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Annual Report

2018–2019



The Center on International Cooperation (CIC) is a non-profit research center housed at New York University. Our vision is to advance effective multilateral action to prevent crises and build peace, justice, and inclusion.



Letter from the Director

The past year has witnessed the deepening trend of global geopolitical realignment, in which great power politics often hold sway over multilateral, cooperative approaches to solving the world's most pressing problems. Worsening levels of inequality continue to erode trust and common political ground, and nationalist and populist sentiments continue to flourish. Rising protests and political tensions, from the United Kingdom to Hong Kong to Chile to France to Sudan, signal both dissatisfaction with the status quo and the creative power of a wide variety of new social movements.

We remain optimists in this evolving global order. The Center on International Cooperation (CIC) at New York University is committed to our core values of research-informed policymaking and multilateral engagement, working to strengthen cooperative approaches among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community. History has shown that in difficult times, it is necessary to adhere to ideals, and multilateral action is essential to fostering the commitment to accomplish peace, justice, and inclusion.

This year, CIC has been successful in informing the policy debate around key issues of multilateral reform, the conflict prevention agenda at the United Nations (UN), the humanitarian-development-

peacebuilding nexus, and the ongoing efforts to bring peace and political stability to longstanding conflict situations in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We supported the president of the UN General Assembly in establishing a substantive debate series on promoting and defending multilateralism. CIC also played an advisory role in the development of the UN funding compact for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing expert analysis to both UN institutions and donors. The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive societies, the multistakeholder initiative hosted by CIC to advance SDG16+, seized the opportunity of the 2019 Summits to welcome new member states, help register the largest number of acceleration commitments for any goal, and release several major publications—including the flagship report of the Task Force on Justice and the challenge paper launching the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion.

CIC is committed to its role in strengthening international cooperation on leading global challenges and remains thankful to our partners and donors who remain optimistic alongside us by supporting CIC in this essential work.



Sarah Cliffe
Director, CIC

Facing page, top: CIC Senior Advisor Karina Gerlach, Task Force on Justice Head of Research Maaïke de Langen, and members of the Task Force on Justice visit a mobile justice center in Susques, Argentina, in May 2019 (Photo: Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Argentina). Bottom: World leaders present "Time to Act on Inequality" statement during the September 2019 UN General Assembly. L-R: Timor-Leste Foreign Minister Dionisio da Costa Babo Soares, Uruguayan delegate, Irish Deputy Prime Minister (Tánaiste) Simon Coveney, Namibian President Hage Geingob, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde, Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, Tunisian delegate (Photo: Ayano Hisa).

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies

As the UN calls for a “decade of action and delivery” on the SDGs, the Pathfinders are poised to accelerate implementation of SDG16+.

CIC continues to host the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, a group of UN member states, international organizations, global partnerships, civil society, and private sector actors working to accelerate the delivery of the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+). In 2018–19, Pathfinders welcomed seven new member states: Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Jordan, Norway, Rwanda, and Uruguay.

Over the past year, Pathfinders has continued to promote accelerated implementation of the SDG16+ targets at national and international levels. 2019 saw the release of the Task Force on Justice’s flagship *Justice for All* report, the launch of a Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion, and significant strides toward launching the next Pathfinders challenge, which aims to build a movement to halve global violence.

Throughout 2019, Pathfinders played a convening and mobilizing role for the SDG16+ community as it worked toward the High-level Political Forum in July 2019 and the SDG Summit in September 2019. Gatherings were supported by founding members Switzerland and Sierra Leone, as well as by the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Canada, the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, and the Republic of Korea.

During the first review of SDG16 at the forum in July, ten Pathfinder countries presented their successes in implementing SDG16+. The UN thematic review of SDG16 was supported by a Pathfinders joint statement from 36 countries.



Above: CIC Director Sarah Cliffe, Program Officer Céline Monnier, and Senior Program Officer Harshani Dharmadasa visit a school in Dili, Timor-Leste, in February 2019.

