

## Pathways to sustaining peace at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

A thematic paper jointly authored by FAO and Interpeace as a contribution to the 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

### 1. Introduction and overview

In its report *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence*<sup>1</sup>, the OECD elaborates five dimensions of fragility that help summarise the root causes, drivers and triggers of violence and armed conflict: economic, environmental, political, security and societal. This indicates that United Nations (UN) Agencies Funds and Programmes (AFPs) have an array of technical and other capacities that can contribute to addressing these five dimensions. For FAO, as a UN specialized agency leading efforts to defeat hunger, broadly speaking these include the economic, environmental and societal dimensions: e.g. through supporting access to livelihoods and economic opportunities; strengthening capacities for managing and facilitating access to natural resources; and improving collaborative capacities between different groups, such as host communities and displaced persons.

Some - but certainly not all - conflict drivers specifically relate to FAO's mandate and competencies. Those that relate to FAO's work and mandate include ones that, *inter alia*, involve competition for land, water and other natural resources, the multiple dimensions of food insecurity, the neglect by governments of marginalized areas, the climate crisis, or environmental mismanagement. Local conflicts are often rooted in marginalization and underdevelopment, particularly in rural areas, as well as in competition over natural resources, which are the foundation of rural livelihoods. Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognises that climate change is a macro-driver of significant transformations to the human system. Climate variability and extreme weather events can severely damage livelihoods, settlement patterns and institutional stability, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and with particularly severe impacts in rural areas. Such events may alter the dynamics of interaction among individuals, which, in some instances, may turn violent.

FAO's goal is to achieve food security for all, through outcomes relating to increased agricultural productivity, improvements in animal health, sustainable use of natural resources, and strengthened household resilience, amongst others. These technical outcomes are not necessarily in themselves peace-contributing. However, they may have a potential peace-contributing impact provided they (i) reduce conflict drivers or strengthen peace drivers that are salient in the specific context, and, (ii) are designed and implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner.

Discussions with other AFPs in recent years has highlighted the need to better understand and unpack the relationships of how technical work has contributed to and can contribute to peace. Indeed, there is a risk that demands to demonstrate AFPs' contributions to sustaining peace mean that peace impacts are perceived as an automatic by-product of technical work. The main aim of this paper is to contribute to that debate, by outlining the key pathways - as theories of change (ToC) - through which FAO can potentially reduce the likelihood of violence or improve the prospects for peace, and to illustrate some of these through field examples.

This paper:

- Outlines the principal and contributory pathways through which FAO may contribute to sustaining peace;
- Demonstrates how some of these pathways have had an impact on local peace, illustrated through examples of FAO field interventions;
- Describes how approaches that contribute to sustaining peace are being incorporated into FAO's policies, guidance, programming and partnerships (both UN system and beyond);
- Presents some key remaining challenges and recommendations.

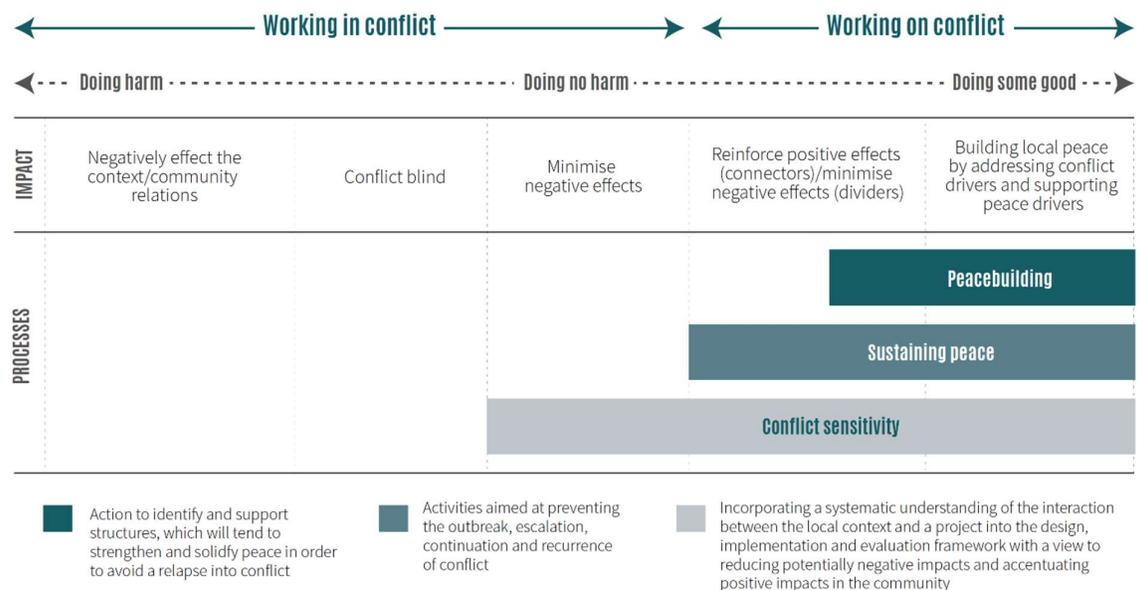
### 1.1. Spectrum of contributions to peace

In order to frame the following discussion, it is helpful to present a spectrum of interventions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. As Figure 1 illustrates, FAO interventions, at a minimum, should be ‘doing no harm’ and where possible examining ways to positively influence local conflict dynamics (i.e. ‘doing some good’).

