

CHAPTER

7

REALIZING
THE SDGS IN
POST-CONFLICT
SITUATIONS:
CHALLENGES
FOR THE STATE

7.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the challenges to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in post-conflict situations and their implications for integrated approaches that advance both sustainable development and peace. Globally, between one and a half and two billion people¹ live in countries that are affected by conflict, violence and fragility. These countries face the greatest share of the global development deficit. Conflicts, in fact, reduce a country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth by two percentage points per year, on average.² People in these contexts are more likely to be impoverished, to miss out on schooling, and to lack access to basic health services and means for decent livelihood.³

Alarming trends show that the gap between conflict affected/fragile states and other developing countries is widening.⁴ It is estimated that countries emerging from conflict are the ones where the SDGs may not be reached in the absence of radical approaches and innovation.⁵ For instance, the ten worst performing countries for maternal mortality globally are all conflict-affected or in post-conflict situations, while gender-based exclusion and violence are a persistent residual effect of conflict.⁶

The United Nations Security Council emphasized the concept of "sustaining peace" as "a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are considered."⁷ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDGs 5, 10, and 16, encompass the spirit of the resolution and recognize sustaining peace as an inherent sustainable development challenge.⁸ The 2030 Agenda brought a renewed emphasis on the need to confront post-conflict interlinked challenges in a coherent manner. An integrated framework for SDG implementation entails ensuring that interventions aimed at sustaining peace (including protecting human rights) and development are mutually reinforcing. The Agenda also underscores that strengthening public administration and governance institutions⁹ is critical for securing peace and attaining sustainable development and an inclusive society as key elements for preventing relapse into conflict.¹⁰

Because countries in post-conflict situations face many urgent problems, the realisation of long-term development goals is all the more difficult for them. In the face of multiple, long term as well as short term priorities, integrated approaches become even more important than in peaceful contexts. National public institutions and public administration, which typically emerge shattered from conflict, must be rebuilt with this purpose in mind. This chapter explores how this can be done, based on recent examples.

The World Public Sector Report 2010 explored in depth the matter of reconstructing public administration after conflict.¹¹ Most of the content of the report and its conclusions are as valid today as they were then, and the purpose of this chapter is not to re-examine this question in its entirety. As the rest of the report, this chapter focuses on the dimension of integration, from the perspective of public administration. The questions examined are how integration differs in post-conflict contexts, compared to others; and how it can be practically fostered and supported.

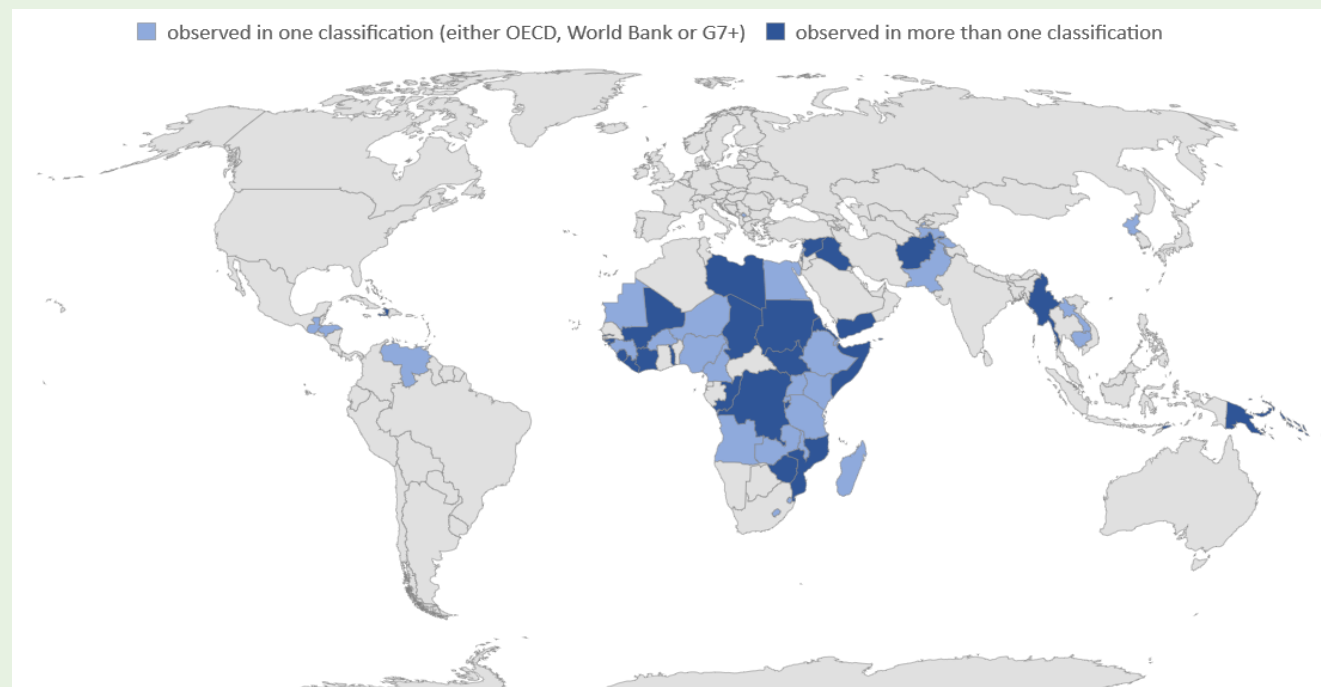
The remainder of the chapter is constructed as follows. Section two provides an overview of the challenges facing post-conflict countries to implement the SDGs. Section three examines governance and institutional approaches that allow post-conflict countries to advance sustainable development and peace. Section four analyses the dimensions of horizontal integration, vertical integration and engagement in post-conflict settings. The chapter concludes with a summary of key areas of concern regarding SDG implementation in post-conflict situations.

7.2. The challenge of achieving the SDG in post-conflict settings

Post-conflict governance presents several challenges that directly affect countries' efforts to implement the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In a nutshell, delivering the SDGs is more complicated in post-conflict contexts than in countries not affected by conflict. Most strikingly, conflict and its aftermath make the realisation of each of the targets of

Box 7.1. Defining post-conflict

Despite the often-common challenges faced by countries in the aftermath of conflict, the term "post-conflict" continues to lack a precise definition, due to difficulties around defining conditions for the presence of conflict, when conflict starts or ends, as well as to the changing nature of conflicts.¹² Recently, the essential links between institutional weakness, governance, and violence have been captured in the concept of "fragility" (see figure 7.1). Weak capacity, accountability, and legitimacy of institutions are the basis of many definitions of fragility.¹³ Despite the definitional challenges, this chapter uses the term "post-conflict situation" to refer to a context where at the end of violent conflict, the assets, skills and systems (physical, financial, economic, technical, organizational, political, social) that allowed a country to function as state have been destroyed to some degree.¹⁴

Box 7.1. continued**Figure 7.1.****Fragile and post-conflict situations according to different classifications**

Source: Author's elaboration based on OECD, World Bank and the Group of Seven Plus (G7+).

Box 7.2. Thinking of specific SDG areas is different in post-conflict contexts

Education is a key tool to promote peace, and provides a powerful tool to link peace-building and sustainable development objectives. Integration of curricula (i.e. having curricula reflect the perspectives of multiple sections of society) and schools (i.e. having schools that are not segregated) are concrete examples of how a specific SDG must be thought of in a different way because of conflict in the past of a society. It also exemplifies the role of public institutions (schools) and public administration in contributing to sustain peace after conflict. The way such approaches can be implemented is likely to vary widely across countries, depending on how the education system is managed.

The case of the Ebola crisis in Liberia is also an example of the need to think differently in post-conflict contexts. Even though the country had built its health system and infrastructure prior to the crisis, low levels of trust in government post conflict resulted in the population being suspicious of instructions given by government health workers, which contributed to worsening the crisis. Thus, in this case, institutional approaches that may have been adequate to address the outbreak of the disease in other situations were insufficient under social conditions created by prior conflict.¹⁵

Yet another sectoral example is that of the Solomon Islands, which built conflict resolution mechanisms in natural resources management frameworks, in order to prevent the recurrence of conflict around natural resources.

Source: Expert inputs for the report.¹⁶

SDG 16 on peaceful societies more difficult. For example, corruption tends to be high in post-conflict contexts (target 16.5). Providing legal identity for all (target 16.9) is harder to achieve in post-conflict situations. As importantly, countries in post-conflict situations also have to think about specific SDG areas such as health, education and many others in a different way (see Box 7.2).

