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Thank you very much. Uh, good morning, good afternoon everyone. Uh, my name is Nina Kiplagat and I am the Governance and Peace Building Coordinator at UNDP's Regional Service Center for Africa. It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this UNDP UNDEF webinar on Deliberative Democracy for Breaking the Gridlock: Exploring Insights from HDR 2023-24 for Innovative Governance Programming. The objectives of this webinar are to provide conceptual clarity on what deliberative democracy is in the context of HDR recommendations; secondly, to raise awareness on how deliberation can be applied to enhance citizen engagement in public spheres, reduce polarization, and strengthen democracy; and thirdly, to amplify lessons emerging from inspiring practices of deliberative governance from Brazil, Malawi, and Uruguay that demonstrate innovative methods and approaches.

The webinar will be divided into two sessions. The first, a dialogue on deliberation, which I will moderate, and then secondly, a presentation of country experiences which will be moderated by Ian Walker, Executive Director of New Democracy Foundation. During the course of the webinar, please feel free to post questions, share your contributions, as well as resources in the chat.

On that note, uh, to start us off, it is my pleasure to introduce Anmie, Executive Director of the UN Office for Partnerships, UNDEF, UN Partnerships, for her welcome remarks. Over to you.

Thank you so much, and hello, and thank you for joining us. I'm Anarie, and I'm the Executive Director for the UN Office for Partnerships, which hosts the UN Democracy Fund. With only six years remaining to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the world must act swiftly to ensure that no one and no places are left behind. To advance this agenda, we need to rethink how we engage citizens and foster inclusive participation in governance. As we heard from world leaders at the UN General Assembly just two weeks ago, time is of the essence. And just today, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program, we will explore how models of deliberative democracy can serve as powerful tools to incorporate citizen voices into governance and work to overcome challenges of political polarization and inequality. As highlighted in this year's UNDP Human Development Report, deliberative democracy and citizens' assemblies are an area that UNDEF has been exploring in recent years, which is gaining traction. We're honored to have UNDP as our partner in this initiative. We're also fortunate to count on academia as well as our project colleagues, New Democracy Foundation, with whom UNDEF co-

published the Democracy Beyond Elections Handbook, highlighting concrete steps to conduct citizens' assemblies in Brazil, and Edwin Massina from Malawi, who will share their hands-on experience with us. As we explore these themes, we remain focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Deliberative democracy is central to developing effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions and to ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. Representation is such a key word here. This connects directly to the recently adopted Pact for the Future, where global leaders recognize that localization will be key to achieving the SDGs and ensuring that no one, absolutely no one, is left behind. Thank you so much for being with us today. We look forward to a meaningful discussion on how deliberative democracy can help all of us overcome current challenges and advance our shared development goals. Let's get started. Thank you.

Thank you very much, An Marie. And, uh, so now we're going to move into our dialogue on deliberation. I'd like to introduce Josephine Panan, Research and Partnership Specialist at the Human Development Report Office, and we will be delving into key findings and why deliberation may be part of the answer to the gridlock. So, to start off, Joseph, the last Human Development Report says that the world is caught in a gridlock. Can you tell us more about that?

Thank you, Nina. Thank you, colleagues. Fantastic to be here and to speak on this very important topic. So, yes, you're right. The latest, uh, 2023-2024 Human Development Report, uh, tried to do something a little bit different. We tried to take a step back from all of these major global interconnected challenges, from conflict to climate change to food insecurity, etc., to ask ourselves instead a fundamental question: why is it that, you know, despite all the knowledge we have, all the technology we have, all the wealth we have in this world, why is it that we're unable to act at the speed and scale necessary to address globally shared challenges? And, uh, what we found was something of a vicious circle that we characterize as a global gridlock. And, well, what does that mean? Well, we argue that the barriers to implementation of policies today are not so much in not knowing what to do, but in difficulties in the process of getting it done. And a huge part of that is political polarization that we review and go very much in depth with in this latest report. So, polarization is something that runs very deep. It runs deeper than differences in opinions, and it tends to sort people into categories defined by a single identity: us versus them. And it tends to fuel sort of an animosity towards those who have different viewpoints than those in our in-group. And the report finds that both sort of objective welfare losses, that is, loss in human development due to maybe economic shocks or violent conflicts and so on, both those types of welfare losses as well as our beliefs, our fears, our perceptions feed into

polarization. So, alongside these big and interconnected development challenges, like increases in violent conflict that we see, like increases in food insecurity or unchecked climate change, which is layered on top and exacerbating challenges, we also find that people's feelings of distress, of stress, of anxiety, of insecurity are increasing across the world. And it's increasing in all societies at all human development index levels. In fact, our new UNDP's new Perceived Human Security Index found that six out of seven people across the world say that they feel insecure about many aspects in their lives. And fear is a paralyzing and polarizing feeling. The report finds that the more insecure people are, the more polarized they become as well. And globally, two-thirds of countries exhibit increases in polarization, as we argue or as we find in the latest report. Now, the more polarized we are, the harder it is to get to collective action to address common challenges. And when we don't address common challenges, human development suffers, human security is under attack, and that is what we refer to as a gridlock or a vicious cycle where we really need policy attention to break free and move ahead to break free these vicious cycles.

Well, thanks very much, Josephine, for outlining these different challenges. So, what can be done about these challenges that you've outlined? You've touched a bit, you've mentioned the policy level, but if you could go into a bit more depth in terms of what can be done.