Pathfinders co-hosted eight SDG16+ events and two high-level dinners, working with more than 25 government, civil society, and private sector partners.

During the SDG Summit and UN General Assembly in September 2019, Pathfinders worked with Oxfam and the government of Sweden to bring together a group of world leaders who presented a joint statement affirming their commitment to pursuing policies that will reduce inequality and exclusion.

Pathfinders also hosted an event celebrating commitments to accelerate action for SDG16+ from Pathfinder countries and other partners: SDG16 registered the highest number of commitments of any goal, although there is still a long way to go.

Looking ahead, CIC will continue to support Pathfinders as it mobilizes the SDG16+ community to put SDG16+ at the heart of the UN’s Decade of Action for the SDGs and prepares for the UN secretary-general’s first SDG Action Platform, which will form part of the UN’s 75th Anniversary Summit.



The Task Force on Justice

The Task Force on Justice has developed an agenda for action that will help deliver the SDG targets that promise justice for all. Chaired by ministers from Argentina, the Netherlands, Sierra Leone, and the Elders, the Task Force was at the heart of an unprecedented mobilization over the last year, which included meetings in Freetown in October 2018 and The Hague in February 2019. Leadership from the ministerial co-chairs has been critical to strengthening the political platform for action, as demonstrated by The Hague Declaration, the Buenos Aires Declaration, and the g7+ Joint Action Plan for Access to Justice in conflict-affected states.

The Task Force presented its report, *Justice for All*, at the High-level Political Forum in July 2019. The report highlighted a global justice gap that sees more than five billion people deprived of justice. Its vision for people-centered justice has galvanized commitments from partners, offering new impetus and direction for justice as we move into the Decade of Action for the SDGs.

A growing group of justice partners have driven this process, contributing to the Task

Force’s research through data analysis, policy commentary, and reviews of available evidence, resulting in multiple reports and working papers that form the basis for future action. This alliance—and the support of justice leaders and activists around the world—will provide the basis of a new phase of Pathfinders’ work on justice.



Above: Hina Jilani of the Elders, co-chair of the Task Force on Justice, addresses the World Justice Forum in The Hague in April 2019 (Photo: Bart Hoogveld).



The Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion

The Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion was created in recognition that inequality and exclusion are among the most politically important—and difficult—issues of our time. The challenge seeks to mobilize political momentum for social, political, and economic inclusion and equality, to sponsor practical changes in international institutions, and to provide interested governments and political parties with a more advanced menu of effective policy solutions. Retreats in September 2018 and May 2019 brought key stakeholders together to discuss the scope and direction of the work, adopting a framework

of “redistribution and recognition” to tackle the problems of inequality and exclusion.

Country visits to Tunisia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and Ethiopia deepened engagement with country partners and provided ground-level insights. In July 2019, an advisory council of ministers and experts was convened by Sweden, Tunisia, and Indonesia. Ethiopia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, and Uruguay have joined the council, along with the UN, the World Bank Group, and Oxfam. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Civicus, Development

Finance International, and other major civil society partners and academics are also part of the initiative.

At the High-level Political Forum in July 2019, the Grand Challenge published a challenge paper that sets out the scope of the initiative, focusing on five themes: political inclusion, progressive fiscal reform, innovative social protection, spatial inequality, and the future of work and technology. The paper has helped to identify key allies and galvanize support for the work among civil society and government partners. In September 2019, the Grand Challenge helped convene a group of world leaders to issue a major statement on inequality during the UN General Assembly.



Above: CIC Director Sarah Cliffe meets with Tunisian Minister of Vocational Training and Employment Sayida Ounissi in Tunis in December 2018.



The Movement to Halve Global Violence

SDG 16.1 promises to significantly reduce all forms of violence everywhere. The Pathfinders' third Grand Challenge is putting together a coalition to achieve this goal. Pathfinders is currently working to launch a movement to halve global violence and create an agenda for action on five dimensions of violence: armed conflict, urban and criminal violence, interpersonal violence (with a focus on violence against women and children), human rights and mass atrocities, and violent extremism.