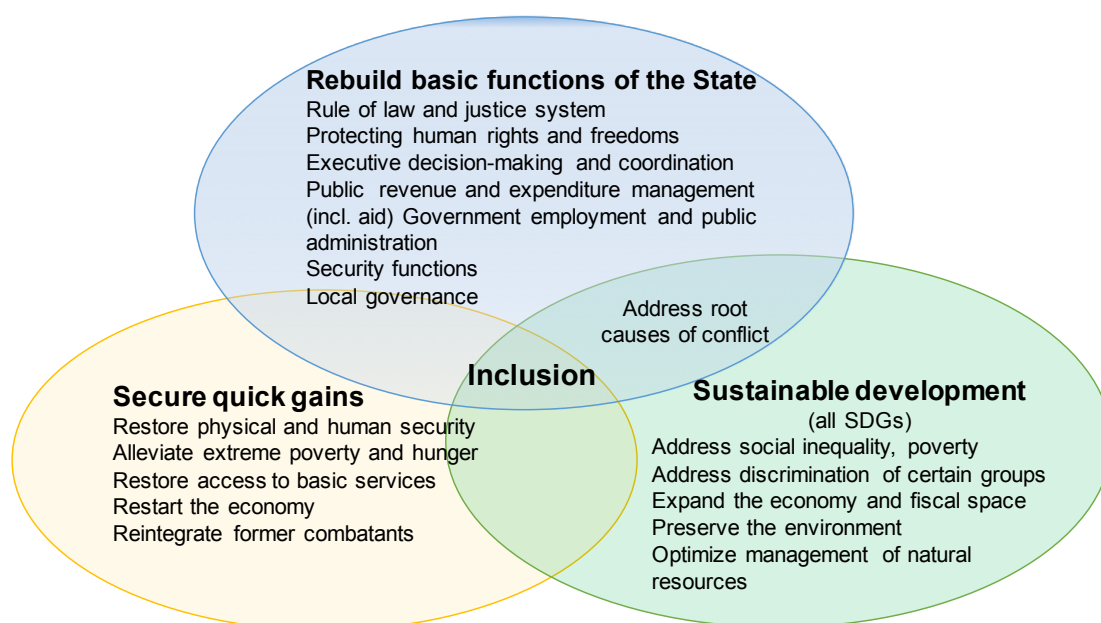
This is compounded by the fact that in post-conflict contexts, long-term sustainable development objectives have to be addressed while addressing urgent and medium-term priorities that are specific to them. In general, post-conflict countries have to deal simultaneously with three categories of issues: securing quick gains; rebuilding basic functions of the State; and progressing toward sustainable development (Figure 7.2).

Attaining demonstrable progress is critical to restore trust in government and avoid the risk of sliding back into conflict,¹⁷ particularly when grievances related to lack of access to services, jobs and other opportunities have fuelled conflict in the first place.¹⁸ It is therefore important to achieve quick, demonstrable progress and secure visible gains on poverty alleviation while, at the same time, ensuring basic security and stability. Actions may include a quick stabilization of the economy which creates the bases for the development of a diversified economy in the longer term,¹⁹ provision of basic public services and improvement of livelihoods.

Although post-conflict situations vary in the nature and degree of devastation, in most cases a violent conflict causes substantial physical, institutional and organizational destruction, including loss of financial and human resources, which may paralyze governance institutions. Depending on the context, public institutions present in stable contexts (e.g. central bank, civil service organization, etc.) may no longer exist after conflict and may need to be completely rebuilt or restored.²⁰ Thus, the second challenge is to build or rebuild the basic functions of the State and its public administration. “Core government functions”, as defined by the World Bank and UNDP, encompass six key responsibilities: (i) executive decision-making and coordination at the centre of government; (ii) public revenue and expenditure management; (iii) government employment and public administration; (iv) the security sector (mitigating and containing internal security threats); (v) local governance; and (vi) aid management.²¹ In addition, functions such as enforcing the rule of law, re-establishing the justice system, and protecting human rights and freedoms are necessary to foster development after conflict. Institutional capacity requirements are greater in post-conflict contexts due to their complexity, volatility and high vulnerability to relapse into conflict.²² Importantly, public administration may be part of the root causes of violent conflict. In such cases, restoring state capacity requires avoiding recreating the same circumstances that caused conflict in the first place.

Figure 7.2.

Multiple governance challenges in post-conflict situations



Source: Authors' elaboration.

The third set of challenges is that of sustainable development. As other countries, countries emerging from conflict have to devise and implement long-term strategies for development that fit their particular context and circumstances. Compared to stable countries, post-conflict countries face the additional imperative to address the root causes of violence and instability, as failing to do so puts the country at high risk of relapse into conflict.

The three sets of priorities are interrelated, and have to be considered simultaneously. Only resilient national institutions can tackle root causes of conflict while simultaneously addressing short-term and longer-term sustainable development needs. Given the length of time needed to establish functioning institutions²³, the scope and speed of reform can be risk factors - attempting to do too much too soon may also actually increase the risk of resumed conflict.²⁴ Progress on the SDGs, in turn, can only be achieved through strategic coherence of various governance and recovery actions. For example, in Nigeria, it became clear in 2016 that recovery and peace building efforts needed to be carried out in tandem with humanitarian assistance being delivered in the country. Subsequently, the Recovery and Peace Building Strategy was closely coordinated with the Humanitarian Response Plan to build on its achievements and avoid overlaps.²⁵

Box 7.3. Combining long-term vision and reconstruction in the Kyrgyz Republic

In the Kyrgyz Republic, after the ethnic-based conflict in June 2010 a donor-funded food-for-work activity (short-term food shortage relief) brought together multi-ethnic local communities to rehabilitate a canal used for irrigating crops. The restoration of the canal produced long-term benefits in terms of increased small-farm production and employment opportunities. It also contributed to the alleviation of the root causes of conflict through social impact and inter-ethnic cooperation. This example shows that actions aimed at providing humanitarian assistance and promoting recovery in the post-conflict environment are most effective when they generate a positive impact on people development and societies and prevent conflict relapse.²⁶ This evidences the importance of combining forward-looking sustainable development vision and strategies with the imperatives of resilience, reconstruction and sustaining peace.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Box 7.4. Multiple trade-offs for development in post-conflict situations

Examples of trade-off and tensions that are specific to post-conflict countries trying to balance expectations under stiff constraints include:

- Aiming at fast, visible results through “importing” solutions versus devoting time and resources to build up national capacity;
- Spending on rebuilding state functions versus restoring public services;
- Spending resources and time on enhancing participation versus quickly restoring public services in a centralized way;
- Rebuilding and restoring pre-existing institutions versus creating new ones;
- Increasing participation and legitimacy versus rebuilding government authority;
- Strengthening local governments versus supporting the central government.

All options have their pros and cons. The opportunity to choose one versus the other depends on the country context – there are no cookie-cutter solutions.

Source: Expert inputs to the report.

However, adopting integrated strategies and policies in post-conflict settings is more complicated than in other contexts. The task of prioritizing and allocating resources among SDG areas faces competition from the two other sets of priorities. This happens in contexts of low national budgets, linked with narrow fiscal space, lower fiscal base due to destroyed assets and low revenue mobilization capacity in public administration, often coupled with extensive debt, all of which limit the ability to address multiple priorities.

Limited resources may be compounded by corruption and illicit financial and capital flows, which themselves may fuel further conflict. In addition, in the initial years after conflict, a significant part of the budget may be provided by external actors. When those leave, countries typically face a “fiscal cliff”, with sharp drops in the national budget, while public expectations are still high. Therefore, it is clear that post-conflict countries cannot be expected to achieve immediate progress on all fronts, and in particular with respect to building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

7.3. Post-conflict governance transformation to advance sustainable development and peace

Post-conflict transitions represent a window of opportunity for important transformation of the terms of State-society relations,²⁷ and for reform of governance. The aim of this transformation is attaining sustainable peace and development for all. To this end, global sustainable development aspirations can serve as inspiration for a common vision for the future.²⁸ The vision needs to be translated into coherent and integrated national policies that are forward-looking, inclusive and promote partnership between the government and society and support by national and international partners.

7.3.1. The primacy of politics and the critical importance of inclusion

Experts underline that inclusion, in a political sense, is at the center of all efforts to build sustainable peace and development.²⁹ The state itself can be exclusionary or inclusive. If exclusion generated conflict in the first place, not addressing it is likely to lead to recurrence of conflict. A critical test of the sustainability of post-conflict settlements is whether the terms of peace agreements are effectively translated in the national legal framework. When this is not the case, there is a high likelihood that the conditions that fuelled conflict in the first place are still prevailing.

Promoting inclusion may require transforming previous patterns of divisive oppositional politics,³⁰ which in turn requires conflict-management capacity, knowledge of the different actors as well as identifying the right incentives to redress trust deficits and meaningfully engage each stakeholder group. Some experts believe that, in some cases, it may not be desirable or possible to engage all stakeholders in decision-making without undermining engagement processes, for instance, when the population believes that, due to past abuses, a particular group “may legitimately be excluded”.³¹ Other experts warn about the risk of excluding stakeholders on political grounds to the legitimacy of engagement and institutions.³² Beyond the “deal-making” aspect of political settlements to end conflict, in the long run the most important is to transform the national political culture. If the political culture remains unchanged, or if political institutions are captured by elites, new institutions are not by themselves going to change political outcomes.