Thank you, Nina. Well, many things can be done, of course. We, as I started off with, we find and we argue in the report that a big problem that we see today is not really not knowing how to address certain issues like climate change and so on, but getting it done, improving the process in how we get it done, and dealing with this gridlock or political polarization that we see. So, the latest HDR tries to lay out a bit of a roadmap for reimagining cooperation and that process in ways that don't wish away differences in views and opinions but work with them. We need the diversity of views and opinions. It's a healthy component of functioning societies, but we need to be able to work with them. So, we lay out three approaches that we think will help with breaking this gridlock. First, one is to try to rethink international cooperation as something more than humanitarian assistance or relief in emergencies, as something more than development assistance from richer to poorer countries, to also include the idea of delivering on global public goods. Because in this interconnected world that we live in, where we saw just a few years ago with the pandemic, viruses don't stop at national borders, right? We don't have the luxury of imagining isolating from problems over there outside of our doorstep, right? They permeate borders and they're interconnected. So, globally shared problems, from climate change to viral outbreaks to digitally spread misinformation, require that we work together and that we deliver on global public goods. This needs to be a key feature of our multilateral cooperation going forward. Second, we argue that we need to invest in human development and in human agency. We need to empower people to feel more in control of

their lives and give them a greater voice in shaping our collective future. Because, you know, we find in the report that currently about half of the world's people feel that they're not in control of their lives, and two-thirds feel that they don't have a say in their political systems. And these agency gaps that we call them are higher or larger where human insecurity is higher. And as I argued earlier, we find that human insecurity is linked to more intense polarization. So, investing in agency, investing in empowering people and giving them voice and control over their lives is one of the keys to breaking this vicious cycle. And third, we argue that we can address polarization directly by looking at people's misperceptions about one another. And our research shows that actually many people live in what we call a false reality, with sort of false or misperceived ideas about other groups, which then impedes collective action. So, for example, about 70% of people around the world say that they are willing to make a personal financial sacrifice to address climate change. But when we ask them, "Okay, but what do you think other people think about the same issue?" they state that they think that only about 43% of people agree with them. So, there's a gap here between your own belief and willingness to act and what you think people around you think about the beliefs of people around you. And if we can correct these misperceptions and create spaces for deliberation, create spaces for coming together and piercing through this fog of sort of false realities, we can also unleash more collective action.

Really interesting. And how does deliberation play a role in all of this?

So, deliberation plays a key role, of course. I think it can really help with strengthening people's agency by enabling them to influence collective decision-making. As discussed earlier, it can also work as a way of piercing people's misperceptions about each other and building common ground by coming together, by deliberating, by having healthy discussions about key issues that are affecting us. And ultimately, it can be scaled up towards the support of delivering much-needed global public goods. Because again, we live in an interconnected world with interconnected global challenges, and being able through deliberation to see how these challenges affect ourselves as well as communities outside of our own vicinity can really help scale up that collective action for delivering global public goods. So, I know we're going to talk a lot more about what deliberation is in detail, and we want to hear from experts from the ground on this. But just to say that deliberation is key to breaking the gridlock. And there are multiple interesting ways of supporting deliberation, including citizen assemblies, as we heard briefly mentioned, mini-publics, online public-spirited dialogues, and of course, the crucial need to protect civic space, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and so on and so forth.

Well, thanks very much, Josephine, for taking us through that—the gridlock, the challenges, and what role deliberation plays in all of this. And you've set us up very well for us to move on to Oliver Escobar, Professor of Public Policy and Democratic Innovation at the University of Edinburgh. And he will be making a presentation touching on three questions, which are: What is deliberation? How does deliberation look like in practice? Can deliberation help in the identification of common ground in highly polarized societies? And what are deliberative mini-publics, and how can they help operationalize deliberative democracy ideals? And before I hand over to Oliver, just to also reemphasize, you know, if you have any comments or questions, please do post them in the chat. On that note, Oliver, over to you.

Thanks, Narina. And I am going to go through this fairly quickly but happy to come back to some of these issues during the Q&A. So, hello from Scotland. I'm going to try to use my seven minutes to give you the headlines of deliberative democracy and then some of the examples, starting with just an overview of some of the key elements that deliberative democrats propose. This is an idea that says that our political systems should be based on public deliberation amongst equal citizens and that that should be the driving force of how we make decisions in institutions, in organizations, in communities. So, deliberative democrats place great faith in the power of public deliberation, and they go as far as to say that decisions are only legitimate when people have the opportunity to influence those decisions through participating in public deliberation. Now, the reason this matters is because for many years, theories like rational choice theory were telling us that people have fixed preferences that cannot be changed, and therefore that makes it really difficult to get beyond our differences, get beyond polarization. Deliberative democratic research shows that that is not true. People discover who we are and the kind of world we want to live in and build together when we engage in conversation with others. So, this is why deliberative democrats insist on the power of public reasoning, not just public opinion. Public reasoning is what happens when we talk to each other, not just when we express prepackaged positions. So, deliberative democrats believe in the force of the better argument rather than the force of money, power, numbers. There's a strong emphasis on the common good over private interest. And when deliberation works well, it can be transformative. It can correct misinformation, misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and it can clear the ground from all kinds of misleading or manipulative arguments. So, there are a number of democratic goods that we expect from good public deliberation: inclusion, reflection, respect, considered judgment, and the capacity to address complex problems in a legitimate way that allows collective public action. So, that's the theory in a nutshell. That's 50 years of theory in one slide.

What is deliberation? How does it look in practice? Well, here, I mean, it boils down to this: imagine a world where we make decisions based on the best available arguments, and that

might be a mix of reasons, values, knowledges developed through collective deliberation, right? That's very different from how a lot of decisions are made by political systems and public institutions today. But deliberation is a really demanding form of communication, and sadly, we don't exercise enough our deliberative muscles because our societies are often too dominated by other forms of communication, such as debate, for example, right? And we might come back to that distinction later. But deliberation is a form of communication that invites people to participate with an open mind, to be respectful of the perspectives of others, to be attentive to different knowledges and public reasons, and to be oriented towards working out what the common good looks like. But as I said, it's really difficult because we live in contexts that are highly mediatized, which tends to lead to polarizing narratives. And this is why sometimes in deliberative democratic work, we like to experiment with spaces that are designed to try and create the right conditions for deliberation. And that's what I'm going to be touching on in the next question.