Fragile and conflict-affected contexts are inherently complex. For FAO to intervene in such contexts mandates that a systematic understanding of the local context is integrated into the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation framework of an intervention. To be conflict-sensitive is to consider and reflect this contextual understanding into all FAO interventions to reduce potential negative impacts and, where possible, to accentuate positive impacts in the community. Interventions that are not conflict-sensitive risk reversing the desired impacts of improving food security, livelihoods and resilience.

Understanding and monitoring the interaction between an intervention and the local context is therefore integral to adaptive programming ensuring that potentially negative impacts are promptly addressed. Ensuring conflict sensitivity is thus a prerequisite, before potential contributions to sustaining peace can even be considered.

Figure 1. Spectrum of interventions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts



## 2. Pathways for FAO contributions to sustaining peace

### 2.1. Introduction

Exploring pathways (through the ToC concept<sup>11</sup>) is a useful entry point to facilitate analysis of existing interventions and to support future programme design. These pathways are an explicit description of how change - in this case contributions to sustaining peace - is expected to happen, and on which assumptions this is based. A clearly articulated ToC is a prerequisite for being able to assess whether and to what extent FAO activities do indeed contribute to sustaining peace. To date, related theories of change have sometimes been clearly articulated in FAO programme documents and project proposals, while at other times remained somewhat implicit. Surfacing these ToCs allows them to be scrutinised, so that assumptions on how and why FAO activities may contribute to sustaining peace can be tested and verified.

The drivers of conflict and peace FAO are most likely to be able to influence, within its mandate and areas of technical competence, are outlined below. For instance, when competition over natural resources is a major driver of conflict, FAO can increase the productivity of natural resources and strengthen cooperation mechanisms and dispute resolution mechanisms, in order to reduce the salience of this conflict driver.

Following this, the key potential pathways through which FAO may be able to reduce the likelihood of violent conflict and increase the prospects for peace are presented and discussed. By making these more explicit, they can serve as a compass for FAO, in order to optimize the degree to which FAO interventions can contribute to sustaining peace.

## 2.2. Key drivers of conflict addressed by FAO interventions

Conflict causality is complex, multi-layered and increasingly influenced by the interrelation of vertical conflict lines. In many of the world's intractable armed conflicts, key structural causes and conflict drivers are to be found in rural settings. There is also the risk that non-violent conflicts, including those over the access to and management of natural resources, can devolve into violence affecting rural development, livelihoods and human security.

The structural causes contribute to an environment where conflict is more likely once they become associated with factors that drive, mobilise or incite disputes, tensions and violence. Grievance-based disputes find fertile ground where representative governance and institutional authority, formal or informal, has been undermined and the state is unable to respond effectively to shocks, whether natural or human induced. Non-state groups, representing the interests of their constituents or eyeing opportunity in a governance deficit, can contribute to state fragility where their interests are exclusionary, replace governance functions and challenge the state's monopoly on the use of force.

In the fragile and conflict-affected contexts in which FAO intervenes, these broader structural causes of conflict are frequently attributed to the weak rule of law, absent or poor governance and the limited or non-existent provision of public services. Within this type of context, institutionalised patronage and corruption can thrive serving to deepen socio-economic marginalisation that contributes to identity group mobilisation and the further undermining of state-society relations.

In such environments, the key drivers of conflict that fall within FAO's mandate can easily trigger or exacerbate the conflict, as they contribute to grievances and can be used effectively to mobilize social groups against each other. The inequitable access to renewable natural resources, including fisheries, forestry, land and pasture, feature prominently in rural conflict dynamics. Disputes and tensions over access to natural resources can escalate into violence in times of scarcity, such as that induced by natural disasters, or in times of abundance, when competition between user groups increases and challenges arise to the legitimacy and capacity of formal and informal natural resource management institutions.

In many contexts, access to land, in particular, is a significant driver of conflict. Demographic growth, urbanisation, extractive industries, insecure land tenure as well as factors associated with climate crisis impacts, including soil degradation and rainfall variability, can coalesce to increase competition. The effects are compounded in displacement contexts or where freedom of movement is restricted due to insecurity and conflict.

Economic downturns and shocks can contribute to the neglect of rural infrastructure, decrease demand for agricultural products, raise the cost of living and place key agricultural inputs beyond the means of smallholder farmers. At times, these conditions can incentivise negative household coping mechanisms, which may include increasing vulnerability to recruitment into armed groups, population movement, early marriage and the erosion of societal relations between groups.

