**Meeting summary and take-aways – Policy and projects team full day retreat**

**Tuesday, 30 August 2022**

1. **Back to purpose: why are we here, and what does it mean for our team’s objectives?**

* Some common points emerged regarding our ‘raison d’être’ and aspirations in relation to our work:
  + Achieve impact, make a real difference – we are nearly all mission and results-driven.
  + Focus on ‘niche’ rather than already overcrowded approaches, where we can have an added value and be heard without being drowned out. Strong added-value: future-oriented, pioneering role. But how on these niches to keep a “foisonnement”?
  + Get behind the gloss to understand deeper mechanics on our topics, see how decision-making really works to be able to act on it.
  + Demonstrate that we can do a different type of diplomacy, work on international relations without the cumbersome bureaucracy of most other institutions in the ecosystem.
  + Serve to bring people together at the same table that wouldn’t otherwise collaborate. It’s a specificity of the Forum, and an attractive feat for policy teams members, to navigate competing interests towards joint action/positions. Challenges remains, including how to get beyond words on true engagement from the Global South or East (given how we are perceived)? Is it appropriate to have “our” positions or opinions that we defend? How to reconcile this universalism with high ambition and avoid the “lowest common denominator” trap?
* Some common areas of interest emerged for future work and focus:
  + Issues linked to the preservation of nature and biodiversity, listed by many team members, and perhaps insufficiently reflected in the activity of the policy department: normative frameworks around the ‘rights of nature’, (re?)balancing this with the rights and needs of humans.
  + ‘Human security approach’, another strong feature to develop as a prism to broaden our work.
  + Issues linked to conflict resolution, with a broader approach focused on “positive peace” and underlying conditions, considering inclusion, tensions within societies, equality, etc.

1. **Success in policy (or with projects): what does it look like and how do we get there?**

* Reflection on what could be written about our various initiatives in 20-30 years assuming they have worked (see annex 1)
* Many commonalities, some differences:
  + Most stories involved significant **obstacles**. It often had to get worst before it got better, to truly mobilize action and enable change. Many risks and challenges were shared (lack of resources, lack of attention, resistance from the system to change, public fears).
  + In most cases, the Forum was able to add value by bridging the North/South gap. How do we truly make that happen? Through decentralization? Far increased diversity of staff?
  + In all cases, the success of the initiatives was independent, not due to cross-fertilization or even linked much to the other parts of PPF. Should we not better think of leveraging the different assets and dimensions of the PPF (event+funders’ network+policy)?
  + The end-point of success was, for most, fairly clear. We largely know our objectives, what big changes we wish to achieve. However, we were much vaguer on how we got there, what are the stages and what is the path to this outcome. The ‘how’ is the trickiest part with what we do.
  + We knew how to describe success, but not through quantitative measurement: if we seek a ‘leapfrog change’, how can we measure progress? What are indicators or metrics of success or progress?
  + Two main paths of success emerged. In some, we retained our ‘branding’ and became the central point, but in many our coalitions no longer existed and had been absorbed by the multilateral system and its institutions. Does success always mean the end of our initiatives? How important is it to remain central to what comes out of them?
  + Competition was almost inexistant. But as our ‘niche’ issues will gain prominence (our aim), others will get involved in the space. What then should be our role, how do we maintain an edge?

1. **Our ways of working together / Linking policy and other PPF’s departments, integrating projects and policy**