So, just starting from some super quick examples, because by now we do have a body of evidence that deliberative approaches can work in divided societies, in highly polarized environments. There has been research and case studies in all kinds of contexts, from Colombia to Bosnia-Herzegovina, from Lebanon to Macedonia, from South Africa to Belgium. So, by now we have a good understanding that deliberation can make a difference. But what remains challenging is how to improve deliberation amongst elites. We know that citizens can deliberate with each other across differences well, but elites struggle to do that among themselves and often with citizens. So, we might pick up on that issue and come back. But how does it work at a micro level? This is one of the diagrams I used and is widely used in conflict resolution studies to illustrate that when we are deliberating, what we're trying to do is to invite people to go underneath that visibility line, underneath the positions that people hold that are more superficial, right? So, what you want to do is to try and create a space where people are invited to get into a deeper level of conversation underneath positions, exploring interests and values, needs and fears. And that's where we begin to find some areas of potential common ground. But too often we live in contexts where this kind of deeper conversation can be quite difficult. Now, if you want to dig a little bit deeper into the theory, there's an open access resource where we go behind the scenes and show the research behind what I just outlined. But let me conclude just by touching on some well, the category of examples that you're going to be discussing later as well in the second part of the mini-publics and how they try to make the deliberative democracy ideals practice. So, mini-publics, by now, my estimate goes over a thousand mini-publics have taken place, although the OECD managed to count around 700. They have been around for five decades. They started in the 70s, citizens' juries, planning cells, and other similar small mini-publics. And more recently, what we see is a

wave of citizens' assemblies, in particular climate assemblies, that is growing lately. So, mini-publics are mini versions of the broader public where you bring together a group of people who are reflective of the relevant population in terms of their demographics and their perspectives. They are given the time and the resources to engage with evidence, engage with the perspectives of others, of a number of stakeholders, and then deliberate in order to reach well-justified conclusions or decisions. So, why mini-publics? Well, because diverse demographics and perspectives really matter. We know that decisions are better when there is a diverse range of perspectives involved. They are designed to be genuinely inclusive, to create the right conditions for equality of participation. There are spaces where there's a lot of work that goes into facilitating meaningful dialogue and deliberation, getting underneath that visibility line into shared interests, needs, concerns, fears, and aspirations, and not just positions. It can create a space that allows both exploration and challenge, and it can reduce the noise of the politics of spectacle and gladiatorial partisanship that dominates so many of our mediatized public spheres. It has the potential to mobilize collective intelligence, shared values. It can help find common ground, but crucially, it's also a space where differences and disagreements can be engaged productively, and they can develop proposals, propositions, recommendations that seek to advance common goods. By now, after five decades, we have a very strong evidence base on how to make mini-publics, assemblies, this type of deliberative processes work well. What is still a challenge is how to make them work well externally, how they work with institutions, how they exercise influence and impact, how they get embedded in the cultures in which we do public governance. So, that's my last reflection, and I just want to thank you for your time. And we produced a guide recently, a very practical guide, step-by-step on how to organize and facilitate mini-publics, and it was published by the WHO earlier this year. So, it's available there, open access. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Oliver, for taking us through these key

Hi everybody. I'm Nicole Kurat. I'm a professor of political sociology at the Center for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance at the University of Canberra. In the next five minutes, I will talk about five ways deliberative norms can be promoted beyond deliberative mini-publics. Let's get started.

First, deliberative democracy can be promoted by reforming existing avenues for citizen engagement. So, when we think about some contexts, maybe there is really no need to reinvent the wheel. In India, for example, the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution institutionalized village assemblies or Gram Sabhas. In Indonesia, Musrenbang is a well-established practice of a development planning mechanism where stakeholders, NGOs,

grassroots movements, and citizens provide input into the development planning of their villages. There are many more examples in the world, like multi-stakeholder development councils, participatory budgeting, local development councils, and even public hearings as part of environmental impact assessment programs. Of course, I'm aware that these programs or institutions are not perfect, which is exactly the point why it's worth investing time and resources in reforming existing institutions for participation to promote deliberative norms. Perhaps we can ask these questions: How can we better support local government officials to be honest brokers of deliberation? Or how can we build capacities for NGOs or even village leaders and religious leaders to model norms of deliberative behavior in these existing spaces for citizen engagement? There is a lot of work that can be done in this space, and that's one avenue in which deliberative norms can be promoted beyond mini-publics.

Second, deliberative principles can actually be used to co-design mechanisms for citizen participation. So, instead of importing a model of citizen deliberation, we can actually use the norms of deliberative democracy to empower citizens to design forums for citizen engagement that are suitable to their own contexts. A few years ago, I had the incredible honor of working with the UNDP team in Iraq, and we actually had the privilege of working with youth leaders in Basra, Thi-Qar, and Maysan to co-design a workshop where the youth leaders themselves designed mechanisms to better reach out to young people, especially those who are marginalized and feel that they're not really that comfortable in articulating sensitive issues to their communities. And so, in that co-design workshop, the proposal that they put forward is to create listening circles, and they felt that that is the most suitable in the context in which they operate.

Third, deliberative principles can also be brought to life in post-conflict contexts to promote healing and mutual understanding. The book "Deliberation Across Deeply Divided Societies" by the late Jurgen Steiner and his colleagues actually cataloged a series of cases where deliberative forums can be used in post-conflict societies. One of the most notable cases for me there is the case of Colombia, where deliberative norms are used to facilitate discussion with ex-guerrillas, ex-paramilitaries, and ex-combatants in order to promote understanding and healing.

Fourth, we can take inspiration from countries like Taiwan, which created online platforms that made political discussions fast, fair, and fun. So, online platforms like Polis can be

applied to contentious policy areas so all citizens can have their say on the issue. And through technology, we can determine the extent to which citizens have reached consensus and the extent to which they disagree on a particular topic. So, Polis is one of many examples of online platforms where deliberative norms can be brought to life.

Finally, we need to talk about journalism and the role of the media in promoting deliberative norms. Our colleagues from Colorado, for example, are working with a local newspaper to transform the opinion column because typically opinion sections are used as a venue for picking fights or polarizing views. And they've transformed one section of the opinion column to become a section where community members actually address one issue a week, and they work together to find ways to move forward in addressing those issues. So, that's certainly another way to experiment on how to promote deliberative norms in the media landscape.

So, those are five ways to promote deliberative norms beyond deliberative mini-publics. I'm sure you can think of more examples, and I look forward to moving the conversation forward.

Right, so there we had Nicole going into more country examples as well and highlighting elements such as the healing, the engagement with media. So now we'd like to go into the question and answer session, or if there are also comments. I see that there is a question from Tanny. Tanny, whether you'd like to come in to pose your question, and also Oliver, perhaps you had also alluded to the engagement with elites. It might be interesting to hear a little bit more on that. So, Tanny, over to you.

Just to check whether Tanny, you're able to unmute.

