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Implementing Peace Agreements in a Complex World

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Societies' survival depends on their ability to make peace. In a world characterised by heightened complexity, where international, national and local conflict arenas are intertwined, however, making peace poses a formidable challenge. Peace agreements are a vital means to contain destructive violent conflicts and, in the best case, enable sustainable political settlements to consolidate peaceful societal relations. Implementing peace agreements in a context of heightened complexity bears enormous political and technical difficulties, which peacemakers seek to navigate by using comparative knowledge and technical innovations in the design of agreements and transitional mechanisms. The objective of this panel is to highlight novel insights on both challenges and innovative approaches to implement peace agreements in today's context of heightened complexity.

Recognising the need to accompany fragile peace processes beyond signing ceremonies, international sponsors support agreement implementation through mediation, guarantees, arbitration, peacekeeping, technical assistance and funding. To enable their implementation, agreements stipulate implementation modalities and mechanisms to manage transitional institutions and reforms. Implementation monitoring mechanisms use sophisticated methods to track progress and recognise risks to fragile peace processes.

Implementing peace agreements is a complex endeavour. The proliferation of international peace-makers, including regional organisations and emerging powers, complicates international coordination. Since peace processes are non-linear, iterative and abortive, interdependent agreements are implemented in parallel. Complex reforms to address conflict drivers involve unforeseeable problems and take years in which political dynamics evolve. The norm to include societal stakeholders besides power-sharing parties can complicate transitional governance processes. The panel showcases novel research on both challenges and innovative approaches to the implementation of agreements.

Track Classification: Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Working Group