* See slides presenting survey results regarding the team’s satisfaction levels and suggestions for better working together (annex 2)
* Policy/PPF: Many challenges linked to broader coordination at PPF, including coordination between departments, and clarification of roles and responsibilities.
  + Learning can be a challenge, many issues are raised, discussed, but not solved. How can we ensure that discussions in previous team seminars or lessons learnt from previous editions are acted upon?
  + How do we improve understanding and cooperation with other departments, and address the perception that policy is more valued, too authoritative, or at times even disruptive? Of course we need to protect our policy objectives and are likely to have the last say on policy messaging, issues, etc – but we can do this without generating frustrations.
    - Value other expertise. Despite our own thematic expertise, skills linked to coms, fundraising, organizational development, etc also are essential. How can we improve outcomes by better having these skills reinforce one another?
    - Question of attitude. Do we take time to explain what we do, and why? To get people on board, help them understand how they can help us? Do we think about how we can help them enough?
    - We need to be a bit modest about our “expertise”. Many of us have only started working on our topics for 1-3 years, we haven’t for the most part done PhDs. How then can this opportunity to gain expertise be made available to others who aspire to it too?
    - Trying to collaboratively solve issues, getting into others’ shoes, inputting on their approaches/strategies, and modalities for working together. Much as we do with stakeholders’ different interests within our policy coalitions…
    - Clarifying what policy work entails: not just “sexy” stuff, but a lot of operational work or excel spreadsheets too…
    - Trying to build predictable processes, so other teams can anticipate when we need them, or when our availability ebbs and flows. This will become easier over time, as we learn about the delivery of our policy work.
  + The fundamental challenge for all this is time constraints…
    - Doing less would allow us to do better, hence the importance of resisting the temptation to always do more.
    - This challenge is linked to the mismatch between our sky-high ambitions, and very limited resources. Sharing tools, lessons, experience between us, as members of the team, can help. Gradually, though, we need to develop access to resources to reduce pressures.
* Policy/Projects:The lack of clarity regarding plans and prospects for better integration between the project and policy work of the team was discussed at length.
  + A key first point is to clarify our shared objective, why it makes sense to work as part of the same team.
    - There is a clear opportunity for win-wins, whereby projects benefit from involvement in our policy coalitions, and our policy work benefits from the engagement and experience of project leaders.
    - In fine, projects can serve as illustrations or inspiration for anchoring our policy initiatives in concrete realities.
  + Efforts to collaborate have, so far, been ad hoc. Building joint projects (such as the policy field trip) with ‘real’ cooperation and sharing of workload could contribute to better alignment.
  + Strong idea and recommendation that gained consensus: revamp the project selection and support process, to link it better to policy priorities, and acknowledge the reducing interest in “random” projects detached from policy priorities.
    - [a word on switching to a “permanent” call for projects, instead of a yearly one with strong and hard deadlines? I.e. main change in the process]. Will also need to review the selection process (3 times a year? ; more flexible?)
    - Finding projects can be done in different ways depending on the degree of specificity of what is sought, and the degree of advancement of our thinking and knowledge of the ecosystem on specific issues. Open calls can serve as “trawlers” bringing in many different fish, while more targeted outreach can serve as “harpoon fishing” when we know what we want. These tools could be deployed at different stages of the year for different topics.
    - In fine, projects showcased in the Space for Solutions and supported by the SCUP could be drawn from a process similar to the current call for solutions, as well as from amongst policy coalition members.

1. **Making most of the PPF5 for our policy/project work**

* How can we make the policy work at the forum most impactful?
  + What is uniquely possible at the event, that cannot be replicated or take place at other times or in other settings?
  + The “shininess” of the Forum can help advance policy objectives, bring in new stakeholders, serve as a catalyst for consensus, help influence decision-making based on our policy priorities, etc.
  + What concrete results and deliverables can each of us bring on our areas of focus? We need to ensure that policy sessions serve as a takeoff or landing strip for initiatives, not just to have a good discussion which does not advance our work.
  + In any case, the Forum is an opportunity to gather our coalitions. Useful to invite “everyone”, and have a wide approach on accreditations. Social moments can also contribute to strengthening our policy communities.
* How do we think about who to give the floor to during our sessions, as it is not feasible to have all coalition members engaged on an equal basis?
  + Sometimes, being at the table is what matters most.
  + Many criteria can be considered: expertise, quality of presentation, level of engagement and contributions, diversity, etc.
* Reflections about the organization of the **round table**
  + Should involve dialogue between the “usual” working group members and other stakeholders, an opportunity to broaden perspectives or share recommendations.
  + Can be open (more shiny so attractive for coms) or closed (more likely to lead to candid exchanges).
  + Requires extensive preparation to identify stakeholders, orchestrate the session. Moderators will need extensive briefing, and should be already familiar with our work and the issues.
* Overall, important to consider the impact of our work on other teams on the chain. Trying to stick to agreed deadlines as much as possible, so we can credibly request flexibility when it is really needed.

1. **Wrap up – key takeaways and hopes for the next couple of months**

* The next two months are going to be busy, and potentially stressful. We need to think individually and collectively about how we remain able to work effectively, and “keep cool”. Anticipating as much as possible will be key, the nearer to the Forum, the more unexpected issues will arise. A need to balance quality/high ambition with timeliness and effective delivery.
* It was useful to talk to each other and exchange notes. The energy in the team will help us push and ensure we achieve the objectives we set ourselves.
* We must continue this reflection. We have lots of ideas. There is the impression that sometimes we work so much in our corner. Will need to revisit some of these after the event, and reflect on how to share them with the rest of the Forum, to inform its broader strategy and thinking.