Okay, I think let's go to the question from David, and then we'll return to Tanny. The question is in the chat. And, uh, see, important discussion. Deliberative democracy could, in a variety of contexts, assume some form of hierarchical power dynamic, assumption of power, and competition in politics. When it materializes through competition in politics, even mini-publics and community organizing can be misconstrued as inviting political change or challenging political order, so it is not tolerated. The question then becomes the

effective and structured translation of the views from the public into deliberative development action.

Alright, so, um, and I see that also Tanny now can unmute. So perhaps Tanny, you could come in and pose your question.

Thank you so much, and it's such a pleasure to be part of this discussion. I wanted to ask because Professor Escobar mentioned that the power of money, power, and numbers are sort of avoided in some way through deliberative processes. My point is that at some point, you know, participation is dependent on those who have the ability to participate, and that is dependent on their money, power, and numbers. So, how do you get around that particular dilemma, given that the people who are the most voiceless are the least able to represent themselves or their interests or to show up? You know, you can think of the younger generation, you can think of the disabled, and, you know, if you're thinking about climate change, it's about the generations that are not even here. So, how do we deliberate on their interests? So, that's something that I wanted to check because it's sort of one of those fundamental dilemmas of representative versus deliberative processes. So, it would be great to get your views on that. Thank you.

Thank you very much for the question. If we could just also have one more contribution, I see Anen from OECD. If you would like to come in with your contribution, and then we'll turn back to our panelists.

Absolutely, Narina. Just checking that you can hear me.

Yes, we can.

Perfect. Thank you so much for inviting us to this very interesting discussion. My name is Orno, and I am here joining you from Paris at the OECD Public Governance Directorate from the Innovative Citizen Participation team. Just wanted to share that the OECD has a commitment or has had a long-standing commitment to supporting countries to strengthen their deliberative capacity. In 2017, member countries adopted the OECD

Recommendation on Open Government, which grounds the basis for participation and deliberation, as well as the development of good practices to improve open governance principles. I'm just sharing some resources in the chat. For the last few years, we have mapped and collected good practices and cases on deliberative cases. We now have nearly 800 good practices from 1979 to 2023, taking place at a local, regional, national, and international level. This is the OECD Deliberative Democracy Database. We have also developed an OECD Deliberative Toolbook, which stems from the report "Innovative Citizen Participation in Democratic Institutions," where we map around 300 deliberative practices to identify trends, models, benefits of public deliberation. And with all that information, we developed some good practice principles to deliver, analyze, and review a deliberative process. Again, some of the resources are now in the chat. Beyond this, we also have the Innovative Citizen Participation Network. We know that practitioners around the world are constantly innovating and constantly identifying new practices and new work on deliberation, as was the case with Olivier and Nicole, who just spoke. The Citizen Participation Network gathers experts and academics who specialize in deliberation to help inform OECD work. If you're interested in taking part, I left my email in the chat, so feel free to reach out and become part of the network. Thank you.

Oh, thank you very much, Anen, for those contributions. I mean, certainly the OECD has pioneered a lot of the work on deliberative democracy, so thanks for sharing all those different resources. So, let me turn over to the panelists. Oliver, I see you're unmuted, so let's start with you, and then we'll go to Josephine.

Yeah, I'll try to cover the... I'm going to focus on Tanny's point, which for me has four dimensions, and I'll go super quick so that Josephine... So, this will be the last thing I say, then it's all yours, Josephine. First, one of the things I didn't put emphasis on because I think you're going to see it in the cases later is that in cases like mini-publics, there are measures put in place to try and reduce barriers to participation so that you can get a cross-section of the population. And that sometimes means compensation, expenses, dependents, childcare, transport, so resources to remove or at least minimize barriers to participation so that then you can have a mini version of the broader population in the room. Second, the role of future generations and even the role of non-human nature is increasingly part of the conversation because, as we know, many of the issues that we face are long-term, and our current institutions suffer from myopia. They tend to be designed to be focused on the short term. So, there is a space in deliberation to creatively bring in the role of future generations precisely because there is a space to dig deeper into issues. But

there is no getting away from the question of power and power inequalities. So, the first point I want to make is that the reason deliberative democrats insist that decisions should be based on the best available reasons rather than power, money, numbers is because that is the only way you get beyond the dynamics that tend to happen in other forms of communication, for example, negotiation, right? In negotiation, what you can have is... Imagine you were talking about climate change. Lobbyists have great power in all kinds of climate change-oriented spaces. And, you know, in deliberation, they will be expected to justify with an appeal to the common good why it is that burning fossil fuels is something desirable. And they will have to justify that to people who are suffering the consequences on the front lines of communities all over the world. So, in deliberation, the expectation is that it is the best argument rather than the force of the power behind you or the money behind you that should carry the day. Now, to create the conditions for that to carry the day is quite difficult, which is why we experiment with things like mini-publics. But I'm sure we will get onto these issues later. And I'll just finish by saying that deliberative democrats do accept that power inequalities are real. And Josephine has spoken about this. You know, we are at a time where we have, as a humanity, we are more powerful than ever in history due to our technological capacity, yet power is more unequally distributed than any other time in history. So, this is the challenge we face, and we need to find a way of tapping into something deeply human, which is the power of collective action based on dialogue and deliberation so that we can find that way forward.

Thank you very much, Oliver, for those points. Josephine, over to you.

Thank you, Nina. And I completely agree with Oliver's points. And I think, so perhaps just to add a complementary view on this. So, in designing the process of deliberation and creating healthy processes and healthy and inclusive processes of deliberation, I think in addition to putting into place the resources to minimize barriers to participation and being aware of power dynamics and power hierarchies, we also need to consider the role of social norms and sort of underlying norms that might be intangible but can also create barriers to participation or create barriers to inclusive participation or to who is being heard. And so, this is another perhaps intangible area of work, but addressing, recognizing the role of social norms and especially biased gender norms, I think is a key area, both in terms of understanding how they mediate participation in deliberation, how they mediate who is heard when that deliberation is taking place, and whose voice is taken into account. And part of what we are doing in the Human Development Report Office is to try to quantify things like biased gender social norms with our Gender Social Norms Index, which is trying

to assess the state of gender social norms and biases against gender equality across the globe, not by asking people directly, "Are you for or against gender equality?" because a lot of people would say, "Of course, I'm for gender equality," but by going deeper and asking people things like, "Who do you think makes a better business leader?" or "Who makes a better political leader?" etc. And that gets to the core of these gender norms. And I think that triangle we saw earlier that Professor Escobar showed really illustrates this very well. We need to go beyond sort of positions and create spaces of deliberation that take into account things like interests and values as well as needs and fears and norms, and how these mediate deliberation. So, just a complementary view on this.

