

UN in Focus



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As the systemic consequences of the pandemic can be felt around the globe, the heightened risk of widespread sovereign debt distress in lower- and middle-income countries is a particularly urgent concern.

Together with the Consensus Building Institute, FES New York brought together some of the world's foremost experts in the field and convened the [Roundtable on Responding to the Risks of COVID Debt Distress](#). In a new Roundtable Report, the group offers recommendations that could help manage risks and ensure that governments emerging from debt distress can still invest in much-needed sustainable development.

Beyond global health and economics, the social and political consequences of the pandemic have become painfully clear. Among them, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated a [downward spiral of decreasing peace, security, and inclusivity](#) in many parts of the world. During the UN's High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), we joined partners to discuss what can be done to counteract the world's turn towards authoritarianism and other threats to the achievement of SDG 16.

In the aftermath of year one of the Covid pandemic, we are indeed living through a [critical geopolitical juncture](#), a complex redistribution of global power that is shaking the very foundations of the liberal world order.

What does this mean for the future of global cooperation? Much will depend on the political will and fortitude of world leaders. At the United Nations, all eyes are on recently reelected [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) and what he may

achieve in his five-year term to come. In the US, *Joe Biden* is facing a deeply divided nation while seeking to reestablish unity with allies abroad.

We hope you enjoy this issue of UN in Focus and appreciate your feedback.

Sincerely,

Michael Bröning

Director, FES New York



Responding to Risks of COVID Debt Distress

Roundtable Report

July 2021



Roundtable Report: FES New York and the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) jointly convened the *Roundtable on Responding to the Risks of COVID Debt Distress*. In a new report, this group of eminent experts offers recommendations to ensure that governments emerging from debt distress can go on to invest in sustainable development. [Learn more.](#)



Covid vs. Peace & Security? The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated a downward spiral of decreasing peace, security, and inclusivity in many parts of the world. During this year's UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), we teamed up with FriEnt and partners to present the findings from a recent report "[Coming to peace with Covid-19?](#)" and reflect on implications for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. [Learn more.](#)




Critical Juncture: In the aftermath of year one of the Covid pandemic, we are living through a critical geopolitical juncture, a complex redistribution of global power that is shaking the foundations of the liberal world order. Together with FES Argentina, FESNY brought together distinguished experts from government, academia, and civil society to discuss the current shifts in global power dynamics and their regional implications in Latin America. [Learn more.](#)



UN Photo/Mark Garten

What Now, António? In 2016, the election of António Guterres as Secretary-General of the United Nations was an unusually transparent process. In 2021, his reelection was a mere formality. But what can Guterres - now liberated from campaign constraints and able to count on a more supportive US administration - achieve in the five-year term to come? [Learn more.](#)




**FESNY
IN THE
NEWS**

JULY 2021

Media Clippings

Joe Biden & International Cooperation: "How many times can you turn the tables without really damaging the china? These tremors have an eroding effect." -- FESNY director Michael Bröning spoke to [The Guardian](#) about polarization in US politics, how President Biden is viewed overseas, and what it means for international cooperation.



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