



Alliance for
Peacebuilding

PeaceCon 2020 – The Largest U.S. Peacebuilding Conference Yet!

AfP held its largest global conference yet, bringing together peacebuilders from 110 countries and 600+ organizations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

01/12/2020

CONTACT

Linda Zheng | Linda@allianceforpeacebuilding.org



Washington, D.C., USA. – From December 7-9, the [Alliance for Peacebuilding \(AfP\)](#), ranked as the [number one](#) peacebuilding institution influencer and change agent, hosted its annual conference, [PeaceCon 2020](#), *Pandemics, Peace, and Justice: Shaping What Comes Next*. The former President and CEO of AfP, Uzra Zeya, shared these words at PeaceCon 2020 to highlight the organization’s unique approach to conflict prevention:

On the policy front, AfP has advocated a transformative approach that favors peaceful prevention and a departure from the securitized mindset of the last two decades. Transformation requires integrating diplomacy and development and making inclusive peacebuilding a steadfast commitment rather than a slogan.

Over the last 10 years, PeaceCon has become the largest global gathering of peacebuilders held in the United States (U.S.). Over 2,000 registrants from 110 countries and more than



Alliance for Peacebuilding

600 organizations attended the three-day event, reaching nearly 19 million social media users. Of the countries represented at PeaceCon, 74% were from the Global South, along with almost 30% of attendees. Liz Hume, AfP's Acting CEO and President remarked on the success of PeaceCon 2020:

PeaceCon 2020 did not disappoint. Experts, practitioners, and government officials assessed and strategized what is working and not working to reduce and prevent conflict and build sustainable peace including the United States and how injustice and inequality in the wake of COVID is threatening to worsen already rising violent conflict globally.

In partnership with the [United States Institute of Peace](#) (USIP), AfP kicked off day one with [opening remarks](#) by Lise Grande, President and CEO of USIP; Uzra Zeya, former President and CEO of AfP; and Julia Roig, President and CEO of [PartnersGlobal](#). Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) shared a message with PeaceCon participants to inspire trust: *"We must trust science; we must trust those with expertise in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Only then can we regain credibility and help to lead alongside our global partners."*

Joseph Hewitt, USIP's Vice President for Policy, Learning, and Strategy, moderated day one's [high-level plenary session](#), "COVID and Fragility: Risks and Recovery," and discussed the profound threat of COVID-19 in fragile and conflict affected states:

Although the vast majority of COVID-19 deaths have occurred outside the most fragile contexts worldwide, the first and second order consequences could be especially problematic in fragile contexts because of the significant potential to exacerbate existing challenges in these places.

The session featured former USAID Administrator, Ambassador Mark Green, Executive Director, [McCain Institute](#); Tjada D'Oyen McKenna, CEO, [Mercy Corps](#); David Beasley, Executive Director, [World Food Programme](#); and Paige Alexander, CEO, [The Carter Center](#).

One of the key panels entitled "Global Fragility Act (GFA): Challenges, Opportunities and What Comes Next?" was facilitated by AfP and Mercy Corps, who co-lead a [67+ organization-strong Global Fragility Act coalition](#). They were joined by leading Congressional staffers and experts to discuss opportunities for [successful implementation](#) of the bipartisan legislation, which mandates the first ever U.S. Government conflict prevention country strategy in at least five countries/regions.

Darren Walker, President of the [Ford Foundation](#), closed out the day with insightful words on the long-term considerations of the pandemic, stating:

We are going to have to move beyond charity, beyond generosity to dignity and justice. In order to do that, we must ask ourselves not just what we can give back, but what



Alliance for Peacebuilding

must we be willing to give up in order to have a world that is more peaceful, a world where people live with more dignity, and there is more equity and equality.

The second day focused on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda with Liz Hume's opening statement setting the tone for the day:

The social and economic consequences of the pandemic are landing hardest on women because of existing gender inequalities.... But despite this, women are showing exemplary strength as they combat COVID-19 within their communities.

AfP then awarded the [2nd Annual Peacebuilding Champion Award](#) to Senators Shelley Capito and Jeanne Shaheen for their bipartisan championship of the [WPS Act of 2017](#), which requires the creation of a cross-government strategy to promote women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and post-conflict and crisis recovery.

Tina Tchen, President and CEO of [TIME'S UP Foundation](#), galvanized PeaceCon participants in her keynote address with a candid discussion on the difficult and significant impact of the pandemic on women in the workplace globally, stating, "We've seen nearly 2.2 million women leave the labor force since the pandemic began, which is threatening to reverse decades of progress in women's labor force participation in the U.S." Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, Founder and CEO of [International Civil Society Action Network](#), moderated the plenary session titled "We Told You So...Why Listening to the Local Experience of Women Peacebuilders Matters for Global Peace and Security," featuring leading women peacebuilders from the Global South.

Commemorating the conclusion of the U.S. Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Coalition's [#Yes4YPS Webinar Series](#) and the fifth anniversary of [Security Council Resolution 2250](#) on YPS, day three's plenary session featured Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY), Congresswoman Susan Brooks (D-IN), and youth peacebuilders from Nigeria, Yemen, and Argentina. Jessica Baumgardner-Zuzik, AfP's Senior Director of Learning and Evaluation, opened the conversation with a hopeful tone:

Today, we'll look ahead to 2021 with a particular focus on U.S. peacebuilding and youth engagement.... I'm personally excited to see what innovation, impact, and change we can bring about in 2021—to not just get back to life as it was, but to shape a more inclusive and sustainable future for ourselves and the coming generations.

The panel discussed the global YPS movement, how the Congresswomen are catalyzing the YPS movement within Congress, and why passing the [YPS Act](#) is critical to the success and protection of youth peacebuilders globally. This inclusive dialogue delved into the importance of youth representation and leadership in peace and security initiatives and U.S. foreign policy more broadly.



Alliance for Peacebuilding

America is facing significant threats to its democracy, peace, and stability due to increasing [conflict drivers](#). At PeaceCon 2020, AfP honored the individuals and organizations working to alleviate U.S. conflict dynamics and presented the [2020 Melanie Greenberg U.S. Peacebuilding Award of Excellence](#) to Shelly Marc and Joe Bubman for their continued efforts addressing racial injustice and inequality and the rural/urban divide, respectively.

AfP, alongside its members and partners, will continue to tackle the most pressing causes of violent conflict both in the U.S. and globally and pursue the following [key foreign assistance and diplomacy policy recommendations](#) for the new Biden/Harris Administration to build sustainable peace at home and abroad.

With over 130 member organizations, AfP brings together the largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and influential humanitarian and faith-based groups to harness collective action for peace. We build coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.