In 2018–19, Pathfinders engaged with violence prevention actors and communities through collaboration, convening, and direct outreach to member states. These included a keynote address by Pathfinders Director David Steven at the 41st Development Cooperation Forum; a workshop on the sidelines of the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development that brought together a group of leaders to conceptualize a movement to halve global violence in all its forms; and several publications on SDG 16.1. Direct engagement with member states focused on supporting Germany in joint efforts to harness women's leadership on small arms and light weapons control for peace and development, as well as consultations on gender and arms control in Addis Ababa, and a side event at the High-level Political Forum exploring the creation of a network to advance this work. In September 2019, Pathfinders, +Peace, and Impact:Peace launched Peace in Our Cities, an ambitious campaign to galvanize a movement of advocates, mayors, and city governments to halve and transform urban violence by 2030.



Left: Mayor Clara Luz Flores of Escobedo, Mexico, signs the SDG16+ Action Pledge at the September 2019 launch of the Peace in Our Cities campaign.

Multilateral Reform

The reform process at the UN, which moved into implementation on January 1, 2019, has been a central focus of the program; it is now shifting to support member state efforts to defend and promote multilateralism.

As the UN approaches its 75th anniversary, member states have been vocal in calling for a recommitment to the spirit of the UN Charter. CIC facilitated and moderated meetings between the leaders of the UN pillar institutions in a series of three high-level dialogues on “the future of multilateralism” that included the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, and many permanent representatives. This series is among the only such joint dialogues since 1945.

In January 2019, CIC published a commentary reviewing the secretary-general’s much anticipated reforms, concluding that while they left some challenges unaddressed, they would bring about significant changes if able to clear the hurdles to implementation. CIC also played a significant role in the discussions on the UN Development System Funding Compact, providing expert advice to UN institutions and donors over the course of the process—with the hopes of supporting the reform agenda by improving funding patterns, accountability, transparency, and results. Looking at wider financing for development issues, CIC moderated part of the UN Summit on financing for development and cohosted a workshop with Norway on the 2020 HLPF, including advancing the agenda.

CIC deepened its engagement on collaboration between multilaterals and the implementation of the UN–World Bank report, *Pathways for Peace*, by supporting joint UN–World Bank efforts on prevention at country level.

Visits to Tunisia, Timor-Leste, Colombia, and Côte d’Ivoire provided insight on practical recommendations to strengthen the partnership.

The program’s ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the UN Gender Parity Strategy included a stocktaking event at the one-year anniversary, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Qatar. In January 2019, the program co-authored a widely read article on the backlash to parity from some UN staff in *PassBlue*.

In 2020, the UN’s 75th anniversary year, CIC will continue its focus on the future of multilateralism, improving the UN’s approach to conflict prevention, and delivering on the 2030 Agenda. The program will further its work on gender parity, and explore new initiatives to foster cooperation between the UN and international financial institutions.

Below: CIC Director Sarah Cliffe, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation Vassily A. Nebenzia, President of the General Assembly María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, Secretary-General António Guterres, and President of ECOSOC Mona Juul at the September 2019 high-level dialogue on multilateralism (Photo: UN Photo/Loey Felipe).



The Year at CIC

July 2018

Pathfinders Stand Up for SDG16+ at the 2018 High-level Political Forum
Multilateral Reform brings heads of UN pillars together for joint dialogue
Congo Research Group report on the violent conflict in Kasai



November 2018

Pathfinders holds The Big Think on Justice in The Hague, Netherlands
Humanitarian Crises field visit to Nigeria



October 2018

Pathfinders participates in the SDG16+ Forum in Freetown, Sierra Leone
Multilateral Reform organizes second high-level dialogue on multilateralism

January 2019

Multilateral Reform issues commentary on secretary-general's reforms
Congo Research Group publishes data leaks on Congolese presidential elections

WHO REALLY WON THE CONGOLESE ELECTIONS?