Thank you very much, Josephine. We've come to the end of the first session. I do note that there are still some questions in the chat, so these will be responded to in the chat. I would really like to thank our first round of speakers, Josephine, Oliver, and Nicole in absentia, for taking us through this element of the gridlock, you know, first of all, the challenges, some striking findings—six out of seven people globally feeling insecure—and also how to get through that. Deliberative democracy, the key concepts, examples, practical examples, you know, you shared with us approaches. We've also heard some country examples, so this was very useful in terms of laying the foundation. And I think this provides a very good segue into the next session. And so, on that note, I'd like to introduce Ian Walker, Executive Director of New Democracy Foundation, who will moderate the second part of the webinar. Ian, over to you.

Thanks a lot, Nina. And good morning, everyone. I see a lot of numbers on the call. Hopefully, you've all tuned in to think, "What is this, and how does it work for us?" Firstly, by way of introduction, New Democracy is a small research foundation based in Australia. We design and operate projects, and we found we advised a number of foreign governments, which led into the UN Democracy Fund saying to us, "How do we go into new countries?" And I think, hopefully, for a number of you, that's really resonant. So, you're going to hear three project examples. I want to take us back to the beginning just briefly. An Marie highlighted we need to act swiftly on problems, and I noticed Josephine, she nearly stole the quote I'm going to use, and it was from Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, who said, "We all know what to do. We just don't know how to get reelected after we've done it." That's when you're going to start to look at deliberative democratic mechanisms. The why is really simple. People in elected office find it really complementary when people from all walks of life, different jobs, different backgrounds, stand next to them and say, "This is a fair decision." For those playing this back, sharing it with colleagues,

there was one great slide from Oliver, and there was this green slide. Stick on that. Take a randomly representative group of people, expose them to diverse and contested information, give them time, a hard question to solve, and a chance to find common ground. And that's really the recipe that you're going to hear throughout each of the next three presentations. So, hopefully, that gives you a feel for what is this deliberative democracy, why is it different. It reaches the part that other politics can get stuck on. Our representative democracies can be great for 80% of decisions, but they are getting stuck on the hard ones because of what Jean-Claude Juncker said.

Well, the first project you're going to hear from tonight, we're going to go to Brazil. And Sylvia and I initially had met at a democracy R&D group conference where there's lots of organizations like us. And through the UN Democracy Fund, Sylvia got a chance to run a first great project. So, Sylvia, what problem did you reach out to the mayor in Fortaleza to solve, and what worked well for you?

Thank you, Ian. Good morning. Thank you so much for this opportunity. I will share my screen here, my presentation. Just a second. I don't know what's going on. I can't find my...

Sylvia, maybe the technology is not going to be loving for us today.

No, no, it's okay. Yes. So, thank you so much. Just, I'm proudly like to share with you that we, at Delibera Brasil, we are a nonprofit and a super-partisan organization here. And we have now three mini-documentaries with letters in English, so you can take a look in our YouTube channel, talking about our experiences here in Brazil. And we have been developing since 2017 this form of participation in Brazil. This is important to say that we also have this legacy, this platform of citizens' participation, like participatory budget, conference councils. But we believe that with this form, we can strengthen and also complement these other forms of participation with these elements that have been exposed before. We have done already 21 mini-publics and citizens' assemblies at the local level here in Brazil. And the Council, the Citizen Council on Solid Waste Management of Fortaleza in 2019, this was supported by UNDEF and in partnership with New Democracy Foundation. And we have developed with the municipality, with the city hall, they have developed a software for sortition. There was a very, very important public event that gave legitimacy, and we had a group of 50 citizens, a representative group. They deliberated, and

their main focus was on recycling. And as you can see in this picture, the current mayor, Sarto, was highlighting this recycling program in his electoral campaign. He was not reelected, but the mayor at that time made his successor. So, I think this is a good sign. And the experience went so well that we were again approved with UNDEF, another program, this time with three cities: Belém in the north region of Brazil, Niterói, it's a large city close to Rio de Janeiro, the capital, and Fortaleza again. And this time, they were asking the citizens' assemblies' help to solve and to deliberate on policies to fight inequality in the cities. And in Fortaleza, the topic was public school, the whole-day public school system. And for the first time, we had children and teenagers deliberating together. So, in the last days, I think it's important to bring these experiences. We are developing a program, HENES, with other four Latin American organizations. It's a cycle of climate assemblies in Latin American cities. And the first was in Belém

So, Belém was chosen among other 16 Amazonian cities who wanted to do that, and we chose Belém because it's in a very important crossing for preservation and this dilemma between preservation and development. And Belém reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable family farming. We had an effective integration of traditional communities. We co-designed the invitation procedures and the sortition procedures with them, so it went very well. You can also see a special edition in English for this case. It's important because here we have social movements, this difficult context, and it's always good to integrate these groups in the planning, in the co-designing, and in the advisory group. What I can say also is that we have mapped throughout these years more than 50 Brazilian municipalities who are willing to solve their public problems with the help of citizens' deliberation. We have challenges, of course, especially the challenge of resources and budget. They don't have the budget for that, but we believe that we can see more and more processes like this here in Brazil at the local level, state level, and national level. Thank you.

Ian: I've got a follow-up question. I'm going to draw from the chat. You might just want to end the sharing so we can see one another. A lot of people on the call will be thinking, "Okay, how did random selection go in Northern Brazil?" You know, in Australia, we have databases of every address. You didn't have that. Did you manage to put old and young, rich and poor in one room, and how did they work together?

Sylvia: Yes, we have faced this challenge because we don't have, like, most of the time, we don't have these databases. So, we do a mix of forms. For example, we do sample surveys of 200, 300, 400 people in the city, and then in these samples, we register a sample of citizens who are willing to participate. Then we have the sortition over this database of registered citizens, like in a sample. We also have done in Belém, for example, with the traditional communities. We co-designed with them. They delivered the invitation letters in

their communities and asked people to register. So, we had very good participation and registration from the traditional communities in Belém. For the sortition, we had a very careful procedure of selecting some people from the traditional community. We had envelopes and all these in a public event in the city council, so it gives a lot of legitimacy. It was really important because even in Belém, a small city, people from the urban area didn't know so well the reality of people who lived in the rural area, the traditional community. So, this worked really well.

