core of every peacebuilding strategy.

To build, maintain and nurture peace, peace must be embedded in the behaviour of a State's formal institutions towards its citizens, and become natural to its manner of governing. A culture of peace requires a sustainable national infrastructure for peace, that allows societies and States to resolve conflicts internally using their own skills, institutions and resources. If peacebuilding is to be lasting, have impact and be anchored in engagement with authorities, it must therefore go beyond work with civil society and communities. Formal partnerships with State institutions are crucial to a successful Track 6 strategy and to peacebuilding that lives up to its own values and principles.

Peacebuilding outcomes are not only achieved by peacebuilders; collaboration between sectors is essential. It is what ensures, for instance, that structural shifts in the ODA[5] system inform the way aid is planned and financed and whether it meets the needs of the most vulnerable, including in conflict contexts. To achieve behaviour change and have a cumulative effect on peace, it is essential to adapt collaborative approaches and focus on influencing the institutional requirements and incentives of each organization. It is necessary to embed resilience-oriented, participatory and local approaches in the actions and behaviours of development and humanitarian actors so that their actions more effectively contribute to peace.

Ultimately, Interpeace must ensure that its impact is designed to last beyond the organization's involvement. This means that, in addition to embedding change in institutions, our strategies must include self-sustainable business planning. By modelling this ourselves, we hope to influence the way the wider peacebuilding, development and humanitarian sectors do their work.

Objective 3.1 - Anchoring change in States

Peacebuilding processes have traditionally focused more on civil society and grassroots communities, and have struggled to anchor change in political processes at senior level and in State institutions. Ultimately, however, any hope of taking change processes to scale and of sustaining an improved social contract requires the State to own such policies, not just meaningfully participate in them. It is also worth noting that most governments in conflict countries lack a dedicated ministerial or para-statal capacity to advance a national agenda of peace and social cohesion. Where these agendas do exist, States often lack the technical capacity or experience to design and implement peacebuilding capacities at local, regional/provincial and national levels.

Given that in the next five years issues of State sovereignty are likely to become more manifest and more governments will seek to transition from aid to trade, Interpeace's approach, which recognizes that local and national leaders are always 'in the driving seat', positions us well as partners of those governments.

Whenever possible and appropriate, Interpeace will seek direct partnerships with State institutions and will bequeath sustainable national capacities for peace. We will seek to become the key partner of governments that seek to strengthen their national capacities for peace at local and national levels. Our partnerships with national institutions for peace will allow us to convene meetings regularly to share lessons and create a global network of such institutions.

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5   Official development assistance (ODA) is defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

Objective 3.2 - A Peace-Responsive international system

Peacebuilding must be more than a sector on its own. It should be understood as the way development, security, governance, justice and other actions build legitimacy and trust. If we can influence organizations in these other sectors to seek peace outcomes in addition to their technical objectives, we can have a multiplier effect. Doing this will require a dedicated capacity to engage with those organizations and understand the internal incentives and requirements that govern their actions, their funding and their personnel. The Peace Responsiveness team that Interpeace established in 2020, supported by long-term funding from donors, is poised to extend the organization's influence and impact across the international network of agencies.

As an international organization and strategic partner of the UN, Interpeace is uniquely positioned to partner with a range of international agencies to improve their peace responsiveness. This will help to build bridges between the sectors of international assistance by bringing to each of them a focused peacebuilding lens, supported by an operational accompaniment designed to improve their actions and demonstrate their contributions to peace.

Interpeace will grow its Peace Responsiveness capacity not only to influence the policies and actions of far larger organizations with wider footprints than our own, but also to open the door to joint programming and funding for our engagements on the ground.

Objective 3.3 - Modelling peacebuilding's success and sustainability

Many would argue that the work of peace is never done and that the longer an organization remains in a country the greater is its access and ability to influence the situation. Such attitudes perpetuate an organization's presence and allow the availability of donor funding to decide whether an organization continues or exits. To be true to our values and principles, we must define success by our ability to institutionalize the practices of peacebuilding in societies. Modelling a responsible exit strategy will require us, from the inception of a Country Strategy, to set benchmarks of success for each activity and define a business plan that works towards exit

over time. This effort will be greatly aided by the information that the Trust, Resilience and Inclusion Barometer will generate.