### 2.3. Key drivers of peace influenced by FAO interventions

In addition to reducing the salience of conflict drivers, FAO can also strengthen key drivers of peace, in order to increase the prospects for peace. At the national or macro level, FAO is able to contribute to sustaining peace outcomes through capacity development and technical support to formal institutions on rural reform, land tenure, natural resource management and climate change adaptation, amongst others. FAO activities at this level can also provide livelihoods support to former combatants, convene groups in disputes over access to natural resources, while also incentivizing inclusive negotiations on the cross-border movement of pastoralists and agricultural goods and services.

FAO has a particular comparative advantage to influence peace drivers at the local level where they relate to the organization's mandate. At the community level, FAO is able to influence local peace drivers through direct interventions and activities aimed at providing the framework for inclusive natural resources use and participatory development. Awareness raising on rights and responsibilities provide a conducive context to discuss inclusive access to fisheries, for example. Associated with access to natural resource use is support to community-based or formal natural resource management institutions and the capacity development of dispute resolution sub-committees. Acknowledging that disputes are intrinsic to shared natural resources, it is how such disputes are addressed that is fundamental to their sustainable resolution.

Fundamental to influencing peace drivers is the incorporation of gender into activities that support localized peace. Both directly and indirectly, women and youth assume important influencing roles in their communities. In many rural contexts, women play an active role in natural resource management; positively affect coping mechanisms during shocks, while in certain contexts protection afforded to women has resulted in their assumption of key roles in the resolution of clan, tribal and ethnic conflicts. Similarly, youth, often labelled as victims or perpetrators, can positively influence their peers. FAO incorporates women and youth through inclusive targeting criteria, as well as through dedicated activities focusing on dispute resolution and improving collaborative relations within and between communities.

FAO also uses participatory approaches to identify localised peace drivers that may resolve inter-community disputes and conflicts. These peace drivers frequently combine rural rehabilitation projects with inter-community collaborative learning and dialogue to sustainably resolve conflicts over access to, for example, irrigation, storage facilities, markets and processing capacities. Understanding the contributory causes of conflict - such as flooding from dilapidated irrigation networks or soil degradation that incentivises migration - can provide a resolution to conflict, while also improving the resilience and food security of communities.

### 2.4. Pathways for FAO contributions to sustaining peace

Five principal pathways are posited through which FAO interventions can potentially contribute to sustaining peace, by reducing the potential for violent conflict and increasing prospects for peace<sup>iii</sup>. These are:

1. Improving social capital both horizontally (intercommunity and intracommunity) and vertically (community-state);
2. Strengthening local conflict management capacities, including over natural resources;
3. Increasing the opportunity cost of engaging in violence;
4. Reducing horizontal inequalities and resulting grievances between groups;
5. Reducing competition over natural resources.

These principal pathways, and seven contributory pathways, are presented in Figure 2. The processes through which FAO may be able to contribute to these principal outcomes is discussed further below, with some of the pathways illustrated through field examples. In contributing to peace outcomes, FAO recognises that its work is predominantly at the local level, working with individuals and communities. This is increasingly referred to as the 'little-p'. In contrast to 'big-P', the little-p is focused on agency

and the transformation of relationships, and interventions that are responsive to local needs. However, contributing to peace at the local level often implies working with state institutions at sub-national and national levels - in particular in relation to policies, legislation and capacities. Fostering local peace through little-p processes can thus potentially have a positive ripple effect on broader conflict dynamics.

The principal pathways through which FAO can potentially reduce the likelihood of conflict and increase the prospects for peace are all closely related to the technical areas of competency in which FAO engages. However, in order to maximize the peace-contributing potential of these more technical interventions, it is often necessary to pay attention to issues of process as well. A given intervention may increase dialogue between population groups that may be in competition with each other, or it can choose not to do so. A particular intervention may increase inequality between groups, or it may reduce inequality. It is through these mediating factors that a purely technical intervention can become a peace-contributing intervention. For this reason, the pathways often reflect these more socially oriented factors, which in theory can be achieved relatively easily through slight adaptations to project design and implementation.

The key premise underpinning these pathways for peace is that they have the potential to influence one or more contextual driver(s) of conflict that is salient in a given context, and has been identified through a context analysis<sup>iv</sup>. As such, the pathways are clearly linked directly to the main drivers of conflict and peace overviewed in sections 2.2 and 2.3. Furthermore, as presented in Figure 2, these pathways can often interact and overlap, and can have multiple relationships and conceptual linkages with the five principal pathways. Indeed, in most instances combinations may need to be considered to maximise impacts on and contributions to peace.