National ownership of the post-conflict development path needs to be inclusive and involve a broad set of stakeholders to create a sense of belonging and inclusion, regardless of political differences. Building trust through processes that meaningfully engage different voices in conflict management, monitoring and accountability helps enhancing the legitimacy of institutions and their credibility. Thus, inclusion stands out both as a goal and an outcome-driven “strategy” for

achieving development and sustaining peace. Rwanda has conducted visioning workshops as a useful tool for training top leadership to promote inclusion. These workshops brought together leaders from different sectors and at all levels of government to allow them to “appreciate the value of collaboration, partnerships and collective impact”³³ while devising recovery strategies.

Post-conflict reconstruction is often approached focussing on structural and institutional reconstruction, and in such contexts it is easy to forget about the people dimension. Reliable grievance mechanisms are central to increasing trust in government in post-conflict settings. Yet, most reconstruction programmes do not consider compensation or reparation of what individuals lost during violence.³⁴ Uganda, on the contrary, implemented a programme for restocking cattle in rural areas. Rwanda and South Africa implemented programmes intended to address housing problems. Such programmes, accompanied by social services as well as inclusion and equity measures, can help ensure that people victimized by violence are not left behind.

Moreover, promoting institutionalized capacities and collaboration to identify, analyse and tackle possible causes of people grievance³⁵ can help to consolidate the foundations for peace and create a synergic mechanism to avoid the risk of relapse into conflict. The principle of inclusiveness, which is at the intersection of the three categories of challenges faced in post-conflict situations (see figure 7.2), also requires ensuring a balanced composition of the public service as a microcosm of the society it serves. This is an even stronger imperative in post-conflict settings compared to stable development contexts.³⁶

7.3.2. Using the SDGs to align strategies and actions

There are reasons to think that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda may facilitate integrated approaches to post-conflict situations. This is because of the broad scope of the SDGs, which encompasses areas that are critical to all the components of post-conflict interventions, from humanitarian action to rebuilding the basic capacity of the State to longer-term development strategies. The SDGs therefore provide a convenient common framework where strategies at different levels can be anchored.

Developing integrated policies that build on the synergies among the SDGs is daunting in post-conflict contexts. While the SDGs are considered indivisible and UN Member States are encouraged to preserve the integrity of the framework, some countries may prioritize and sequence SDG adoption in their respective national and local development plans based on ‘suitability’.³⁷ However, neglecting some development priorities may have negative impacts on the overall coherence of the SDG framework. For example, environmental aspects may be considered as lower priority despite their long-term impacts. Negative effects could also surface if the ‘suitability’

picking is driven by political economy imperatives and is not decided in an inclusive manner.³⁸

Compared to countries not affected by conflict, identifying elements of national sustainable development strategies in post-conflict contexts requires additional elements. Those include an understanding of key contextual elements and drivers of the conflict, in order to address root causes; an assessment of the degree of institutional development needed;³⁹ as well as a mapping of recovery requirements. This is normally done through an assessment⁴⁰ of all governance institutions to ensure that they are fit to promote development, peace and social cohesion, deliver public services effectively and maintain stability. The assessment also helps to analyse whether there is a need to redefine the role of public administration and how it relates to civil society, the private sector and other national and international stakeholders. An important element of institutional resilience is linked to setting up an “infrastructure for peace”, that is to say, embedding mechanisms that promote dialogue, mediate disputes and avoid risks of conflict relapse.⁴¹

To address the problem of competition among international actors that intervene in post-conflict situations, the United

Nations calls for a “comprehensive joint and multidisciplinary mapping and assessments, including of the humanitarian, security, rule of law, human rights, social, economic sectors”.⁴² Joint multi-actor frameworks and the adoption of compacts binding governments, donors and civil society to implement a single plan are solutions promoted by G7+ countries to encourage country-led,⁴³ coherent, predictable, and timely assistance from the international community. In Yemen, for example, under the country’s Peacebuilding Priority Plan approved in May 2014, United Nations entities partnered in a joint programme on sustainable livelihoods and employment generation for people living in conflict-affected communities.

Several countries have used the SDGs as a framework to align their long-term development strategies and plans, as well as other instruments such as budget processes (see chapter 2 in this report). Among countries having suffered from conflict, Chad, Colombia, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands and Somalia offer examples of how linkages with the SDGs were made in national plans and strategies (see Tables 7.1 to 7.5). It is difficult to compare the results of such mappings across countries, as the methodology used to produce them is not uniform.

Table 7.1. Linkage between Chad’s pillars of the National Development Plan and the SDGs

Priorities/SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Reinforce and consolidate national unity/peace/justice/equity and social cohesion																	•	
Promote governance/ consolidation of peace and reinforcement of interior and exterior security																	•	•
Promote strong, diverse, inclusive and sustainable economic growth	•	•			•		•	•	•	•								
Create the conditions for a better life and sustainable development			•	•		•					•	•	•	•	•			

Source: République Du Tchad Présidence de la République Primature Ministère de l’Economie et de la Planification du Développement, 2017. Plan National de Développement PND 2017-2021, Available at: <http://pnd.td/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PND-2017-2021.pdf>

Table 7.2. Linkage between Colombia’s National Development Plan and the SDGs

Priorities/SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Infrastructure and competitiveness for economic growth								•	•								
Social mobility through better education and health systems			•	•													
Transformation of the countryside and green growth aimed at reducing the gap between urban and rural areas										•	•		•				
Consolidation of the welfare state			•	•		•				•							
Good governance for a more modern, transparent, efficient and effective state.																	•

Source: Departamento Nacional de Planeación Colombia, 2014, “Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Todos por un nuevo país Tomos 1 y 2”, Imprenta Nacional de Colombia.

Table 7.3. Linkage between Sierra Leone's Agenda for Prosperity and the SDGs

Priorities/SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Diversified economic growth							•	•	•								
Managing natural resources												•	•	•	•		
Accelerating human development			•	•		•											
International competitiveness							•	•	•								
Labour and employment							•	•	•								
Social protection	•	•								•							
Governance and public sector reform																•	
Gender and women's empowerment				•	•												

Source: Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Advanced draft report on adaptation of the Goals in Sierra Leone, July 2016.

Table 7.4. Linkage between Solomon Islands' National Development Strategy and the SDGs

Priorities/SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sustained and inclusive economic growth						•	•	•	•		•			•	•		
Poverty alleviation across the country, basic needs addressed and food security improved; benefits of development more equitably distributed.	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•						
All Solomon Islanders have access to quality social services including education and health			•	•											•		
Resilient and environmentally sustainable development with effective disaster risk management													•	•	•		
Unified nation with stable and effective governance and public order				•	•			•								•	•

Source: Solomon Islands Government, 2016. Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016 to 2035, Honiara: Ministry of Development Planning and Coordination. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cobp-sol-2017-2019-ld-01.pdf>.

Table 7.5. Linkage between Somalia's National Development Plan and the SDGs

Priorities/SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Peace, inclusive politics, security and rule of law																•	
Macroeconomics and poverty	•							•									•
Building effective and efficient institutions	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Economic development - private sector								•	•								•
Productive sector	•	•						•						•			
Social human development		•	•	•		•		•								•	
Infrastructure							•	•	•								•
Building resilience capacity	•	•						•			•				•		
Aid management and cooperation																	•
Gender mainstreaming					•												

Source: Federal Government of Somalia, 2016. The Somalia National Development Plan (SNDP) - Towards Recovery, Democracy and Prosperity 2017 - 2019, Available at: <http://mopic.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/somalia-national-development-plan-2017-2019final14dec.pdf>

7.3.3. Rebuilding public administration after conflict

As documented in the World Public Sector Report 2010, capable, effective and inclusive institutions and public administration, in addition to being consubstantial to a fully functioning State, are also instrumental to addressing both short-term and long-term development challenges. They help to shape an integrated national vision for sustainable development and peace, ensure responsive public service delivery (including justice and security) and look beyond post-conflict peacebuilding.