Ian: And that was something I saw, just the act, you know, in our silo society of putting people in one room. A quick-fire question before we go to the next presentation: give people a sense of how many people were in the room and how many days, how many hours did they spend together wrestling with this problem?

Sylvia: As I said, we have some budget problems, so our process, the topics are complex. They worked for five Saturdays, the whole Saturday, for five Saturdays. There were about 50 people. We work around 50 people, so 50 citizens with this representative profile. They worked for five Saturdays, and normally, they reach in the final session. We are finalizing the citizens' recommendation report, so in the final session, normally, they get this report with their recommendations already done.

Ian: Lovely. Thank you, Sylvia, for joining us. We're now going to zap across the road. We're going to go across the world to Edwin Mwa from Malawi. Edwin came to us with a great problem, and hopefully, anyone listening from an African country is going to want to share Edwin's story. We've got some great videos and documentaries about this. Edwin, you're still on mute, so I'm going to stretch a bit while you hit the button and come off mute. The problem that needed to be fixed, what is it that people didn't trust that you said, "This is the project that I want to work on in Malawi," and tell us how it went. It would be super if you could also touch on that political liaison that you did with some of the national MPs. Over to you, Edwin.

Edwin: Okay. In Malawi, we're dealing with the Constituency Development Fund. Actually, I would say the Constituency Development Fund problem is more or less like a Commonwealth country kind of problem. CDFs have been a problem simply because they have a political element, yet the funds that are being planned are meant to be accessed by the people, but the people that are supposed to access the funds are not aware of the funds. So, that has been the main problem. There has also been a lot of corruption, transparency issues, and accountability issues in the management of the funds. Civil society organizations and some political elements wanted to abolish the funds. Actually, some of them wanted to go to court, so it had been a problem across the country and across so many people. Then we said, "Ah, let's look at this problem critically. What is the

issue here?" So, we opted to take this problem because it was a national problem from the president, the MPs, and the communities, faith leaders, CSOs. It was a problem. So, we wanted to understand the problem and then find a solution that we could communicate to the leaders. So, we constituted citizen assemblies in a district called Salima. This district has five constituencies, so we wanted to get about 20 people per constituency, making a total of 100 members within that whole district.

The first method that we used to identify the people, we simply used random sampling. Our random sampling was kind of crude in that we don't have statistics, like the numbers that we could just go and draw or maybe computerized kind of numbers. We didn't do that. We used colored papers. That's what we used to do the sortition. We would have maybe about five colors. We would go to a marketplace, an open marketplace. In Africa, we normally have marketplaces. We would go there, talk to people, then gather around us maybe 100 or 200. We distributed the papers of different colors, then one would just choose a color. So, whoever picked that color, it means they were also incorporated. Then we drafted their names, all those things. Afterwards, we told them where to meet so that we could give them some training or something. We did that across the whole district to find the participants. After that, we started looking into the issue of the CDF in designated places. The first thing was to use the guidelines because the CDFs had guidelines. They were quickly drafted, they had their own problems, but we still used those. We gave information to the participants to understand it. Unfortunately, most of them, it was their first time to know about the CDF. They were not concerned about issues of politics or issues about how government runs, all those things. So, it means we had a lot of work, first of all, to tell them how governments are run, central government versus local government. Then we also had to give them details about the CDF manuals. After that, we said, "Okay, now that you have information, can you go back to your areas and see if you have CDF projects running there?" Then they would come back and explain what they had found and compare what is in the guidelines and what is happening on the ground. That would form a basis of discussion. So, they would come with their research, something like that. Then we would discuss, and they would start comparing what is happening on the ground and what is in the guidelines. They would identify the discrepancies in there. After some time, after deliberation, they had to do the recommendations based on what the guidelines are saying. Then there was a time when we had to meet the members of parliament as well as the district headquarters or the local government executives for them to give their recommendations. So, I'm just stating quickly because the process was very long, but in a nutshell, that is how we did it.

Ian: Edwin, thank you for a brilliant snapshot. What I really hope people got a sense of, I remember the first time I came to visit you in Malawi, and you said, "How are we going to do

random selection?" There was a market day, there was a highway, and you said, "We're going to hand out colored paper in the marketplace because everyone's here," and it just worked. So, for those in different countries thinking, "How does this work in different places?" Malawi, you went and used marketplaces because that's where the community is. Also, the fact you said people are going to learn by walking around and seeing the projects. National politicians said people don't trust us because of CDF. So, let's list what all the money gets spent on, let's let them go and see it, and they used it and followed up. Were you surprised, Edwin, that it was a very long process because it got interrupted by COVID three times?

Edwin: Yes, well, I would say first of all, the greatest challenge is the literacy level sometimes because it means you had to be very slow for them to grasp some concepts. But the beauty was that once they understood, they were very quick at acting. This, I think, is one thing we should learn, that those people that seem to be not having more information, once they get the information, they become too quick to use that information and act. It's what we noted. However, the process, as you say, delayed somehow because of COVID and then some restrictions of traveling, something like that. But ultimately, in the end, we still achieved the goals that we intended to achieve. Another aspect is that we also had to do a lot of lobbying, especially before the project was implemented. We had to talk to the MPs, we also had to talk to the district council office up until they said, "Okay, you can go ahead, and we support you in whatever you want to do." They started giving us information, like the information on the markets because markets happen on different days in different locations, but I had all that schedule. So, I would easily go around to know that on Wednesday, I'll have a market on this one, on Thursday, there will be a market on this one. So, that is how it was easier for us. But the most important thing is you have to do some sort of lobbying before you can just come with your project because, by the end of the day, it is the very same guys that will have to comply with whatever you find out, so they have to have their own blessings. So, it made it easier.

Ian: Edwin, you did that for the benefit of everyone watching. We'll share a documentary that was made by the UN Democracy Fund following this call, or I can find the link and throw it in the chat. But it was having national ministers saying, "I want you to solve this problem." They didn't view it as competitive; they viewed it as complementary, and that's because you brought a team in right at the beginning to say, "We think you have a problem, we want to solve it with you." So, thanks for sharing that, Edwin. Hopefully, that's a really resonant story about public trust and use of public funds and how you got everyday people to stay engaged for a whole year in taking a look at it. Thanks a lot.