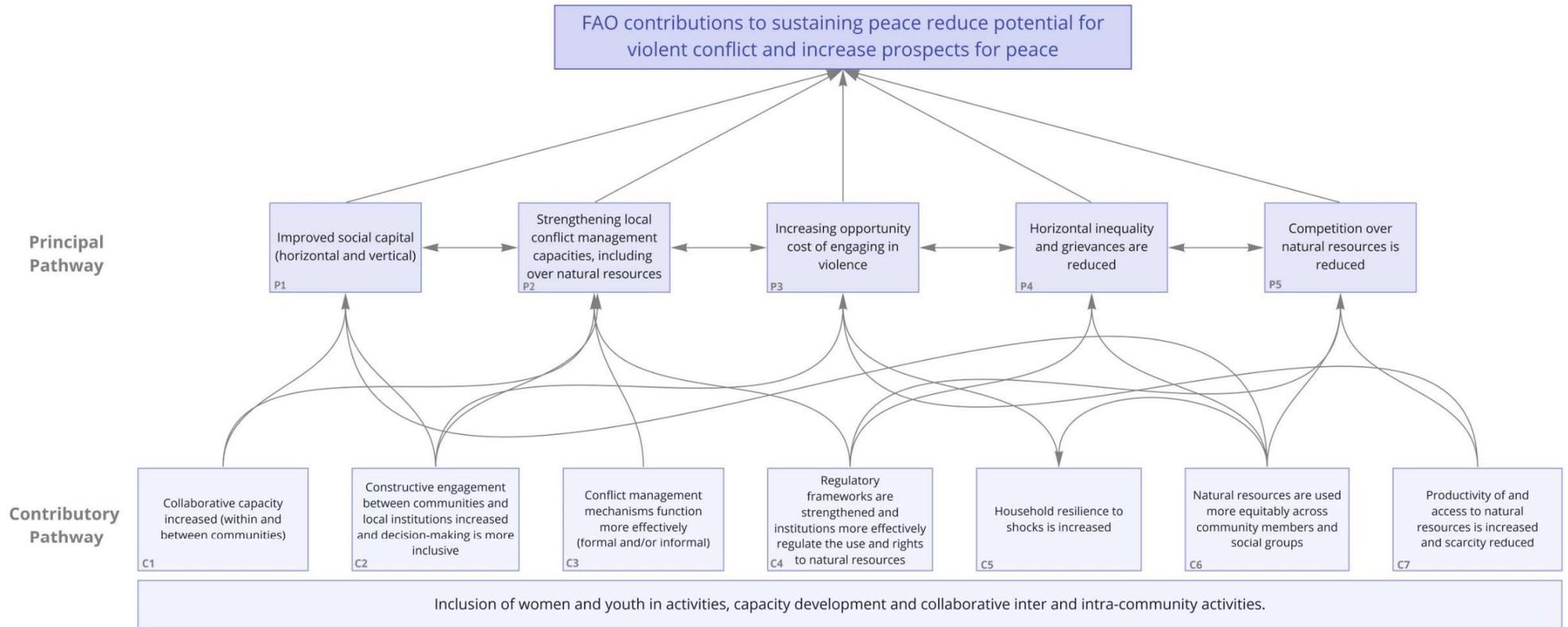
In a generic ToC format, and by way of example, four of these contributory pathways for FAO interventions to reduce the potential for violent conflict and increase the prospects for local peace can be summarised as follows<sup>v</sup>:

- (C1) **If** collaborative capacity within and between communities is increased, **then** there will be a shift towards more collective norms for management and use of natural resources, with an increased ability to solve tensions and address disputes in a constructive manner.
- (C4) **If** regulatory frameworks are strengthened and institutions more effectively regulate the use and rights to natural resources, **then** competition over natural resources is reduced as governance mechanisms will be clearer, perceived as fairer and function more effectively.
- (C5) **If** the resilience of agricultural livelihoods to shocks is and food security is increased, **then** people will not need to resort to negative coping strategies, will have a more positive longer-term perspective, thus increasing the opportunity cost of involvement in violence.
- (C6) **If** natural resources are used more equitably across community members and social groups, **then** access to productive resources to more vulnerable groups is increased, reducing the degree of inequality and sense of injustice, which may lead to increased confidence and trust within and between communities.

In some cases 'standard' technical approaches may be adapted or complemented with additional activities to increase the chances of contributing to sustaining peace. For instance, by adding a component of dialogue between different communities, or by investing in the collaborative capacity of communities to manage natural resources jointly. In this case, more specific peace-contributing outcomes (such as enhanced collaborative capacity, or inter-group dialogue) could be added to complement the more technical outcomes of an intervention in the results framework.

Underlying these ToC are the important contributions and roles of both women and youth to peace, for example through their engagement with dispute resolution mechanisms and natural resource management, which can be particularly important at the local level<sup>vi</sup>.