Building or reforming institutions can affect existing power structures, which makes it de facto a political process. In peace-making processes as well as post conflict, significant power lies in the hands of the actors that control state institutions. Elites often have a vested interest in keeping economic and political power – this can be offset by building coalitions to get a critical mass of agents of change. Restoring old institutions instead of transforming them may produce fragility, lower levels of trust and may contribute to increased poverty even several decades after the cessation of conflict, as seen in some countries.⁴⁴

Reconstructing public administration by implanting institutions based on experience of developed countries risks creating empty structures without corresponding functions.⁴⁵ Practitioners call for options adapted to countries' political realities, institutional capacity, and levels of insecurity.⁴⁶ Norms, values and behaviours championed by leadership and public servants and their professional capacities – particularly that of front-line providers⁴⁷ (so called “soft” skills as opposed to “hard” factors such as forms or functions) – are fundamental components of institutional strength. Yet most institutional development programmes do not pay attention to these elements. In Liberia, after the departure of the United Nations Mission in the country (UNMIL), there was little institutional capacity and limited fiscal space to continue maintaining security in the entirety of the country. The solution found was to create small well-trained and well-equipped police units and place them at the service of local communities as hubs in regions known to be prone to conflicts. The country also established platforms for dialogue, particularly at the local level, including civil society organizations and the private sector.⁴⁸

Linked with this, a key challenge is to ensure transition strategies in government and public service that preserve existing capacity, while also renewing personnel. How to benefit from the knowledge of an “old guard” that may have had a role in the conflict phase, while supporting the emergence of a new generation of public servants who fully support the post-conflict process is a difficult problem. Youth can bring generational renewal in public administration to make it more attuned with the needs of the community it serves (see section 7.4 in this chapter).

Departing from past approaches that encouraged focusing efforts on institutional capacity before addressing institutional challenges, countries in post-conflict contexts have addressed effectiveness and accountability alongside other key recovery efforts.⁴⁹

Burundi, for instance, established the Office of Revenue in 2009 to address transparency of the public administration, fight against corruption and tax evasion and safeguard resources for development. This action has contributed to restoring fairness and fiscal justice, which enhances people's perception of social justice.⁵⁰ Nepal has institutionalized an anti-corruption focus in its post-conflict reconstruction by creating a Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority with the power of investigating wrongdoing among persons holding any public office and their associates. Liberia has adopted a comprehensive four-prong national anti-corruption strategy, which includes: (i) identifying the causes of and attitudes towards corruption in the country; (ii) measures to reduce opportunities for corruption; (iii) mapping the country's state of corruption; and (iv) formulating ways to break with corrupt practices.⁵¹ In addition, countries like Uganda have set up specialized institutions dealing with sectors particularly susceptible to corruption,⁵² such as the governance of natural resources, which can fuel conflict. Independent supreme audit institutions (SAIs) operating in post-conflict contexts can make significant contributions toward state building. By producing audits as well as promoting awareness of their findings and recommendations, SAIs serve as an intermediary between government and people to understand key sources of fragility⁵³ and promote a culture of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability.⁵⁴

In Nepal, the National Administrative College, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and Nepal police and army participated in mandatory training to help them incorporate conflict sensitivity in public affairs. Conflict sensitivity was also included in the curriculums of Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) and the Local Development Training Academy (LDTA). The National Planning Commission (NPC) has also incorporated conflict sensitive elements into its planning guidelines. Similar approaches were adopted in Myanmar and Timor-Leste.⁵⁵

Even more than in countries not affected by conflict, public institutions and public administration in post-conflict countries must be committed to inclusion and to the imperative of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. Public institutions need to unwrap the full meaning and implications of this principle by transforming their systems, structures and practices and core beliefs. Public servants have to be open to the idea of co-production with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. In doing so, they need to leverage on champions within society who may be ready to take risks while promoting dialogue and inclusion.

Sustaining public service reforms after violent conflict requires strengthened performance capacities of public administration and management development institutes and relevant university faculties. These institutions are normally tasked with strengthening and sustaining the capacities of public servants to foster national ownership and coordination capacity. Uganda and Ghana, for instance, which have successfully implemented peace and development sensitive reforms, managed to raise the profile and capacity of their public administration institutes. The latter underwent fundamental transformation as capacity building institutes in the public sector and accompanied the reform process.⁵⁶

7.3.4. The critical importance of budget processes

Particularly in post conflict settings, effective management of the national budget is critical to ensure policy implementation, as well as to enhance state legitimacy and accountability. A coherent, country-owned national programme that promotes integrated financial management approaches and directs investments to typically underserved areas of the administrative backbones of ministries (such as human resources, administration, procurement, operations, etc.) was found to be key in bolstering national capacity, for instance, in Timor-Leste and Afghanistan.⁵⁷ In Liberia, to address the problem of “fiscal cliff” (see section 2 above), the international community intervened to increase fiscal space to generate resources for reconstruction. The national budget was increased from 80 million to 600 million.⁵⁸ However, a massive injection of external resources requires careful control by the State to prevent corruption.

As other countries have done, some countries in post-conflict situation have taken steps to secure funding for SDG implementation by adjusting the budget process and

Box 7.5. The challenge of aligning external actors' intervention with national priorities

Experts seem to agree that international assistance in post-conflict contexts should be driven by the principle of country ownership, be it in terms of financial support, technical assistance and capacity building. They also agree that there is a long way to go to achieve this goal. In the Solomon Islands, one of the g7+ countries, the 2016-2035 national development programme (NDP) is used as a tool to align support from all multilateral partners. One of the five NDP objectives is effective governance in alignment with SDG 16, and the government places great importance on public institutions' forging connections, collaborations and partnerships with national, regional and international bodies in order to acquire the needed support and professionalism to advance peacebuilding.

Source: Expert inputs to the report.

its cycle in line with the SDG framework.⁵⁹ In Sierra Leone, for example, the SDGs have been integrated into the 2016 National Budget.⁶⁰ A certain level of predictability in local government financial resources is essential to support local initiative-taking and create incentives as well for greater accountability. Colombia, Mozambique or Afghanistan, among other countries affected by conflict, have gradually increased fiscal resources available to local governments.⁶¹

External actors all have different agendas, which may not match the government's or other stakeholders' priorities. Because of their systemic importance in post-conflict settings, this often creates an additional challenge to integration. Despite the existence of development effectiveness principles calling for complementarities among agencies with different mandates, coherence and integration are often elusive. A coherent country vision, national sustainable development strategy and implementation plan can help aligning external interventions with country priorities (see Box 7.5).

7.3.5. Preventing relapse into conflict

Experts agree that sustaining peace is more difficult than attaining peace, and stress that the most successful prevention strategies are endogenous and local - undertaken by local and national actors through internal political processes.

In particular, to promote conflict prevention, it is critical to foster collective approaches to risk assessment and management and build local capacities and commitment to collectively understand and closely monitor the conditions that could contribute to fragility. It is also important to clarify responsibilities for managing risks (among donors, government, stakeholders).⁶² This prevention-based approach includes assessing how risks could affect the implementation of sustainable development programmes, the protection of sustainable development gains and the promotion of resilience.⁶³

Monitoring may require establishing early warning systems⁶⁴ supported by data and analysis.⁶⁵ Collaboration within government and with non-State actors can help identify multidimensional risks related to conflict, climate change, disaster, health, among others.⁶⁶ In 2002 for instance, Nigeria conducted an inclusive strategic conflict assessment led by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, which operates under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One year later, further discussions among stakeholders and interest groups across the country analysed early warning and conflict prevention elements. The process culminated in a national action plan outlining a strategy for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity within government institutions.⁶⁷ Also, Afghanistan promoted inclusive stakeholder analysis under the leadership of the Aid Management Directorate of the Ministry of Finance in 2014. The analysis fed into a fragility assessment and identification of progress indicators.⁶⁸

7.4. Horizontal integration, vertical integration and engagement in post-conflict contexts

7.4.1. Horizontal integration

Adopting policy integration strategies is critical in post-conflict contexts. Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Timor-Leste and Nepal, for example, have promoted institutional coordination across sectors for implementing more integrated national sustainable development strategies.⁶⁹ The Colombian Government has created a high-level inter-ministerial commission for developing the SDG implementation strategy and action plan at national

and regional levels. The commission - chaired by the head of the National Planning Department with ministerial level representation across the government under the guidance of the office of the president - also monitors, follows up and evaluates the achievement of the SDG targets assessing reciprocal impact and progress. In the Solomon Islands, the Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace was specifically created to emphasize the importance of peacebuilding for the country's social and economic development. This ministry facilitates horizontal integration among different ministries and government agencies (e.g. with mandates on security or economic development) to ensure alignment around peacebuilding actions.⁷⁰

Box 7.6. Policy integration and inclusion in Colombia

The National Development Plan adopted by the Colombian Government in 2014 laid down the government strategies and public policies based on three pillars, peace (SDG 16), equality (SDGs 10), and education (SDG 4).

In addition to policy integration mechanisms at the national level, the Colombian Government made efforts to provide an inclusive platform for local policy-making, giving a voice to previously marginalized groups, and supporting their participation to local elections as candidates. The Government took steps to establish the legal and institutional architecture for territorial peacebuilding under the leadership of the Minister Counsellor on Post-Conflict Human Rights and Security. Rapid Response Plans were prepared and a pre-selection of high priority departments and municipalities made. The coordination between central and local levels of government was ensured through the Inter-institutional Post-conflict Council.