Interpeace will very deliberately plan self-sustainability in each component of its Country Strategies and in its resource mobilization requests. Learning from this exit strategy process will be gathered and shared with stakeholders, including donors, in the interest of modelling good peacebuilding practice and strengthening donor confidence in the value for money of their investment.

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Organizational Objectives 2021-2025

We will strengthen One Interpeace; raise our profile, impact and resources through partnerships and outreach; and strengthen systems, standards, accountability and governance.

In pursuing the Strategic Aims, all staff in all locations worldwide will seek to be stronger as a 'One Interpeace' team: to be inclusive, to embrace and celebrate our diversity, to be united and to be supportive of each other. Interpeace staff will also aim to: strengthen the linkages and coherence of programmatic, policy and operational efforts; strengthen and diversify the supporting resource base; lift the organization's profile and impact, adapting to changes in the global communications and media landscapes; and achieve 'best in class' standards of accountability and governance to the greatest extent possible, sharing and giving practical effect to these goals with partners wherever possible.

Organizational Objective 1
"One Interpeace"

Interpeace's greatest asset is its staff. We therefore aim to continue to model the peacebuilding approach that we advocate externally by being strongly inclusive and consultative, taking views into account about institutional direction-setting, decisions and change wherever possible, while bearing in mind that Interpeace is an international organization with responsibilities and accountabilities to a range of external stakeholders and investors and most obviously to the Governing Board. Efforts will continue to be made to strengthen this underlying approach and achieve the objective of a stronger, collective and consultative 'One Interpeace'. It is the institutional cornerstone of success.

Interpeace has made progress in bringing consistency and quality to the recruitment, induction, professional development, and retention of its staff. Investment in staff will be increased, including through a suite of regularly updated human resources policies and procedures, a contemporary remuneration framework, and other support (for

example, external counselling and whistleblowing services). In addition, induction, organizational learning, and skills development will be enhanced in a mutually reinforcing way, using on-line tools and connectivity. Interpeace will also lift the quality of staff performance evaluation and management.

The adoption in 2020 of a Gender Equality Policy reflected progress towards creating and sustaining gender responsiveness. Similarly, a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group was established in 2020 to help the leadership and senior management to strengthen further the culture of diversity and inclusion internally and enhance the quality of Interpeace's field-based peacebuilding and policy work. A headline outcome is the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion framework to guide the organization's human resources policies and procedures and ensure that Interpeace is more diverse in its staff composition. The framework will be underpinned by evidence, in order to drive collective understanding of the change that is required and achieved.

Organizational Objective 2
Raise our profile, impact and resources through partnerships and outreach

Thanks to its status as an international organization, its historic partnership with the United Nations, and its sound reputation in the diverse multilateral environment of Geneva, Interpeace is able to be a key partner for peacebuilding policy and programming. This is evidenced by its fruitful past and present strategic partnerships with several governments that have shared values and peacebuilding objectives.

Whilst competition for limited resources is inevitable in peacebuilding as in other sectors, it is possible to explore and promote synergies to mutual benefit, thereby creating more resources for Interpeace and for peacebuilding at large. In 2020, with a range of partners from the peacebuilding and other sectors, Interpeace successfully created a platform for practical collaboration in support of the Principles for Peace initiative. Further collaborative partnerships for mutual and collective benefit will be explored and advanced.

The Interpeace Advisory Team (IPAT) of external peacebuilding consultants continues to add significant material value to peacebuilding at large and to the quality of Interpeace's work. IPAT is also able to serve as a ground-breaker. It can establish links and foster understanding of Interpeace's approach to peacebuilding, creating an entry point for future programmatic work in the field.

To achieve a number of the objectives of this Strategy, particularly the pursuit of systemic change and improved sustainability of political (Track 1) impacts, in coming years Interpeace will need to raise its profile and activity at the United Nations in New York. Similarly, the European Union has been one of Interpeace's key strategic partners; we have advanced shared values and objectives, each contributing resources according to our means. Interpeace will continue to foster its relationships in Brussels, in the field, and in the capitals of EU member States. Given the location of much of Interpeace's current and potential programmatic work, the African Union will also be an important partner.

