

# DCO Thematic Paper on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

## **United Nations Development Coordination Office thematic paper focused on the Conflict Prevention Engagement of UN Resident Coordinators**

### **Background**

As part of the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review, UN entities are encouraged to submit thematic papers on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to contribute to assessing the implementation of the twin resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture and the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Preventing violent conflict is a central goal of the United Nations and a clear priority for Secretary-General António Guterres. Efforts to sustain peace are necessary not only once conflict has broken out but also long beforehand, through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes. Inclusive and sustainable development not only is an end but also happens to be the best defense against the risks of violent conflict. The best way to prevent societies from descending into crisis is to ensure that they are resilient by investing in inclusive and sustainable development. Agenda 2030 calls for development strategies that result in resilient societies where people are safe from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence and repression, and protected from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives.

### **Role of the Resident Coordinators (RCs)**

Recent reforms of the UN Development System aimed at making the RC system more capable of addressing prevention challenges, including by aligning the political, development and humanitarian work of the UN. DCO contributes to the ongoing Peace architecture review by examining the conflict prevention role of Resident Coordinators through a select assessment of how RCs, as elaborated in the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF), are working on conflict prevention together with the UNCT and UN peacekeeping or political missions to ensure full complementarity and contribute to building resilience, preventing crises, sustaining peace and planning and managing transitions .

### **Examples of where Resident Coordinators have taken a prevention-approach to development, by aligning political, development and humanitarian work of the UN.**

In Costa Rica, the RC with the support of DPPA conducted a conflict analysis, involving indigenous peoples; identifying the most relevant social and institutional actors; and exploring the capabilities and challenges of the UNS in conflict prevention to develop a “road map” for a prevention strategy for the country.

In Kenya the RC, building on existing relationships with the Government and other UN agencies continued the “human security approach to development as a conflict prevention tool” which was expanded to encompass the nexus between climate change, poverty and violence in Northern Kenya. This was achieved by forging public/private partnerships, leveraging stronger resource mobilization potential for development and conflict prevention in target areas. Private investment was key to a longer-term prevention strategy aimed at countering inequity and promoting inclusivity in Kenya’s margins. Calling private companies, the “third force” in development, the RC brokered partnerships with several large corporations for investments in the UN flagship programs in Turkana and Marsabit<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/attachment/2852/RC-Project-Kenya.pdf>

In Benin, the RC is building synergies with other partners, including the World Bank to support the Government's National Development Plan/Government Programme of Action in line with the agenda 2030 and the SDGs (sustainable and inclusive growth, climate change impact resilience-building, and entrepreneurship and youth employment, strengthening human capital, good governance, etc.). In an effort to prevent conflict and violent extremism and foster peace consolidation, support is being provided to Benin to strengthen its peace architecture through mediation, dialogue and social cohesion effort. In order to prevent and mitigate violent extremism and conflicts at its periphery, Benin has adopted a cross-border approach by designing development projects which are implemented in border areas under its UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2019-2023. This approach contributes to improving the resilience of the populations of the cross-border zones. These projects adopt a cross-border approach, which essentially are aiming at the establishment of an environment that guarantees the inclusion of women and young people as partners and beneficiaries by targeting them specifically.

In Togo, the UN led by the RC, supports national authorities, and community leaders to build sustainable capacities to promote social cohesion. The support provided is made through the national High Commission of national reconciliation and national unity and its decentralized local peace committees in the 39 préfectures of the country. The national High Commission of national reconciliation and national unity is mandated to promote local mediation through the now established. The UN has provided support to train the members of the peace committees and initiated the mediation of the most common and recurrent conflicts in 3 selected préfectures. Support to the local peace committees will continue in 2020.

### **Cross border approaches**

The United Nations in Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo have initiated a joint cross-border program with funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. The objective of the joint program is to contribute to the improvement of the resilience of the populations of the cross-border areas of Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo from a PVE perspective. Its operationalization is scheduled for 2020 and the UN is committed to pursue these efforts.

Countries in the sub region have undertaken preliminary steps to address the growing threat of Violent Extremism by establishing PVE committees at national and local level and promoting regional cooperation under the ECOWAS umbrella. In 2019, the UN provided resources for the establishment of local PVE committees in the most vulnerable region (Savanes). The UN intends to support the initial phases of the development of action plans to prevent violent extremism during the year 2020.

### **Support to country programming and analysis: The CCA and Cooperation Framework**

The CCA and Cooperation Framework provide great opportunities for the Peace and Security pillar to collaborate the UN Resident Coordinator system in identifying and supporting national partners to address the drivers and root causes of conflict. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is the planning instrument to accelerate the achievement of SDGs and aims at helping countries remedy inequalities, exclusion, discrimination, poor natural resource management, unemployment, climate change and corruption. During 2019, there has been a closer engagement with DPPA/DPO regional and thematic divisions, PBSO and DPPA/DPO strategic planners in efforts to strengthen the Cooperation Framework development process, especially on the new Common Country Analysis (CCA) as well as in reviewing the UN Conflict Analysis Tools. The peace and security pillar has been eager to contribute to the CCA and Cooperation Framework process by providing technical expertise to integrate multidimensional risk assessments as well as political and conflict analyses into

the CCA to underpin planning to prevent violent conflicts and sustaining peace. For instance, DPPA Central Africa regional desk is supporting country offices in Angola, Congo and DRC rolling out new Cooperation Frameworks in 2020 and identifying support need for 2021 roll out countries like Chad.