Regional development plans, with a peacebuilding focus and ranging from reintegration and reconciliation activities to economic development, were replicated at the municipal level. These plans also established investment parameters for the post-conflict period. Multi-year binding agreements were signed between the central government and departments as a key instrument for facilitating interaction between national and subnational entities and help deliver regional development policy.

Deepening democracy and people participation in decisions that affect them and rebuilding of trust between people and the State for reconciliation are two of the four foci of the Colombia National Development Plan. The Plan states that peacebuilding is a participatory process, which must develop from a dialogue including the Government, state institutions, social organizations, communities, private sector and businesses. Through National and Regional Forums on Victims, survivors of the conflict contributed their perspectives to peace talks between the Government and rebel groups. Women and girls, who have been armed combatants, conflict victims and local peacebuilders, are key actors of the peace and development nexus in Colombia. Young women's networks were engaged in supporting and facilitating the country's peace negotiation process.

The agreements drafted as part of the peace process reflected victims' inputs on access to basic services and proposals including on return of land to indigenous communities. This was a critical peacebuilding action considering that one of the drivers of conflict (other drivers included economic and income disparities, weak governance and lack of security in more remote areas) in the country was access to land and natural resources for rural people, particularly for women. Addressing this grievance was identified as one of the priorities to prevent Colombia from slipping back into conflict. Reducing the gap between urban and rural environments was consequently included among the five priority areas of the National Development Plan (see table 7.2)

The Development and Peace Programmes (PDPs) promoted multi-stakeholder engagement in the country (23 such programmes were developed in 2015, covering close to 50 per cent of Colombia's municipalities). Led by grass-roots and religious organizations, PDPs brought together various actors to develop regional agendas dealing with humanitarian protection, economic development and governance. Some PDPs have also managed to integrate a significant number of institutions, including private and public entities, at the local, national and international levels. Nonetheless, in some cases, these civil society-led initiatives lacked the necessary power, authority and legitimacy to alter local policy-making. Some communities complained about the lack of implementation of peace and development agendas developed collectively through dialogue. Learning from this experience, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace drummed up support for the peace process and involved local communities in discussing the items on the peace agenda.

Sources: see footnote.⁷¹

7.4.2. Vertical integration

Promoting vertical integration and coherence requires balancing political and technical requirements as well as reconciling political decisions at the central level with realities on the ground. Ensuring coherence and integration between national and sub-national levels of government is more challenging in post-conflict contexts, where local interests and powers may resist central authority. Local populations may perceive national power structures as “distant and often irrelevant”⁷² to their concerns and expectations. In the case of Yemen, for instance, centre-periphery integration was found to be extremely complicated because of local interests around the management of water resources, among other things.⁷³ Challenges also include the difficulty for the State to reach and provide basic services to remote areas of the territory, which negatively affects legitimacy.⁷⁴

Building coalitions at the local level where the State works with community leaders⁷⁵ may help prevent further violence.⁷⁶ Several countries have invested in the local government workforce and trained community members as municipal officers or community assistants aimed at strengthening the interface between state authorities and the local population.⁷⁷ Liberia’s Governance Reform Commission, for example, in its strategic action to advance political, social and economic decentralization, has defined appropriate structures to promote grassroots representation and participation.⁷⁸

One of the key trade-offs facing donors is how different levels of governments should be supported. The answer is likely to depend on the priorities that are put on different objectives such as restoring access to public services for most of the population, particularly groups that were most affected by conflict, versus rebuilding core government functions. In some cases, local governments may in the short run have more capacity to deliver on the services front, and there is always the temptation to “push” service delivery as low as possible in the government structure. In many cases, national programmes implemented country-wide need to be managed in a decentralized fashion.

Devolving power to local governments - decentralization - is not always a solution to vertical integration. Supporting local governments at the expense of strengthening the central government may in the long run lead to negative outcomes. In some places, there is a fine line between decentralization and disintegration of the country. Decentralization may also be seen as a threat by elites whose buy-in is crucial to political stability after conflict.⁷⁹ To ensure systemic coherence and integration, decentralization can occur together with other reforms in relevant sectors including education, health, agriculture, etc.⁸⁰ and through careful sequencing of actions. If decentralization is implemented, it should be well managed (impeding local elites capture among others) to support improved linkages between central and local authorities

and cohesion. To this end, for example, Guatemala has set up a system of local, regional and national social councils allowing for issues to be discussed by local communities and brought into the national budget processes through a bottom-up process.

Experts underline that the issue is not decentralization versus centralization, but finding what works best in each context.⁸¹ In Somalia, for instance, the unequal power and resource-sharing among different clans and sub-clans was considered one of the key root causes of conflict. A top-down approach, forming a centralized administration starting from top-level leadership was initially adopted but faced resistance given the suspicion among Somali clans. A bottom-up process was later proposed, which included the development of institutions from the grassroots level, free from clan affiliations and the interference of warlords, with local capacity for self-government supported by enhanced public awareness.⁸²

To ensure coherence and balance between the needs of the centre and those of the periphery, capacity and resources allocated to federal, provincial and municipal levels need to be harmonized.⁸³ In particular, capacity strengthening at the national and sub-national levels should be done in parallel and in a consistent manner.⁸⁴ The Government of Mozambique, for instance, took steps to establish the legal and institutional architecture for territorial peacebuilding in 2003 by establishing district governments as legal entities with a duty to prepare strategic and operational development plans in a participative way. Coordination between central and local levels of government is ensured through the National Decentralized Planning and Finance Programme. Launched in 2010 and managed by the Government, this national programme supports local governments to propagate inclusive development in all 128 districts (see box 7.7).

The integration of action at the national and sub-national levels may be enhanced through compacts or other accountability frameworks between the central government and local authorities (such compacts may also involve key national and international partners). Local compacts, agreements, understandings can be pursued at the regional and local levels.⁸⁵ These agreements also allow departments and municipalities to coordinate different sources of revenues from different levels of government.

7.4.3. Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a key factor for successful post-conflict governance. Engaging all social groups not only is in line with the 2030 Agenda commitment to leave no one behind, but also allows shaping a common vision for a country’s future that reflects people’s aspirations and needs. Stakeholder participation in post-conflict assessment, consultations about citizens’ needs and priorities, as well as

Box 7.7. Re-establishing local government legitimacy in Mozambique

Mozambique has undergone a remarkable transition since the end of conflict in 1992, enjoying peace, stability and economic growth for over 20 years. During this period, the gradual introduction of key legislative and governance reforms by central government institutions has re-established the legitimacy and authority of local governments and contributed to the maintenance of peace and security.

From 1998 on, the Government sought to improve local service delivery and stimulate local development through the participatory elaboration of local development plans. Consultative councils were established as the conduit for articulating local priorities and the means through which local communities would interact with local governments. Legislation introduced in 2003 established district governments as legal entities with a duty to prepare strategic and operational development plans in a participative way. District governments were made budgetary units that would receive fiscal transfers. In 2005, districts were allocated an investment budget for the first time.

Government then introduced measures to strengthen local revenue collection, to improve financial management and to increase public accountability. An approach to local economic development was devised that used community-based businesses to construct public infrastructure financed via district government investment budgets. In 2007, the Government invited development partners to support the establishment of a National Decentralized Planning and Finance Programme. Launched in 2010 and managed by the Government, this national programme supports local governments to propagate inclusive development in all 128 districts. Finally, in 2013 the government approved a policy and strategy for decentralization. Main lessons learned from Mozambique's transition to decentralized governance after conflict included:

- i. Piloting elements of sensitive decentralization reforms in a post-conflict context is an effective means of building confidence between national and local institutions, and between government and development partners.
- ii. Adopting a bottom-up approach for re-establishing the legitimacy of the State through local governments is a manageable and effective entry point for local governance intervention.
- iii. Participatory planning is an important tool for mobilizing consensus around development priorities, facilitating dialogue between stakeholders, promoting inclusive development and reducing the risk of a return to conflict.
- iv. Local development funds are critical for strengthening local government planning and financial management capacity; they give incentives to prepare development plans in a participatory way and also help legitimize the planning process. However, it is important that these funds are ultimately absorbed into the State budget to guarantee sustainability.
- v. Even where recovery appears consolidated, underlying fragility in local government institutions may remain and be quickly exposed by natural disasters or renewed outbreaks of conflict. Permanent and robust mechanisms for dialogue and participation are required to overcome this.
- vi. Successful decentralization processes take time, up to 20 years in the case of Mozambique. Rapid decentralization in post-conflict situations is rarely the right solution as it infers transferring mandates and responsibilities onto a fragile foundation of poorly trained and resourced local governments.

Source: UNDP-BPPS input to the world public sector report, 2017.

design, implementation, review and evaluation of SDG-related actions can help address the determinants of conflict and promote transformation towards sustainable development.