The third step on our journey together is we're going to go to Uruguay. While we've heard from two project partners outside the UN, as the very formal background attests to, Alonso is going to tell us an in-the-tent story, I believe, of a project in Uruguay. Alonso, over to you.

Alonso: Thank you very much, and thanks to everyone who has made this space possible. I think, as has been said over the discussion today, there are two elements: we need to enlarge and reach the space for deliberation, and definitely, we need to act. I just want to say hi to many calling from UNDP, but especially to Emmanuel Sapienza and Moa, both of whom also helped us to conceptualize this work that we are doing. But before jumping straight into it, just a very quick word in relation to the context. Uruguay, a wonderful country in the Southern Cone of Latin America, 3.5 million people, one of the 24 democracies that can be rated and are considered a full democracy. But the question still remains: why do we need to keep doing this kind of work in countries that rate like that? The truth of the matter is that we need to protect democracy, and we need to work on democracy; otherwise, it will just get eroded. If we look into the Latinobarómetro, as of today, the level of satisfaction with democracy is higher than what you find in the region. It's around 59-60%, but the truth is, in the last 10 years, it has gone down 20 points. In 2013, it was around 83%. We also found some anomalies in our democracy here in Uruguay. For example, women's representation: only 24% of the seats are held by women, and Uruguay rates 96th in the ranking from IPU. Also, youth participation: only 5% of young people between 16 to 29 say that they have participated in political spaces. We see a kind of deterioration in the level of the discussion, and we also see what happens in many places, which is the public sphere is facing problems in delivering solutions due to their complexity. So, in all this, we decided to embark and work on promoting higher deliberation, and we designed a project called Diálogo, which means dialogue around. It has the ultimate goal of working through democratic deliberation and bringing innovation in order to expand the deliberative space, anchoring especially in two main tracks. One track was or is still linked to strengthening the linkages between civil society, citizens, and parliament specifically. The second track has been working with youth, who, as we have said, are highly unrepresented.

In the first track, in the track which is working on strengthening the linkages between parliaments with citizens and civil society, we support the creation and have worked with the Special Commission on Futures. It's a parliamentary commission constituted with both chambers that has a foresight approach, picks one theme, and over a period of two years works on a foresight in order to bring evidence, enlarge discussions between the parliament, academia, civil society, and other groups, and really build the scenarios. That has proven a very valuable space because it also has this long-term approach that we were debating before and takes a little bit of the day-to-day political debate or sometimes the

day-to-day political fight. The second track, in which we have worked a lot, has been with youth, and there have been a number of interventions. One of them has been working and giving voice to youth through already existing mechanisms. For example, the parliament has mechanisms called Propuestas, an online platform through which it aims to enlarge the level of participation from the citizens, where they can bring their views, where they can bring proposals. What we did is work with youth groups for them to bring what are the issues that are close to their hearts and be able to influence this discussion and this debate. Another component in which we significantly worked with the youth was through the Interparty of the Youth, which means working with all the youth components of the political parties, a space that was already existing but that was a little bit not used lately. So, what we did is we reinvigorated this space, understanding that it's a very meaningful space that will not only strengthen the political parties by bringing the views of their younger generation but also the democracy at large. There was a very clear milestone that we worked on over the last 15 months that had a very important event two months ago, in which over this accumulation process, the youth political parties debated among themselves and with the youth constituencies what is the kind of country they want to see, what is their vision, and translated that into a number of concrete proposals that were presented to the political candidates. We will have elections in one month in the parliament, with the presence of the parliament president and vice president, to all the candidates. So, that was a process that was designed, but that was a clear highlight point. But also within the political parties, what we have done is two kinds of works, and again, it's with this vision of enlarging spaces or really strengthening already existing spaces. One of the spaces in which we worked was connecting the political youth with an intergenerational dialogue. As many of you probably know, the country was under a dictatorship for many years, so there were events and also a space of dialogues in which the political group of the '83, the one who took the country back into democracy, had exchanges and reflections with the youth parties, as a kind of transition change between the values, the experiences, and the reflections. The same thing has been done with the intergenerational debate with the youth from the interparty with some of the social and environmental movements in order to strengthen and create an agenda, identifying the linkages point. Lastly, and very quickly, we have also worked in terms of creating capacities, and again, in this foresight capacity, which we think is extremely important in order to have a longer-term debate within the youth and the political parties.

If I may conclude with one quick reflection, I think what we have aimed is, one, to support the creation of new spaces. The Futures Commission in the parliament has been one. We have aimed also to strengthen some already existing ones. Propuestas as a platform has

been one, but also to increase the linkages between existing spaces to have a better and stronger dialogue.

Ian: Alonso, you've got 100 colleagues watching, probably a thousand more will watch it after hours on the recording when we all watch the Zooms and catch up. What do you know now that you wish you'd known at the beginning? I know you just mentioned the linkages, but anything operational where you'd share with your colleagues going, "You can relax, this works better than you think," or conversely, "Pay extra attention to this aspect"?

Alonso: I think one of the important elements is we really need to build patience. I mean, we had a larger vision of where we wanted to move and why, and that has been discussed over the last hour and a bit. But I think you need to start small in order to build confidence to at some point being able to speed it up. It's a sensing exercise. Of course, you kind of think through it, but you sense it, and you need to see when to push the accelerator and when to push a little bit the brakes to make sure that this confidence is not broken and everyone is at pace with what's happening and they feel confident.

Ian: Thanks a lot, Alonso. Now, I'm hopefully the magic of technology is now going to bring all the speakers back next to me. Eski, well, it's working so far. The first batch of questions were all aimed at Brazil. Now there's a question that I need to scroll back to, but there were questions about how you integrated with other council advisory bodies and also questions around prospects for national projects. Sylvia, if you can handle both of those.

Sylvia: Yes, thank you. This is a very interesting question. As you may know, we have in Brazil all these innovations like the national conferences, the policy councils at local level, state level. What we have done since the beginning is that for each project, we start creating and composing an advisory group. We call it a content group.