Figure 2. Key pathways through which FAO can contribute to sustaining peace



A sample of interventions are presented below to better illustrate these pathways through country-level experience and evidence. Whilst the specific outcomes and underlying ToC in each example are very much a product of the context in which they occur, links to the generic contributory pathways in Figure 2 are flagged:

#### **Example A: Post-conflict rural land reform under the Colombia national peace agreement**

*ToC – If the post-conflict land restitution framework and process is strengthened and transparent, and national institutions effectively regulate the return of land to those dispossessed by conflict, then conflicts over land tenure will be reduced as governance and legal mechanisms are experienced as fair, and the prospects for community-level integration will be improved. (Key contributory pathway(s): C2, C4).*

The 2016 Colombia peace agreement was ambitious and complex, covering a wide variety of issues. FAO was requested to help implement the first point of the peace agreement - comprehensive rural reform - a recognition that land was a key conflict driver and needed to be central to a sustainable peace. FAO's work includes support to rural land reform processes (such as creation of a multi-purpose land registry), inclusive rural development and addressing food insecurity. FAO was working with the government of Colombia and civil society organizations to provide policy advice on tenure rights, rural development and food security, supported through national budgetary provisions, as well as bilateral projects such as the Swedish-funded *Strengthening the Sustainability of the Land Restitution Process*. Working with the government of Colombia's Land Restitution Unit, this has focused on restoring the land rights of people (from over 20 indigenous groups) dispossessed by the conflict, promoting community-level integration and natural resource-sharing, and institutional strengthening. Through this process, almost 500 000 hectares of ancestral land were legally returned to 1 221 families during 2018.

#### **Example B: A community-driven model reinforcing conflict prevention and resilience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).**

*ToC – If an inclusive participatory process enhances constructive engagement between communities whilst livelihoods are made more resilient, and conflict resolution capacities are increased, then this will (re)build trust between communities, reduce tensions over natural resources and increase the opportunity cost of engaging in violence. (Key contributory pathway(s): C1, C2, C5).*

FAO's Dimitra Clubs are community-based groups, often established in remote or conflict-affected areas, which get together on a voluntary basis to discuss common challenges and organize forms of collective action to improve livelihoods and food security. The clubs facilitate dialogue that involves the equal and active participation of a diversity of community members, including men, women, youth and marginalized people - building relationships, improving aspirations, confidence and trust. In the Tanganyika province of the DRC violence between Bantu and Twa has worsened in recent years. FAO and WFP are working together to increase smallholder farmers' incomes and build resilient livelihoods, but also to support community-based organizations and contribute to local peace.

Qualitative assessments demonstrate changes in behaviour, practices and perceptions in both identity groups, including sharing of natural resources and improved social cohesion. Over 170 Dimitra Clubs have recently been created in Tanganyika province. In Kabalo and Nyunzu territories, the Dimitra clubs have brought together Twa and Bantu men and women in several interventions improving collaborative capacities through inter-group dialogue, collective action and awareness raising activities, particularly over how to manage local natural resource-based conflicts. The creation of collective fields and vegetable gardens has helped promote Bantu-Twa collaboration. Similarly, joint cultural and sporting events such as football matches, poetry, storytelling, and dance have been organized to promote diversity and tolerance. Community radios installed in project areas run joint radio broadcasts by young Twa and Bantu club members promoting collaboration between members of both communities. In Kabalo territory, in cases where Bantu and Twa do not live in the same villages, qualitative data from focus group discussions and individual interviews indicates that the brokering capacity of the Dimitra

Clubs has increased the incomes of local youth, thus reducing the attractiveness of joining local militias. Even though the climate of mistrust and suspicion between Bantu and Twa communities persists in some places, relations have noticeably improved.

Critical to this success has been the involvement of local NGOs such as Le Zébreaux, and Search for Common Ground (SFCG), an international non-profit organization specialized in conflict resolution. This highlights the importance of partnerships, and bringing additionality and complementarity to technical interventions, such as the creation of local peace committees, and is a good example of a resilience-building intervention implemented through an integrated, community-based, multi-partner approach<sup>vii</sup>.

### **Example C: Linking community-based animal health services to natural resource conflict mitigation in the Abyei Administrative Area.**

*ToC – If the resilience of livelihoods and food security is improved through animal health interventions in both communities, and support to local conflict management mechanisms means that natural resources are accessed and used more equitably between ethnic groups, then this will (re)build trust between communities, reduce tensions over natural resources and increase the opportunity cost of engaging in violence. (Key contributory pathway(s): C3, C5, C6, C7).*

An FAO intervention between 2015 and 2017 in the contested Abyei Administrative Area between the Sudan and South Sudan reduced the risk of natural resource-based conflicts and enhanced community resilience. The Abyei Area is a grazing hub in which historically both the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya tribal communities interact, sharing natural resources such as grazing land and water. However, natural resource use was an increasing source of confrontation, leading to frequent outbreaks of violence between the communities. FAO identified a window of opportunity by providing community-based animal health veterinary services to both communities, working with local authorities and in collaboration with the peacekeeping mission, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). This allowed wider resource use issues to be addressed, including movement and access concerns.