Engaging people in decision-making regarding SDG implementation in post-conflict situations is critical but very challenging. Disruption of infrastructure, logistical inadequacies and security threats can challenge engagement. Communities are often traumatized, socially divided, and mistrust is often pervasive. Identifying vulnerable groups that may be marginalized in the absence of targeted action is also more challenging in post-conflict settings. Engaging previously marginalized groups in decision-making may threaten the existing power-holders.⁸⁶ Social groups may

also be divided by competition for resources. Lack of trust between people and the State is more acute when the lack of legitimacy was one of the root causes of conflict.⁸⁷

The experience of countries like Colombia (see box 7.5) shows the importance of allowing people to take part in post-conflict recovery and transformation processes and shape inclusive policies and strategies. Some countries set up legal and constitutional frameworks based on a process of inclusive participation to lay out the vision and foundation for peaceful development. For instance, in South Africa, the White Paper containing proposals for the country's transformation was disseminated to the public and received extensive comment. This process ensured public

engagement and was an effective tool to achieve greater unity in the country.

The development by countries in post-conflict environments of SDG national action plans or strategies provides an opportunity for non-State actors to be involved in formulating these plans, and to hold governments answerable for implementing them. Participatory budgeting has been promoted in some post-conflict contexts to empower local communities to engage with local governments to enhance service delivery and ensure that expenditures reach those that have the greatest needs. Nepal, for instance, began implementing participatory budgeting in 1999 through its Local Self Governance Act, and since then has been successfully training local communities and strengthening local institutions to become more involved in local decision-making processes.⁸⁸

The United Nations has been emphasizing the important role of local governance to give voice to the minority groups, enhance their participation in reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts and become invested in post-conflict public administration.⁸⁹ Public administrations, at all levels, have a key role to establish institutional arrangements that, based on the respect for human rights, engage minority groups, indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups in decisions that affect their lives.

SDG implementation provides an opportunity to disrupt entrenched inequalities. Specific groups - particularly individuals and communities who are marginalized by processes of economic development - can be proactively engaged through well-designed incentives. Nepal, for instance, has fostered multi-stakeholder dialogues on mutual concerns in conflict-prone regions by offering capacity development on conflict prevention to religious leaders to reduce tension among different communities. The engagement of local communities, mostly women and members of excluded groups, prevented the escalation of conflicts during phases of national political deadlocks. It also allowed to conduct an inclusive dialogue on land reform, a critical element of both stability and poverty reduction, as well as addressing social issues including gender-based violence.⁹⁰

In 2012 the Government of Timor-Leste adopted a national village development programme, through basic infrastructure development managed by communities, to improve people social and economic conditions. This programme gave an opportunity to communities to decide (and hold full responsibility) for the development priorities of their village. Community understanding of financial issues was enhanced through training.⁹¹

Some governments strive to create an inclusive vision for post-conflict reconstruction by engaging traditional institutions and their leaders. Traditional institutions, like chieftainships, have a

key role in engaging with local communities and they often exercise a profound influence on them. In some contexts, they may be more able to operate than formal institutions. It is thus critical to engage them in post-conflict governance, even though these institutions may not always perform to standards that external actors would like to see upheld. In the Solomon Islands, recognizing the vital importance of traditional structures and systems in stifling small conflicts at the village level, legislation is being introduced to empower and institutionalize these traditional structures.

Gender equality and the engagement of diverse stakeholders (youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, among others) in decision-making are also critical for building community resilience, preventing armed conflict and violent extremism.⁹² The experience of Rwanda, for instance, shows that institutionalized participation fosters dialogue, joint focus in addressing common needs and collaborative efforts in finding solutions to attain jointly agreed development goals. This also helps building durable inter-ethnic trust, accelerating the reconstruction of the social fabric and ultimately enhancing community ownership over development processes.⁹³ Post-conflict challenges to women's engagement in decision-making include: (i) lack of security; (ii) gender-based violence; (iii) resurfacing of stereotypical attitudes about women's role in society; (iv) challenges deriving from women's simultaneous involvement in income-generating and care activities; and (v) lack of inclusive policies.

The importance of engaging women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reforms (e.g. disarmament, security, judicial, constitutional and electoral processes) was recognized by the United Nations Security Council in 2000.⁹⁴ Women's participation in post-conflict decision-making is critical for broadening coalitions and ensuring that they serve wider population groups.⁹⁵ For example, the vital political role women played in efforts to rebuild Libya is widely known.⁹⁶ During national elections in Senegal in 2012, women led the formation and implementation of an "early-warning-and-response" centre, when the country faced prospects of election-related violence.⁹⁷ The Roundtable on Peace and Development in Fiji, conducted between 2010 and 2013, also saw prominent roles played by women leaders in building an agreement between civic leaders and their antagonists in the military-backed interim Government.⁹⁸

Effective engagement strategies ensure equality of rights⁹⁹ and power relations and opportunities between men and women. This includes addressing socio-cultural barriers and barriers posed by lack of education,¹⁰⁰ access to land and other productive sources, disproportionate care burdens women face in the aftermath of conflict, and promoting women's empowerment.¹⁰¹ To ensure long-term impact of engagement, it is crucial to enhance women's engagement in budgeting processes (this was done in Afghanistan to promote gender responsive budgeting) as well as women's

leadership capacity¹⁰² through their engagement in local governments and community units responsible for overseeing post-conflict needs as well as civil society organizations.¹⁰³

Women's associations can create a collective voice and engage in different decision-making processes to sustain peace. This is the case of the Mano River Women's Peace Network in South Sudan¹⁰⁴ which has engaged youth and women from various African neighbouring nations to sustain peace in the Mano River sub-region. The Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia has helped sensitizing post-conflict societies to enhance gender responsiveness.¹⁰⁵

The employment of women as decision-makers in public administration and institutions is one of the strategies used to attain greater gender sensitive planning and budgeting processes¹⁰⁶ and responsiveness to women's needs.¹⁰⁷ Burundi, Kosovo, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda have adopted strategies aimed at enhancing women's representation in post-conflict governance by setting quotas for their participation as decision-makers in public institutions. Experience also shows that women's participation in the security and justice sectors has a positive influence on the inclusion of women's issues in local governance, expanding public confidence in women as holders of public authority and fighting crimes against women (in particular sexual and gender-based violence).¹⁰⁸ In Afghanistan,¹⁰⁹ Liberia and Uganda, for instance, efforts were made to increase women's representation among police officers.

Strategies that address the resurgence of stereotypical and cultural barriers in post-conflict situations have paired up leadership capacity development measures with actions that foster women's engagement in the media, social mobilization, networking and advocacy campaigns aimed at addressing stereotypes.¹¹⁰ For instance, women and youth in Pakistan are widely engaged in campaigns aimed at changing narratives about women in society and portraying them as important peace actors and agents of change in their communities. In sum, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment after conflict needs to be done through systematic mainstreaming of gender equality goals in development planning by local and national authorities.¹¹¹

In post-conflict countries, a large section of the population is constituted by young girls and boys that have suffered the scourge of war.¹¹² Some may have taken part into violence as child or youth soldiers. Both development and peace experts widely agree that allowing youth to express their needs and aspirations and engage in decision-making is key to successful peace and development efforts.¹¹³

Two years ago, Security Council resolution 2250¹¹⁴ called for a greater voice of youth in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels and encouraged governments to set up mechanisms that would enable

young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes. The important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts is further emphasized by Security Council resolution 2282 of 2016.¹¹⁵ This resolution also underscores the role of youth organizations as partners in sustaining peace efforts.

Engaging youth presents challenges and requires addressing stereotypical attitudes within post-conflict societies. On the one hand, youth may be perceived as "potentially dangerous and violent," on the other as "apathetic, vulnerable, powerless and in need of protection".¹¹⁶ While youth often yearn for reconciliation and for participating in decision-making and peace-building efforts, public institutions and administrations are often unable to effectively engage them. Practitioners emphasize that reversing this trend requires strong national leadership "with a firm sense of equity and philosophy of social justice".¹¹⁷ Thus, after identifying and addressing factors causing the social exclusion of young people,¹¹⁸ public institutions can empower them to take an active role as contributors to society and reconstruction efforts.¹¹⁹

Experience shows that in post conflict settings, youth can be engaged as champions for SDG implementation¹²⁰ and positive agents of change¹²¹ and have a strong potential to build bridges between communities.¹²² At the local level, where State authority may wane after violent conflict, country experiences¹²³ show the contributions youth-focused and youth-led campaigns, networks, movements and organizations have made to sustaining peace and development. For example, a network of young ex-combatants led advocacy efforts to promote peace in Libya. Some governments have implemented measures to address the limited participation of youth in decision-making through targeted policy and institutional reform. The Iraqi Government, for instance, has established a youth advisory council to the governorate council of Ninewa. Also, the Rwandan Government has provided targeted vocational training and psychosocial support to street youth, among other vulnerable groups, to enhance their engagement in post-conflict recovery.¹²⁴

Youth can also be engaged in efforts aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, using their propensity towards innovation and technology to enhance sustainable development efforts. Transforming innovative solutions that solve people's problems or build new skills around SDG priorities into marketable services would promote youth employment and productive engagement, lowering the risk of radicalization.