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Certainly! Here is the continuation of the text with added punctuation:

Sylvia: Yes, thank you. This is a very interesting question. As you may know, we have in Brazil all these innovations like the national conferences, the policy councils at the local level, state level. What we have done since the beginning is that for each project, we start creating and composing an advisory group. We call it a content group. In this advisory group, we invite all the stakeholders. It's not only an expert group; it's a political group, in fact, like people who have been working on the issue, activists, social movements, and also these other instances that are working on this. So, they participate. The councils usually, for example, thinking about the youth, we have now done just recently the Youth Climate Assembly in Recife, a capital in the Northeast, and they were directly in touch with the Council of Youth. So, they are working together with climate assemblies. Thinking about the national level, at this new national president Lula's government, we have good perspectives, and we are discussing the possibilities of the national conferences that we have. The national conference with all the civil society is a very participatory process. The national conference could convene a citizens' assembly to go over a group of citizens to go over a kind of gridlock that the conference cannot solve. So, the national conference is a very powerful instance of participation, but they can reach out to a citizens' assembly and combine this. So, this is a kind of mix that we are talking about here in Brazil.

Ian: Edwin, there was a question in the chat. It came up a couple of times about participant capability. It said, "We've tried this in some African countries, and participant capability wasn't there." You spoke a little bit about how you saw, you know, there were some challenges at the beginning. Where did you see that capability increase? Can you help share a little bit about that? What was the magic ingredient that helped people get into a complex topic?

Edwin: Okay. At the beginning, it's like you're writing a blank slate about a certain topic. So, what we did, we invested a lot of time to try to explain to the people how government works and then how even the fund, how are these funds connected from central government, parliament, local government, and how can they access them. Then we also went further to say, "Okay, can you examine in your own areas where you have had these funds and what happened?" So, all this was like a hands-on kind of training. From just giving the content, they also had like a hands-on kind of training. By the end of the day, they understood the whole process, and they had also gained knowledge. So, although they might not have been as literate, the way we delivered the message and the whole thing, by the end of the day, everybody was educated, and they were competent enough to even go to the local government office and make demands on how the projects were working. I remember some of them had to ask for a list of the projects in the district to see how they were being managed and what the amount of money on each individual project was. So, that was also

more or less like an empowerment to people who were outside the whole political process, but now they began to understand, and they also began to start making demands.

Ian: Thank you, Edwin, because what you've really captured there is the importance of time. Sylvia mentioned her five Saturday projects. I think yours were six Saturdays in the end. It builds people's capability, and also you had great incentives. You had national ministers saying, "We're listening to that incentive." Listening has to make a huge difference to people. I think I've got a question here for Alonso just regarding government executive links. How do you handle this in terms of a project like this? What is that formal integration with the executive side of government?

Alonso: Thank you, Ian. I mean, I think it's key. As I mentioned, part of the work has been related to the parliament, so we've been working very much with the legislative side. Of course, there has been a dialogue, an open dialogue from the beginning in order to lay out what was expected to be the process, but also a lot of clarity on what was expected to be the output. At this point in time, we are also specifically reflecting on the Futures Commission, the legislative Futures Commission. We are starting to reflect on how we can make stronger linkages with the executive branch in order to really make sure that we keep closing the loop. But going to the core of the question, I think it's openness, total clarity in the beginning on what are the objectives and what is expected to happen and how it's expected to happen. People don't want surprises there. Of course, we need to protect the space. There is no doubt about that. It needs to be a meaningful discussion in which the participation is genuine, but there needs to be also very much clarity. There should not be surprises on either side.

Ian: You're on mute. Sorry, my first Zoom. I missed COVID. This was a fantastic way to wrap up, Alonso, and I appreciate you sharing the story, and Edwin and Sylvia. Just to wrap up the session as we hand over, what we hope you've got a sense of is a really practical application of random selection of citizens so you can actually get people like us, just regular people, being heard, being given a substantive role in decisions. It worked in Malawi on a complex financial topic. You heard examples from across South America there in Uruguay and Brazil. Give people the time and pose them a hard question. It helps to reach a trusted public decision. So, with those examples, I'm now going to hand over to Sarah Lister, the Head of Governance for UNDP, who's helped to make this possible. Sarah, over to you to close.

Sarah: Thank you very much, Ian, and what a fascinating discussion. I wish I had more than two minutes allocated to me, but I don't, so I will be disciplined like all the other marvelous speakers and just make a couple of reflections and thank a few people. Creating meaningful opportunities for civic engagement is a key part of UNDP's work on promoting

an open and inclusive public sphere, and so that's the backdrop to the conversation that we've brought together today. We are keen to explore ways in which we can strengthen our work in this area, and so it was really interesting and really inspiring to hear how deliberative approaches and different approaches to deliberation can enable constructive dialogue in highly polarized environments. I have a few key takeaways myself. This is an area I've been interested in for many years, but I also learned a lot. I was particularly struck by that diagram that Oliver showed with the peaks and the need to go below the issues to enable people to discuss their values and the issues that are dear to them. I learned a lot also from the many examples that there were and this theme throughout on the need to embed these approaches in or link to formal political structures. Alonso, you spoke a lot to that, but others did as well. Then that very real discussion we had at the beginning about power and money and whose voices are being heard and do these approaches just mirror those power structures that already exist and further embed them in societies. It's been a super interesting conversation. I'm very pleased that UNDP has been able to organize this jointly with our very good friends and partners at the UN Democracy Fund, An Marie and her team, and I'm really thankful to all the speakers and the moderators for their contributions and what they have brought to the discussion. I would also like to thank those in my team who have made this possible: Emma, Esi, and Emanuele for all the hard work behind the scenes. We do look forward to further engagement on this issue. Please feel free to reach out to them, to me. I've seen a whole load of really interesting questions, comments, resources in the chat. I've been trying to keep up with those while also listening to the conversation. So, this is an ongoing conversation, and UNDP and UN Democracy Fund are pleased to have hosted this one, but we want to take it forward as well with all of you. So, in closing today, I would just ask you also to complete the one-minute evaluation poll which will appear on your screen by some magic of technology that I don't know how it will happen, but I'm confident that it will. And close us off for this morning or this afternoon or this evening. I see some colleagues who have stayed online very late in their time zones, and I appreciate your contribution and your time. Thank you very much, everybody. Goodbye.