**Annex 1 – “Eulogies” for our individual initiatives, what could be written about each in 30-50 years if they are successful (key extracts)**

* + **Overshoot Commission**
* Spread knowledge about **additional approaches to reduce climate risk**, particularly in an intergenerational aspect since the youth movement should be included. The new generation having a saying on the processes of decision making.
* **Global cooperation** to discuss new technologies and decide whether to use them or not. Redistribution of the “know-how” and technologies to countries where they are needed.
* **Ideally:**Expanded infrastructure of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) and sunlight reflection methods. If these are not used, at least know the “why-not”. Solve the climate overshoot so that there’s more time for cutting greenhouse emissions and applying sustainable solutions.
  + **Net Zero Space**
* Objective of sustainable outer space is achieved, counting with over 1,000 supporters from in and out the industry, and almost every country represented.
* First successful commercial **active debris removal** (ADR) mission sent in 2025. Most of **low Earth orbit** (LEO) debris is removed. Despite geopolitical scenarios preventing some actors’ involvement in the beginning, we raised awareness to achieve cooperation on information sharing and ADR missions.
* Alliance of nations working together, conduct ADR missions on most worrying objects.
* Working group (established by PPF) has achieved deliverables, recommendations taken up by the UN’s open ended working group into a draft international treaty on ADR.

* + **Paris Call**
* In 2030, it has been a decade marked by a succession of events and incidents. Major consequences of cyberconflict on civilians have created real awareness by political actors.
* The **Paris Call** and its community made it possible to create the first major arms control regime on **cyber non-proliferation**. An effective treaty, with variations for all the systemic players, and with a movement somewhat like the one that led to the adoption of the Rome Statute in 98. This success is attributed to the momentum and mobilization of NGOs and civil society.
* In 2025, the **Paris Call** released a main deliverable (set of standards), allowing to unblock the problem of attacker's uncertainty in cyberspace (for attribution by States).
* The forum contributed to a new order in humanitarian law applicable to space and proliferation. Despite ad hoc negotiations, though, they failed to deliver significantly because of states’ use of their privileges.

* + **Projects support**
* After more than 30 years to scale up, thanks to the support of many, some solutions have tacken of and had major impact on the world.
  + After negotiations that lasted 30 years, thanks to the Forum, states signed an ambitious **high seas treaty**.
  + The **SADA cooperative** is now a company employing thousands of refugee women, thanks to EUR 2M+ funding from the European Commission.
* A major event was held in **Afghanistan** after the fall of the Taliban regime, including the display of street art from artists who had fled the country in 2020 and cultural heritage preserved by ALIPH. International organizations, companies and NGOs were in strong attendance.
* The SCUP to become over years a recognized accelerator of solutions coming from all over the world. It has gained recognition by global governance actors, and involves hundreds of projects and mentors. Many global events and donors rely on the SCUP to identify promising projects to invite and fund.
* The **SCUP’s** financing is based on social impact bonds, given its high return on investment on key global indicators.

* + **Critical materials**
* In 2030, mining for these materials has become **less polluting and socially responsible**. High seas extraction has been globally banned as we have limited demand and improved supply from land sources, avoiding damage to biodiversity.
* An extensive **circular economy and recycling** sector thrives, allowing reliable access to all key materials. This emerged thanks to a community made up from actors across the world and value chain.
* **Autonomy**. Everyone can now access the materials needed for the ecological transition, with closed production loops where production and transformation are embedded in producing countries. Europe no longer imports raw materials from producing countries, but only transformed products, which have also enabled a leapfrog to green energy production across Africa.

* + **Global Health**
* After the outbreak of another pandemic, in 2030, political action was finally taken at scale at a historical health summit.
* Thanks to a case study on **pandemic warning systems**, the forum succeeded in setting up a funding and cooperation model, involving actors in the South to develop production capacities.
* The forum launched an initiative on genomics. The use of this technology for the modifications of the **human genome**, its medical uses of the sequencing of viruses. This allowed to create capacities to respond effectively to epidemics and to create medicines across the global South.
* Many obstacles were faced, including largely from the private sector which tried to impose its agenda, but also from foundations in the global North.
* The WHO had difficulties and was challenged, but ended up strengthened, having now expanded its capacities and adjusted its governance models.

* + **Initiate**
* The last few decades saw a major acceleration in the **development of AI**, which gradually occupied political and social aspects in the public space, in transport, finance and legal aid.
* The distribution powers between **public and private** is unstable. We see the beginning of the **Great Technological Polarization**. One digital space driven by the **US** based on liberal and democratic preferences, and another where **China** has more control (even authoritarianism).
* **Europe** found its place by using its regulatory power. Although it doesn’t develop as much in technology, Europe defends its interests through its market and regulatory power. Europe is not always the first with early initiatives, but the Forum has helped it navigate the decoupled spaces.
* Bringing together **civil society from the South** to work on digital issues didn’t enable the emergence of a third model, but shaped the development of AI technologies on some issues. Eventually, though, disagreements between members caused the split of the alliance and each continues to advocate independently.