Public institutions and administration have a key role in designing and implementing policies that address gaps in education and promote job creation to allow youth to fully participate in post-conflict contexts. In the Balkans, for example, youth education was considered critical not only to prepare youth for the labour market but also to contribute

to long-term social reconstruction and understanding of divisions in society that led to violence. South Africa involved NGOs to support the government to address post-conflict divisions through youth education.

Youth leadership promotion initiatives can build the leadership of the next generation of public servants. For instance, in Afghanistan (where 70 percent of people are under the age of 30), there has been an effort to appoint 500 young people in leadership positions (at deputy minister and some ministerial positions) in government.

7.5. Conclusions

This chapter explores the challenges to realizing the SDGs in post-conflict situations and their implications for integrated approaches that advance both sustainable development and peace.

In general, post-conflict countries have to deal with and prioritize among three sets of interrelated concerns simultaneously: securing quick gains; restoring basic functions of the State; and progressing toward sustainable development. This happens in contexts of low national budgets, linked with narrow fiscal space, lower fiscal base due to destroyed assets and low revenue mobilization capacity in public administration, often coupled with extensive debt. Limited resources may be compounded by corruption and illicit financial and capital flows, which themselves may fuel further conflict.

The Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies in particular, are made more difficult to attain because public institutions and public administration have usually suffered heavily from conflict. Importantly, SDG areas such as education, infrastructure, health, social protection, and basic services can provide critical tools for addressing grievances from different groups and help re-start economic and social development on a sustainable path.

Adopting policy integration strategies is critical in post-conflict contexts. Many countries have adopted cross-ministry coordination structures specifically for the implementation of broad strategies that combine recovery from conflict with long-term sustainable development objectives. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda may facilitate integrated approaches to post-conflict situations. This is because of the broad scope of the SDGs, which encompasses areas that are critical to all the components of post-conflict interventions, from humanitarian action to rebuilding of the basic capacity of the State to longer-term development. Several countries have used the SDGs as a framework to align their long-term development strategies and plans, as well as other instruments such as budget processes. Yet, developing

integrated policies that build on the synergies among the SDGs, although critical, is daunting in post-conflict contexts. Countries may prioritize and sequence SDG adoption in their national and local development plans based on 'suitability', with potentially negative effects if the 'suitability' picking is driven by political economy imperatives and is not decided in an inclusive manner.

National ownership of the post-conflict development path needs to be inclusive and involve a broad set of stakeholders. In the long run, the national political culture needs to be transformed to put inclusion at the center. Even more than in countries not affected by conflict, public institutions and public administration in post-conflict countries must be committed to inclusion and to the imperative of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. The development by countries of SDG national action plans provides an opportunity for non-State actors to be involved in formulating these plans, and to hold governments answerable for implementing them. Of particular importance in post-conflict contexts is the engagement of minority groups in reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts.

Capable, effective and inclusive institutions and public administration, in addition to being consubstantial to a fully functioning State, are also instrumental to addressing both short-term and long-term development challenges. They help to shape an integrated national vision for sustainable development and peace, ensure responsive public service delivery (including justice and security) and look beyond post-conflict peacebuilding.

Public servants have to be open to the idea of working with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to deliver public services. To promote stakeholder engagement, a key factor in successful post-conflict governance, they need to leverage on champions within society who may be ready to take risks while promoting dialogue and inclusion.

Moreover, promoting institutionalized capacities and collaboration to identify and address grievance can help avoid relapse into conflict, particularly when exclusion generated conflict in the first place. Building or reforming institutions can affect existing power structures, which makes it de facto a political process. Elites often have a vested interest in keeping economic and political power - this can be offset by building coalitions to get a critical mass of agents of change.

Particularly in post conflict settings, effective management of the national budget is critical to ensure policy implementation, as well as for enhanced state legitimacy and accountability. A coherent, country-owned national programme that promotes integrated financial management approaches and directs investments to typically underserved areas of the administrative backbones of ministries (such as human

resources, administration, procurement, operations, etc.) was found to be key in bolstering national capacity, as described in this chapter.

External actors all have different agendas, which may not match the government's or other stakeholders' priorities. Because of their systemic importance in post-conflict settings, this often creates an additional challenge to integration. A coherent country vision, national sustainable development strategy and implementation plan can help aligning external intervention to country priorities.

Ensuring coherence and integration between national and sub-national levels of government is challenging in post-

conflict contexts, where local interests and powers may resist central authority. Devolving power to local governments - decentralization - is not always a solution to vertical integration issues, as supporting local governments at the expense of strengthening the central government may in the long run lead to negative outcomes. If decentralization is implemented, it should be well managed (impeding local elites capture among others) to support improved linkages between central and local authorities and cohesion. The integration of action at the national and sub-national levels may be enhanced through compacts or other accountability frameworks between the central government and local authorities.

Endnotes

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- 2 World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>.
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- 4 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 5 Particularly countries in sub-Saharan Africa, see ODI Development Progress, 2015, *Reaching the SDGs by 2030*.
- 6 Chandran, Cooper, Ivanovic, 2015, *Managing risks to sustainable development: Conflict, disaster, the SDGs and the United Nations – A report prepared for the UNDESA for the 2016 QCPR Review*, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research.
- 7 Sustaining peace is defined as “activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.”
- 8 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 9 United Nations General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, October 2015.
- 10 The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels. SDG 16, in particular, emphasizes the importance of an effective public sector, and thus strengthening institutional capacity for development and peaceful outcomes (targets 16.6 and 16.a, in particular). It is therefore a formal recognition of the peace and development nexus. However, already in 1992, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development emphasized that “peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible” (Principle 25). Also, DESA’s World Public Sector Report emphasized in 2010 that “most of the violent conflicts that have rocked the world and hindered development are a consequence of failures in governance and public administration systems”.
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- 16 See the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York 25 October 2017.
- 17 Open Society Foundation and the Blavatnik School of Government, 2016, *Rebuilding Public Administration In Post-Conflict States: Roundtable Report*, Oxford, UK, October.
- 18 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
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- 23 The World Bank estimated that rebuilding public administration after conflict requires between 20 to 40 years. See World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 24 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 25 World Bank, 2016, North-East Nigeria, Recovery and Peace Building Assessment, Synthesis Report, Washington DC.
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- 30 United Nations, 2010, *Reconstructing public administration after conflict: challenges, practices and lessons learned*, World Public Sector Report, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/135, New York.
- 31 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 32 Fatiha Serour, intervention during the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25 October 2017.
- 33 John-Mary Kauzya, presentation at the Roundtable on Rebuilding Public Administration in Post-Conflict States, 2016.
- 34 Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25 October 2017.
- 35 Causes of people grievance (and risk factors) can be linked to socio-economic, political or environmental issues (e.g. unemployment, poverty,