The new CCA framework places greater emphasis on multidimensional cross-pillar analysis, especially on the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. The development system reform has increased focus on cross-pillar collaboration and of the roll-out of the new UN Cooperation Framework guidance in 2019, the new generation of CCAs show a greater attention to the linkages across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding dimensions and stronger analyses of the drivers of needs and vulnerability.

The Bangladesh CCA has a dedicated section on the HDP nexus and it identifies some common areas for collaboration relevant to HDP partners. Among others, the CCA analysis points to issues of social cohesion and tensions between Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities (SDG16), access to justice for Rohingya refugees, water and sanitation and the need to address water scarcity (SDG6) and joint district-level planning.

The Ethiopia CCA also identifies drivers of needs and fragility such as conflict, climate change (leading to droughts, floods, land degradation, extreme weather events), high dependence on natural resources and poverty. The CCA also provides a conflict analysis, including a recent overview of the conflict, and underlying causes. It is also worth noting that the Ethiopia CCA includes an analysis of cross-border and transboundary issues. For instance, it analyses cross-border population movements, such as the influx of migrants and refugees from neighboring countries (Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan) to some of the poorest areas, which consistently lag behind other regions on many development indicators. Transboundary natural resource management (e.g. river basins) is another key regional issue analyzed by the CCA, which is impacting people's lives in Ethiopia and requires collaboration among neighboring countries (e.g. Somalia, South Sudan and Egypt).

### **Building national capacities for conflict prevention**

In efforts to build national capacities for conflict prevention, in 2019 the joint UNDP-DPPA Programme adjusted to a reformed UN development system and peace and security architecture, with PDAs having direct reporting lines to the Resident Coordinators. The PDA cadre expanded to 56 positions globally from 49 the previous year and peace and development teams were established in more than 20 countries. The work of the PDAs is at the forefront of our joint efforts to support to Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams and national stakeholders to consolidate local capacities for peace, conflict prevention, dialogue, mediation, and conflict-sensitive development programming. This year regional Specialists will be deployed in six agreed locations - Addis Ababa, Amman, Bangkok, Dakar, Istanbul and Panama regional offices - to contribute to regional analyses and provide back-up support to PDAs and UNCTs.

To ensure that the drawdown of a Peace Operation or Special Political Mission does not lead to a relapse in conflict to preserve Peacebuilding gains, the United Nations led by UNDP-DPPA/DPO and (from 2020) DCO have developed a Joint Transition Project which support UNCTs and countries in such situation. Thus far, the project has deployed Transition Specialists in RCOs in DRC, Sudan and Mali. This capacity has been instrumental in fostering joint planning, sustaining Peacebuilding achievements.

### **Financial Support to Peacebuilding efforts at country level**

Since its inception, 58 member states contributed to the Fund, 33 in the present 2017-2019 investment plan. The Fund works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant

fashion. The Peacebuilding Fund addresses critical funding gaps for sustaining peace and is investing in 40 countries on 5 continents. The PBF has also priority windows of support to cross border initiatives, youth and women's empowerment as well as facilitating transitions. In order to ensure complementarity with the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and Common Country Analysis (CCA); PBF proposals are appraised and signed off through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office. The PBF is supporting Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso to coordinate national and regional approaches to border management in the three countries. The PBF is supporting UNCT efforts under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator to enhance capacities of women and youth in the Bangsamoro autonomous region in the Philippines. The PBF together with the UN Post-Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Colombia have supported the strategic alliance between the Colombian Government, the UN and the international community to advance the post-conflict peace and stabilization agenda in Colombia. Going forward, efforts are underway to ensure linkages across the three UN funds: the PBF, the SDG and CERF funds to ensure a systemwide coordination of financial support.

### **Peacebuilding review and sustaining peace 2020 review**

The Secretary-General's 2020 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace will draw key recommendations and lessons learnt in prevention and peace building from field missions and regional offices, and all Resident Coordinators.

### **Women Peace and Security**

Following last year's launch of the annual report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security in 2019, Resident Coordinators are being encouraged through monthly policy updates to support UN Women's advocacy efforts at engaging UN entities to take steps to accelerate progress in delivering on the recommendations of the report, drawing on the 10 commitments in the WPS agenda.

### **Leadership learning and Training on Prevention**

In February 2020, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), in partnership with UN DPPA-UNDP Joint Programme on Strengthening National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, the Development Coordination Office and the Peacebuilding Support Office, organized a closed-door workshop on operationalizing sustaining peace and prevention. The workshop took stock of ongoing efforts by RCs to operationalize prevention, as foreseen in Pathways for Peace and provided an opportunity for peer exchange among UNHQ colleagues and RCs on the tools and approaches available for preventive purposes, and how these can be effectively combined to inform future guidance and learning tools for RCs and their staff working on preventive contexts.

A special virtual Forum for Resident Coordinators, Resident Representatives with Peace and Development Advisors engaged in complex political settings in the context of Covid-19 response is planned for 27 May 2020. A further leadership prevention forum with DSRSGs/HCs & selected RCs was planned for June 2020 which had to be postponed to a later date due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The forum will bring together UN stakeholders from integrated UN presence, HQ departments and agencies, to support joined-up UN efforts on the ground. It will also help address strategic and operational issues of priority of concern for the DSRSG/RC/HCs, with a view to identify solutions and share useful practices across countries and across HQ units as well as to strengthen partnerships to improve coherence on the ground.