In June 2016, as a direct result of this work, a community level peace agreement over natural resource use was signed between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok. The peace agreement also led to the establishment of a shared market in the heart of the demilitarized zone, facilitating trade and livelihoods, and leading to food price decreases.

### **Example D: Improving community relations between Venezuelan migrants and host communities in Colombia**

*ToC – If the resilience of livelihoods and food security is improved through interventions that engage host, returnee and migrant communities, and support is provided through mechanisms that promote collaboration and engagement, then this will improve relations between these communities, and positively change inter-group perceptions. (Key contributory pathway(s): C1, C5, C6, C7).*

Colombia's northern neighbour Venezuela has slipped into a deep economic crisis that has sent more than 4 million people across borders in search of food and stability. Many have settled in bordering areas, like La Guajira in Colombia, without access to land or job opportunities. Some households have grown to over 30 people and many families expecting the arrival of more relatives in the months to come. This is not only putting a strain on individual families but also on locally available resources, like land and water.

Based on a multiagency (FAO, WFP and UNICEF) survey in mid-2018, early action interventions by FAO in La Guajira boosted local food production, protected existing assets (such as livestock), and rehabilitated local water supply systems. These were also designed in a way to support social cohesion between hosts and migrants, incorporating the creation of Community Production Centres to bring Colombian and Venezuelan families together around a common goal, which became hubs for learning

and exchange of ideas. Almost 75 percent of the participating households in La Guajira said their relationship with other groups had improved in the last 12 months. In the control group that number was less than 40 percent. This suggests that the type of activities FAO implemented in La Guajira, mediated through community production centres and more efficient use of scarce natural resources, can help challenge negative perceptions that host communities and migrants may have about each other.

This is an important finding for anyone working to sustain peace at a local level in these vulnerable parts of Colombia – and especially in light of the latest migration data. About a third of families that took part in the early action intervention said they had received new arrivals from Venezuela in the last 12 months; those households grew by four people on average. But the vast majority of interviewed households said that they still had family members in Venezuela who are planning to come to Colombia in the next year. Efforts to boost food security, ease tensions and build relationships between host communities and newcomers will only become more important in the months to come.

### **Example E: Cross-border coordination of livestock movement and sharing of natural resources in the Greater Karamoja Cluster**

*ToC – If the sharing and coordinated use of natural resources across borders is supported, and communities are brought together to discuss the management of resources, then key livelihood assets will be protected and this will improve peaceful co-existence of pastoral communities and help preempt potential conflicts. (Key contributory pathway(s): C1, C2, C3, C5, C6).*

The Greater Karamoja Cluster (GKC) encompasses the southwestern parts of Ethiopia, northwestern Kenya, the southeastern parts of South Sudan and northeastern Uganda. Pastoralism is the principal source of livelihood in the GKC, and pastoralists largely depend on natural seasonal pastures and water resources for their survival. Livestock mobility remains the prime strategy employed by pastoralists and agropastoralists to cope with the seasonality and changing availability of these resources. Pastoralist groups traditionally rely on interdependent relationships and the symbiotic sharing of knowledge and resources. However, changing state borders have contributed to tensions and restricted their mobility. Climate impacts have worsened intercommunal conflicts and disputes over natural resources, straining the pastoralists' ability to move their herds beyond their communities' own lands.

Over the past decade, FAO has worked closely with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) and its member countries in GKC, with a focus on livestock mobility and natural resource management. The recurrent tensions and violent conflicts in the cross-border areas of Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda have weakened the resilience of community institutions and livelihood systems in many areas. The cross-border sharing of pastoral resources can contribute towards conflict prevention and mitigation.

The process of the cross-border sharing of pastoral resources and coordination of livestock movements draws upon several bottom-up approaches, including community-managed disaster risk reduction (CMDRR), participatory natural resource management (PNRM), community animal health workers (CAHWs), and livestock and pastoralist field schools (PFS). Indeed, the sharing of resources fosters the creation of platforms where communities can mediate disputes, conclude peace agreements and formulate joint grazing policies to avoid future conflicts. In particular, FAO worked with the IGAD's Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) to coordinate livestock activities in the Kenyan and Ugandan cross-border areas, facilitating peaceful livestock movement between the border areas of the two countries. This allowed Turkana pastoralists to escape the 2017 drought and move peacefully into Uganda to access grazing, reducing conflict incidence between the Turkana of Kenya and the Karamojong people of Uganda. The governments of South Sudan and Ethiopia both joined this agreement later on.

### **3. Key institutional achievements to date**

FAO made commitments at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit<sup>viii</sup> to better understand the root causes of conflict and to work to reduce fragility, as a contribution to conflict prevention and sustaining

peace. These commitments included, *inter alia*, development of organizational policies and guidance, a greater focus on conflict-sensitivity, capacity development of staff, the development of strategic partnerships, and increasing the number of joint risk and threat monitoring mechanisms and systems it supports.