August 2018

CIC publishes commentary on the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review

September 2018

Pathfinders Stand Up for SDG16+ at UNGA 2019
Multilateral Reform co-hosts "The Gender Parity Strategy: One Year On" event



December 2018

Afghanistan-Pakistan Regional Project workshop on the Afghan peace process in Beijing, China
Pathfinders/Peace and Security joint field visit to Tunisia

February 2019

CIC supports the UNDS funding compact process at The Hague retreat
Pathfinders/Peace and Security joint field visits to Indonesia and Timor-Leste



March 2019

Peace and Security program hosts the Data for Peace and Security International Practitioners Workshop

Pathfinders high-level group publishes the Justice for Women report



May 2019

Peace and Security field visits to Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria

Pathfinders workshop at the annual Peace and Development Forum in Stockholm

Humanitarian Crises/Pathfinders joint field visit to Ethiopia



July 2019

Pathfinders co-hosts eight SDG16+ events at the High-level Political Forum

Peace and Security/ Humanitarian Crises joint field visit to Colombia

Pathfinders launches the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion



September 2019

Pathfinders convenes world leaders to issue a major statement on inequality at the UN General Assembly



Pathfinders reception celebrating acceleration actions during the SDG Summit

Multilateral Reform organizes the third high-level dialogue on multilateralism at the UN

April 2019

Pathfinders launches *Justice for All* report in The Hague and Buenos Aires

Peace and Security launches policy briefing series on conflict prevention at the UN



June 2019

Afghanistan-Pakistan Regional Project holds track-two international dialogue in Istanbul

Pathfinders hosts multiple events at SDG16 Conference in Rome

August 2019

Congo Research Group produces the first biannual Kivu Security Tracker report

Peace and Security publishes final briefings in the conflict prevention series

Humanitarian Crises field visit to Lebanon



Facing page: Ambassador Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani, CIC Deputy Director Paige Arthur, and other panelists speak at "The Gender Parity Strategy: One Year On" event co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the UN in September 2018. Above: Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio meet in the SDG Action Zone for the world leaders' statement on inequality in September 2019 (Photo: Ayano Hisa).

Peace and Security

With a focus on practical approaches to prevention and data-driven initiatives, the Peace and Security program aims to raise the level of ambition for the UN.

As pressures on multilateral approaches continued to grow over the past year, the Peace and Security program worked with a regionally and politically diverse group of 20+ member states to identify common ground for the secretary-general's prevention agenda, while highlighting practical steps forward at country level. Drawing on field visits to Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, and the headquarters of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the program documented nationally led, sovereignty-supporting approaches to prevention that can serve as useful models for multilateral accompaniment to country-led initiatives. These findings were then presented in New York at workshops co-hosted by UN permanent missions and the government of Norway.

The program also broke new ground by hosting an international practitioners' workshop in collaboration with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to showcase practical applications that have the promise of changing the way that peace and security practitioners work and delivering benefits for people in conflict-affected countries. More than seventy people from around the world participated, highlighting applications using artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, new datasets, and more.

Continuing CIC's history of data-rich approaches to analysis of peace operations, the program began work on a new dataset that promises to help policymakers better understand how resources for peace operations match up to mandate objectives.