It is to be expected that strong social movements will continue to intensify worldwide in the years ahead. These movements vary in their agendas and activism, but many tend to affirm fundamental aspects of the social contract: equal rights, justice, accountability, the fight against racism and discrimination, the role of youth and women in decision-making, and so on. Amplified by diverse media channels, these demands are no longer monopolized by political parties or established organizations. Interpeace will adapt its messaging and outreach to learn from and influence new forms of social organization and reach non-traditional audiences seeking peaceful change. The Peace Talks have been a flagship for Interpeace: to sustain and increase their relevance, value and impact, they will be adapted to meet the changing demands of the communications landscape.

Interpeace's approach to partnerships has evolved; this is especially true of our programmatic work with local partners in the field. Local partners continue to be indispensable in ensuring that peacebuilding is anchored in locally-led design and implementation. They also play a crucial role in sustaining the investments made in peacebuilding. Interpeace will continue to tailor its approach to relationships with local partners. Depending on the peacebuilding context and needs, and the optimum pathway for achieving sustainability of impact, Interpeace will sometimes undertake its field work directly, or together with one or more local partners, and at other times will work in partnership with local civil society organizations, or alternatively with national institutions.

Organizational Objective 3
Strengthen systems, standards, accountability and governance

Interpeace aspires to be among the best governed and administered international organizations. By lifting its standards and organizational performance in recent years, especially the coherence, transparency and accountability of its processes, the organization has gained the confidence of its key stakeholders, made strong progress in launching new and innovative initiatives, and increased investment from donors.

Historically, Interpeace's 'Track 6' methodology has emphasized the Track 3 level (local organizations and communities). In view of the focus of this Strategy on strengthening resilience to achieve sustainable peace at scale, Interpeace will need to invest more, beyond the community level, in national, regional and global levels of decision-making at Track 1 level. This thinking will be reflected in the skills and expertise that Interpeace brings in to the staff establishment, and also in the increased use it will make, periodically, of senior political contacts and other relevant actors and their networks, including members of the Governing Board and Advisory Council.

New tools and channels for communication and connectivity open up new opportunities for individuals and communities to engage personally and actively in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Interpeace will capitalize on this by integrating communications in its programme designs and field-based work, in order to sharpen practical impacts in the field, support learning, and improve peacebuilding practice. To do this, the organization will need to embed new core communication skills and expertise. Likewise, it will strengthen the quality of its design, monitoring, evaluation and learning (whether these are internal or shared externally). A particular effort will be made to create a feedback loop so that results and lessons learned – especially from innovation – are reflected in future programme design and policy formulation. This information will contribute to the overall body of evidence-based results made available for communications, donor reporting, institutional learning and other purposes.

Interpeace's peacebuilding methods were founded on participatory research, underpinned by solid and independent academic analysis. Over the next five years, Interpeace will increase the quality of its research and analytical frameworks (political, economic, sociological, etc.) by integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. The organization will build its internal research capacity, both to ensure consistent quality and to be able to apply its research in programmatic and policy initiatives. The development of the Peace, Resilience and Inclusion barometer will be the practical manifestation and centrepiece of Interpeace's commitment to research and to the quality of its research.

The membership of the Governing Board has continued to evolve, improving gender balance and geographical representation. Diversity brings benefits in both the quality of advice and the direction the Board provides. Support for the Board in discharging its responsibilities will continue to be a core priority.

The Advisory Council reflects Interpeace's unique position, straddling the inter-governmental and non-governmental domains. By assisting the organization to achieve selected institutional goals, the Council will be able to strengthen the relevance and impact of its statutory function, which is to provide strategic advice and guide Interpeace in its positioning with governments. The Council will become larger and more diverse in its membership.

Finally, reflecting Interpeace's commitment of to the highest possible levels of accountability and transparency, and to its own internal culture of 'One Interpeace', it is planned to review this Strategy at the mid-point of 2023 and at the end-point of 2025. The reviews are expected to consider in particular the progress and success of the organization in achieving the Strategy's targets. The reviews are also expected to consider the effectiveness of each of the annual Workplans and Budgets approved by the Board during the five-year period, which give life in more granular detail to the Strategy in a prioritized and affordable way.

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Interpeace's peacebuilding efforts worldwide are possible thanks to strategic partnerships with the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland.

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