In 2018 FAO's *Corporate Framework to Support Sustainable Peace in the Context of Agenda 2030*<sup>ix</sup> was endorsed, guiding FAO in its areas of competence and comparative advantage towards a more deliberate and transformative impact on peace. This was in line with the recommendation of the 2018 Report of the Secretary-General on *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace*<sup>x</sup> for UN entities to see sustaining peace as an important goal to which their work can contribute, and to integrate the approach into their strategic plans and thinking. As outlined in this paper, FAO has a clear role to play in the context of the UN Secretary-General's focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, as well as ongoing UN system reform to better bridge humanitarian, development and peace actors and investments. Since 2018, through Interpeace's Advisory Team (IPAT), FAO has partnered with Interpeace to develop specific tools, guidance and training to enable more systematic and robust context analyses and conflict-sensitive programming. This strategic partnership brings together FAO's technical and programmatic knowledge with Interpeace's 25 years of experience in peacebuilding.

#### Box 1. Contributing to local peace through the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

FAO has considerably stepped up its engagement with the PBF since 2017. In the past two years twenty-four PBF projects with FAO's involvement (where FAO is lead agency for ten), have been approved with funding from both the Immediate Response Facility and the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility, and under the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative and cross-border windows.

The high success rate of project approvals in recent years represents concrete recognition by the UN Peacebuilding Support Office of FAO's role in implementing activities that contribute to local peace, particularly over natural resource management. In 2019 FAO became an observer of the Peacebuilding Contact Group.

FAO's contribution to PBF projects have in particular focused on:

- Economic and social empowerment of communities in support of social cohesion.
- Creation of economic opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable youth through integrated strategies, including the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) and Dimitra Clubs approaches.
- Supporting inclusive natural resource management (e.g. fisheries, land, pasture, water) and local conflict resolution capacities.
- Cross-border natural resource management and engagement with local, national and sub-regional stakeholders.
- Strengthening institutional and political dialogue on transhumance dynamics between different countries in cross-border projects in the Sahel.
- Developing capacities of local and national pastoralist institutions and corresponding awareness raising among national stakeholders.
- Support to post-conflict land reform linked with community-driven rehabilitation projects.

FAO is implementing PBF projects in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen. FAO is partnering with ILO, IOM UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Population Fund, UN Women and WFP.

A critical tool developed and field-tested with Interpeace is the *Conflict-sensitive Programme Clinic*<sup>xi</sup>, a structured participatory analysis designed to identify and integrate conflict-sensitive strategies into the design and implementation of FAO interventions. In the past two years area-based context analyses, supported by FAO's *Guide to Context Analysis*<sup>xii</sup> were completed in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, the Philippines, the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali), the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen, and one is being finalised (March 2020) for southern Kyrgyzstan. Conflict-sensitive programming support was provided to FAO field offices in Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Myanmar,

Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, as well as the Regional Office for the Near East and the Resilience Team in East Africa. Capacity development in conflict-sensitive programme design has included participation by partners, such as other UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities.

Interpeace and FAO are continuing this partnership in 2020 to further strengthen its internal capacities and processes for conflict-sensitive programming, as well as distilling typical pathways through which FAO programmes contribute to local peace impacts, within the scope of its mandate. Similarly, research partnerships have been furthered with academic institutions (e.g. Uppsala University (see Box 2) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo) to explore the linkages between resilience, peace and conflict.

**Box 2. Exploring the links between resilience, peace and conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The effects of climate variability on violence are hotly debated. While this topic has received considerable attention in both policy circles and academia in recent years, understanding of the conditions under which climatic shocks affect armed conflict are still limited. Even in high-risk regions there is great variation in who will regard the use of violence as a viable option in response to a climate-related shock. In partnership with Uppsala University, household survey data from a multiyear food security resilience programme funded by the Government of Canada in North Kivu has been analysed to study violent attitudes following agricultural production shocks as a result of climatic change.

Preliminary findings indicate that less resilient respondents, based on both objective and subjective indicators, are more likely to be supportive of violence following agricultural production shocks, such as severe weather events.

This is just a start in building a more robust evidence base on these relationships. However, such research findings tentatively support the hypothesis that increasing household food security resilience, and resilience to climate variability, can contribute to localized stability, and improve the prospects for local peace.

To manage and support this work, a small Conflict and Peace Analysis Unit was created at FAO Headquarters, including a full-time context/conflict analyst. In 2019 this was complemented by the creation of a global roster of context analyst/conflict-sensitive programming specialists, with dedicated decentralized capacity based in sub-regional offices in Amman, Dakar and Nairobi to provide context analysis and conflict-sensitivity support to field offices.