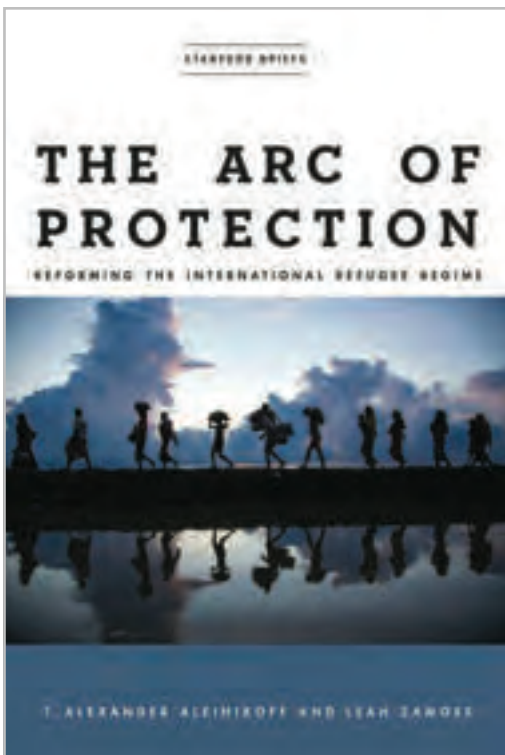


Above: CIC Program Officer Céline Monnier, ECOWAS Director of Early Warning Dr. Abdou Lat Gueye, and CIC Deputy Director Paige Arthur (seated, R-L), with staff of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network in Abuja, Nigeria, May 2019.

In 2019–20, the 2020 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture will provide an opportunity to solidify commitments to nationally led and sovereignty-supporting prevention. The program will work with the g7+ countries to capture lessons learned by host nations of UN peace operations for consolidating peace in the wake of transitions, as well as to deepen CIC's work on data-driven approaches to peace and security. The aim is to start raising the level of ambition for prevention at the country level.

Humanitarian Crises

The Humanitarian Crises program aims to bring a fresh, critical perspective to a longstanding policy dilemma: what is, or should be, the role of humanitarian action in “permanent emergencies” with root causes that are overwhelmingly structural and political?



Above: *The Arc of Protection: Reforming the International Refugee Regime*, co-authored by Program Director Leah Zamore, was published in 2019 (Cover: Stanford University Press).

During 2018–19, the program undertook a major independent review of the “new way of working” between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors, supported by Norway and UNDP. The review analyzes whether country teams, donors, and governments are succeeding in combining humanitarian action with approaches that address the inequities that give rise to humanitarian needs. The review included fieldwork and consultations in many settings, including

Colombia, Ethiopia, Greece, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, Somalia, and Switzerland. The findings have already had an important impact on the ground, for instance by encouraging humanitarian actors to take greater account of macroeconomic challenges in their programming and policy.

The Humanitarian Crises program has also increased its engagement with global policy processes. Findings from the review continue to feed into high-level policy forums, including the High-level Political Forum and the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration. In partnership with The New School’s Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, the head of the program co-directs the Experts Group on Global Refugee Policy, shaping global discussions around the Global Compact on Refugees, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and the Global Refugee Forum.

During 2019–20, the program will continue to support new ways of working between humanitarian, development, and peace actors. It will have a particular focus on efforts to reinforce (rather than replace) national and local systems, and efforts to strengthen governance structures in two “hard case” contexts: protracted internal displacement situations, and conflict/displacement settings with a climate crisis dimension.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Regional Project

APRP is an influential source of analysis and advice on the conflict in Afghanistan—amid increasingly difficult political conditions.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Regional Project (APRP) works on many of the most pressing challenges for the region, supporting the peace process and international cooperation through a blend of structured dialogues, applied research, and strategic outreach. In 2018–19, APRP continued its collaboration with various Chinese organizations, the European Union, and US think tanks on the Afghan peace process. In December 2018, APRP organized a workshop on the peace process in Beijing in collaboration with the China Institute of International Studies and the Norwegian Center for Conflict Resolution (NOREF). Participants from Afghanistan, China, Norway, and the United States (US) attended the workshop, and Afghan, European Union (EU), and US government institutions sought out CIC’s analysis as a result.

In 2019, APRP hosted a track-two international dialogue in Istanbul to support the efforts of the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation. Participants from Afghanistan, China, the EU, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, and the US attended.

The dialogue emphasized coherent messaging, a structured and representative intra-Afghan dialogue, and an international framework to support the peace process.

APRP’s director continued to engage in widespread media outreach, appearing on PBS and WNYC, and writing op-eds and articles for publications including *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*.

In the coming year, APRP will continue to organize multilateral dialogues on Afghanistan with the US and China, and regional actors such as Pakistan, India, and Russia. The program will focus on applied research to support Afghanistan’s peace process.



Above: APRP Director Barnett Rubin speaks at the India International Centre in New Delhi in October 2018 (Photo: Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi).

Congo Research Group

As the Democratic Republic of the Congo made a historic transition to a new government in 2019, CRG has continued to provide in-depth analysis of Congo's political process, while further expanding its work on political economy and real-time tracking of violence in the eastern part of the country.



Above: Congo Research Group director Jason Stearns speaks to staff at a meeting near the border of North Kivu, DRC.

The Congo Research Group (CRG) carries out rigorous research informed by a deep knowledge of the social and historical background to political and conflict dynamics in Congo. As the country prepared for critical elections in late 2018, CRG conducted a series of opinion polls, dug into the biases of Congolese electoral institutions, and examined the elections' impact on conflict dynamics across the country. Following the elections, CRG partnered with the *Financial Times* and *Radio France Internationale* to publish leaks suggesting massive rigging of the vote.

In 2019, CRG introduced a new blog, *Ebuteli* ("stairs" in Lingala), and is preparing to launch a podcast called *Masolo ya Kati* ("Intimate Conversations"). In the past year, three new full-time members have joined the core team, and the program has further expanded beyond its focus on the violence conflict in eastern Congo. CRG's political and conflict analysis extended to the Kasai region, which suffered a period of unrest in 2016–17 following the insurgency of a local customary chief. CRG published a report on the origins and consequences of the conflict in July 2018, and continues to provide monthly reports on political and security dynamics in the region.

In 2017, CRG partnered with Human Rights Watch to launch the Kivu Security Tracker (KST), an online platform providing real-time information on security incidents in the two Kivu provinces of eastern Congo. In August 2019, the project produced the first biannual KST report examining trends surrounding violence in the region. In the coming year, CRG will launch a major project on Ebola in eastern Congo, its impact on armed groups and conflict, and the political economy of the humanitarian response. CRG will also publish two reports on the Inga dam project, and continue to provide timely, critical analysis about the conflict and politics in Congo.



Above: CIC Director Sarah Cliffe, Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder, and Oxfam Executive Director Winnie Byanyima gather in the SDG Action Zone during the 2019 UN General Assembly (Photo: Ayano Hisa).

Donor Acknowledgments

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The New Venture Fund

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Open Society Foundations

Schmidt Family Foundation

Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Together for Girls

United Nations Development Programme

United States Institute of Peace

World Bank

We are also grateful to partners who have hosted major conferences, including the governments of Argentina, Belgium, China, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Sierra Leone, as well as the European Institute of Peace, the Institute of Chinese Studies (India), the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Justice Project.



Top left: Pathfinders Director David Steven meets with justice partners at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Photo: Bart Hoogveld). Top middle: CRG researchers visit the Kasangidi sector office in Kasai Central province, DRC, in July 2019. Middle left: CIC Data Specialist Paul von Chamier, Program Officer Céline Monnier, and Program Assistant Shavon Bell participate in the Data for Peace and Security workshop in New York in March 2019. Middle right: Sierra Leone hosts a ministerial meeting of the Task Force on Justice in Freetown in October 2018. Bottom left: Dr. Alaa Murabit launches the "SDG16 Butterfly Wings," from the SDG Butterfly Effect Campaign, at the Pathfinders' SDG16+ Decade of Action reception in September 2019 (Photo: Ayano Hisa). Bottom right: CIC Director Sarah Cliffe and Senior Program Advisor Karina Gerlach visit the Faculty of Law at the University of Indonesia in February 2019.



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