As part of the wider sustaining peace agenda, FAO has engaged in a number of interactions within the UN system, and beyond. Indeed, many AFPs are going through similar processes to strengthen their conflict-sensitivity and contributions to peace, building on existing practices. Exchanges have been fostered, and representatives from FAO, ILO, IOM, UNICEF and WHO met on the margins of Geneva Peace Week in 2019 for an initial discussion mutual learning, challenges encountered and support. Similarly, FAO experts provided inputs as resource persons for the 2019 UNSSC online course on *Conflict Analysis for Sustaining Peace*, providing perspectives on moving from theory to practice, and highlighting some examples of adapting context analyses to the needs of an organisation.

#### 4. Key remaining challenges and recommendations

In presenting these pathways FAO does not claim to achieve sustaining peace impacts in all of its programmes. Instead, it is equipping itself with the tools and mechanisms to consciously increase its contributions to sustaining peace. The longer-term aim for FAO is to be able to understand more deeply to what extent it can play a meaningful role in contributing to sustaining peace, and act upon this understanding by becoming more intentional, evidence-based, realistic and pragmatic.

A clearly articulated ToC is a prerequisite for being able to assess whether, and to what extent, FAO activities do indeed contribute to sustaining peace. To date, related theories of change have sometimes been clearly articulated in FAO programme documents and project proposals, while at other times remained somewhat implicit. By surfacing these ToCs, FAO is able to test and verify these hypotheses,

and strengthen the evidence base around them. Box 2 summarises some preliminary empirical work in this regard, which seeks to better understand the links between resilience, climatic shocks, peace and conflict.

At programme level, these ToCs will be used as a tool to reflect on programme design and implementation. Grounded in experience, learning and additional evidence, will either strengthen the evidence base of these ToCs, or it may lead to additional reflection on those ToCs, and what changes in programme design may be necessary. This will help to strengthen the evidence base and validate these ToCs over time. In some cases a programme has an explicit objective in contributing to sustaining peace (as is the case with all UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) projects), and these ToCs will serve as guidance on how to capture this in the results framework. But even in cases where interventions do not have a stated peace-related objective, there is still scope for FAO to be more intentional in potentially contributing to sustaining peace by adapting its approaches accordingly.

This is not an easy task. Frequently, monitoring and evaluation systems are designed to measure technical outputs and need to be adapted to also better capture contributions to peace. Measuring relatively intangible outcomes, such as trust in authorities and social cohesion, can be difficult and is highly context-specific. Attribution is problematic, as there are so many other factors at play, and progress is hardly ever linear. It is precisely for these reasons that it is so crucial to surface these pathways of change and to continue to invest in this over the longer-term.

Enhanced institutionalization of conflict-sensitive approaches and skills, as well as deepening and broadening of partnerships, will require continued attention and focus. In building off investments and internal reflections made since 2016, there is an ongoing need to:

- further deepen understanding of the importance of and approaches to conflict-sensitive programming across FAO, emphasising how this can reinforce the core goal of eradicating hunger;
- improve support to inter-agency and inter-institutional collaboration, across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus at the field level;
- improve the monitoring of the degree and kind of impact of FAO's contributions to sustaining peace;
- better identify opportunities to support and reinforce sustaining peace, emphasizing local solutions, and the role of women and youth;
- reflect on commonalities of experience with other multi-mandated specialized UN agencies; and
- capture and share good practices and lessons learned at the field level in a more systematic manner.

## 5. Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2016-9789264267213-en.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> A Theory of Change (ToC) is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. In its simplest form, a ToC can be stated as, *If we do X (action), the effect will be Y (result), due to certain mediating processes.*

<sup>iii</sup> These pathways reflect earlier thinking on various pathways as discussed in the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: building resilience for peace and food security* (2017) (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-I7695e.pdf>) and *Food security, sustaining peace and gender equality: conceptual framework and future directions* (2017) (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7610e.pdf>).

<sup>iv</sup> FAO generally uses the term context analysis in preference to conflict analysis, with the understanding that while a context analysis is a ‘good enough’ conflict analysis, it includes the same core tenets and approaches.

<sup>v</sup> It should be noted that ToCs are context dependent, and their use in other contexts will require customization, based on robust contextual understanding and related insights.

<sup>vi</sup> Reflecting key points of S/RES/2250 (2015) and S/RES/2419 (2018) on youth, peace and security, as well as S/RES/1325 (2000) and S/RES/2122 (2013) on women, peace and security.

<sup>vii</sup> As a driver for improved collaborative capacities between groups and for local peace, the Dimitra Clubs approach is now being incorporated in several FAO and joint projects in post-conflict and fragile contexts. This includes PBF cross-border projects in Niger and Chad (Diffa/Kanem), as entry points to reduce cross-border conflict and contribute to local-level reconciliation by supporting more resilient pastoralism, community mobilization and youth development.

<sup>viii</sup> FAO Position Paper for the WHS (2016) (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5655e.pdf>).

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/I9311EN/i9311en.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> A/72/707–S/2018/43

<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5784en/CA5784EN.pdf>

<sup>xii</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5968en/ca5968en.pdf>