- socioeconomic gaps, political imbalances, unequal access to extractive and non-extractive resources, etc.). Tensions among different groups within a society or tensions between state and non-state actors can deteriorate into violent conflict through a variety of circumstances including competition over access and control of resources, irresponsible or unaccountable leadership, corruption, etc.
- 36 For instance, UNDP recommends to “promote the inclusion within the public administration of women and hitherto excluded groups, often on an ethnic and/or religious basis, for its impact on sustaining the political settlement but also for its potential to make service delivery more responsive to the needs of different groups” to maintain peace dividends. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report, 2017.
- 37 United Nations Development Programme, 2017, *UNDP Offer on SDG Implementation in Fragile Situations*. Some believe that it may be advisable to “avoid ‘Whole of government’ approaches in fragile contexts, as they often fall foul of political rivalries and work primarily with individual ministries, but rather focus on the core government functions. Without tangible progress in terms of effectiveness and accountability in fulfilling these functions, progress in sector-based service delivery, economic development and environmental management will be slowed and at risk of set-backs, in particular when exposed anew to shocks and conflict. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 38 United Nations Development Programme, 2017, *UNDP Offer on SDG Implementation in Fragile Situations*.
- 39 United Nations, 2010, *Reconstructing public administration after conflict: challenges, practices and lessons learned*, World Public Sector Report, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/135, New York.
- 40 The purpose of the assessment is to understand the fragility context created by the conflict and other factors. Fragility is multidimensional and requires the integration of several analytical tools to fully understand its dimensions. This includes understanding the power relations and the drivers of fragility, and identifying and analysing the drivers of conflict, institutions and institutional context, natural hazards, and disaster exposure and vulnerability. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report, 2017.
- 41 United Nations, 2010, *Reconstructing public administration after conflict: challenges, practices and lessons learned*, World Public Sector Report, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/135, New York. More recently, the Security Council highlighted eight elements of the sustaining peace infrastructure: (i) inclusive dialogue and mediation; (ii) access to justice and transitional justice; (iii) accountability; (iv) good governance; (v) democracy; (vi) accountable institutions; (vii) gender equality; and (viii) respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. This new perspective takes ‘peacebuilding’ out of the time horizon constraints it has been subject to since the 1990s, when it was considered a ‘post-conflict’ exercise to be implemented by outsiders. The concept of ‘sustaining peace’ also calls for breaking out of existing sectoral approaches to peace-building and conflict resolution, and for better integrating the United Nation’s three foundational pillars (peace and security, development and human rights) and their respective governance structures.
- 42 United Nations, DPKO/OROLSI-Stabilization, early peacebuilding and sustaining peace in United Nations peace operations: principles, elements and options.
- 43 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282 of 2016, S/RES/2282 states that national governments and authorities have a key responsibility in “identifying, driving and directing priorities, strategies and activities” although this task is shared with “all other national stakeholders”.
- 44 Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25 October 2017.
- 45 United Nations Development Programme, 2014, *Restore or Reform*. UNDP-BPPS inputs into the World Public Sector Report 2018 also states that “Reforms need not be based on imported norms and models; reforms in post-conflict contexts sustain better the test of time and future potential shocks and tensions when they are based on practice, including trial and error, and follow an incremental process.”
- 46 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 47 Marika Theros, intervention during the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York 25 October 2017.
- 48 Amara Koneh, intervention during the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York 25 October 2017.
- 49 According to UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018, “The 5 Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) adopted by the New Deal combine political stabilization, institutional strengthening and service delivery objectives, showing that the goal of making public institutions more accountable and effective cannot be done in isolation from progress on the broader political and security agendas”
- 50 United Nations Public Service Awards, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, available at <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Research/Case-Studies/unpsacases/ctl/NominationProfilev2014/mid/1170/id/2304>.
- 51 United Nations, 2010, *Reconstructing public administration after conflict: challenges, practices and lessons learned*, World Public Sector Report, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/135, New York.
- 52 Idem.
- 53 UNDESA, 2009, Report on Sustainable Development Strategies of Countries Emerging from Conflict in Africa, (unpublished), p.121 highlights the example of Rwanda’s Ombudsman’s office that conducts sensitization exercises and trains local level officials and other stakeholders to curb corruption.
- 54 Goldsworthy, D. & Stefanoni, S., *State building in fragile situations: The role of Supreme Audit Institutions and their international partners*, page 5.
- 55 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 56 John-Mary Kauzya, presentation at the Roundtable on Rebuilding Public Administration in Post-Conflict States, 2016.
- 57 Ashcroft, Laing, Lockhart, 2016, State Building in conflict affected and fragile states: a comparative study. Institute for State effectiveness (ISE), and g7+ Foundation, *Public Finance and National Accountability in Timor Leste and Afghanistan*.
- 58 Amara Koneh, World Bank, intervention during the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York 25 October 2017.
- 59 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 60 Government of Sierra Leone, 2016, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, *Advanced draft report on adaptation of the Goals in Sierra Leone*, July, Freetown.

- 61 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report, 2017.
- 62 OECD-Overview of the Links Between the Environment, Conflict and Peace: Developing Methodologies.
- 63 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 64 UNDP emphasizes the importance of building early warning and early action infrastructure at all levels of society, with particular focus on supporting women's groups as primary early warning actors for conflicts and disasters. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 65 Joint data management platforms help to share early warning information among government agencies.
- 66 United Nations Development Programme, 2017, *UNDP Offer on SDG Implementation in Fragile Situations*.
- 67 OECD- Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace building: tools for peace and conflict impact assessment.
- 68 United Nations Development Programme, 2015, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund: 2014 Annual Report*.
- 69 United Nations, 2009, *Analysis of the challenges and capacity gaps in the area of comprehensive development planning in post-conflict context*.
- 70 Peter Mae, 2017, Implications for Sustaining Peace, Solomon Islands, Discussion Paper, Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace.
- 71 Departamento Nacional de Planeación Colombia; United Nations Development Programme, 2015, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund: 2014 Annual Report*. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2017. OECD, 2015, Colombia policy priorities for inclusive development.
- 72 United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2012, Peace Dividends and Beyond: Contributions of Administrative and Social Services to Peacebuilding.
- 73 United Nations, 2009, Analysis of the challenges and capacity gaps in the area of comprehensive development planning in post-conflict context.
- 74 The local level is where the unmet needs of vulnerable and conflict-affected populations and the institutional weakness of the state interact in the most explosive manner. See UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report, 2017.
- 75 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 76 Idem.
- 77 United Nations, DPKO/OROLSI-Stabilization, early peacebuilding and sustaining peace in United Nations peace operations: principles, elements and options.
- 78 UNDESA, 2009, Report on Sustainable Development Strategies of Countries Emerging from Conflict in Africa (unpublished), p.142.
- 79 UNDESA, Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25 October 2017.
- 80 United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2012, Peace Dividends and Beyond: Contributions of Administrative and Social Services to Peacebuilding.
- 81 UNDESA, Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: the Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25 October 2017.
- 82 Nuredin Netabay, Bottom-Up Approach: A Viable Strategy in Solving the Somali Conflict, 2007 available at: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/casestudy/netabay-bottom>
- 83 Iberoamerican Forum on Public Administration for the Sustainable Development Goals, organized by the Latin American Center for Development (CLAD) and Colombia (National Department for Public Administration National Department for Planning), 27 July 2017.
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- 85 United Nations, DPKO/OROLSI, 2017, "Think Global, Act Local" Peace Operations – local and community impact for security, stabilization and prevention, January.
- 86 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 87 UNDP-Capacity Development in Post-Conflict Countries: Impact of conflict and fragility on governance capacity.
- 88 United Nations Capital Development Fund, 2017, *Financing Sustainable Urban Development in the Least Developed Countries*, United Nations, page 41.
- 89 United Nations, 2010, *Reconstructing public administration after conflict: challenges, practices and lessons learned*, World Public Sector Report, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/135, New York.
- 90 United Nations Development Programme, 2015, Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund: 2014 Annual Report.
- 91 Ministry of State Administration, Timor-Leste, United Nations Public Service Awards candidate, 2014 available at: <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Research/Case-Studies/unpsacases/ctl/NominationProfilev2014/mid/1170/id/2987>
- 92 United Nations, Antonio Guterres (S-G speech at Central Asia summit, 9 June 2017).
- 93 United Nations, Seminar on Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions, October 2011.
- 94 United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1325 Women Peace and Security", 2000.
- 95 World Bank, 2011, *Conflict Security, and Development*, World Development Report 2011, Washington DC.
- 96 High-Level Dialogue on 'Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace' in January 2017.
- 97 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 98 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 99 Structural gender inequalities (SDGs 5 and 10), contribute to undermining the achievement of the SDGs in post-conflict contexts.
- 100 While war-torn countries may face steep difficulties providing educational services, education plays a key role in economic recovery in post-conflict countries. Skewed investments in human capital could perpetuate conflict, increase inequalities across groups and cause grievances. See also: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), *The Impact of Conflict Over the Life Cycle Evidence for the Arab Region: Trends and Impacts, forthcoming*.

- 101 Gender analysis is critical for responsive policy development and effective engagement. See also Myrtilinen, H., Naujoks, J. & El-Bushra, J., Rethinking Gender & Peace-building, *International Alert*, available at http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_RethinkingGenderPeacebuilding_EN_2014.pdf.
- 102 This is in line with SDG target 5.5: “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.”
- 103 Women usually have an easier time influencing decision-making, in particular at the local level, in post-conflict contexts through civic engagement in advocacy, participatory and social accountability processes, which provide channels for their engagement on public issues outside of traditionally male-dominated channels. Women’s civic activism can have a great influence on social attitudes, such as sexual and gender-based violence and domestic violence, or for obtaining better services and the ability to enter the job market, or to vote in local elections. However, local women’s organizations face more difficulty in accessing technical and funding assistance compared to national (elite) organizations and may remain cut from the broader peacebuilding and state building agendas as a consequence. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 104 Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), Mano River Women’s Peace Network (MARWOPNET). Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP). Available at: <http://gnwp.peacegeeks.org/incident-report/mano-river-women%E2%80%99s-peace-network-marwopnet> [Accessed November 13, 2017]
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- 106 United Nations Development Programme, 2014, Restore or Reform: UN Support to Core Government Functions in the Aftermath of Conflict, United Nations Department of Public Information.
- 107 However, even with women elected in local offices, the gender-responsiveness of local policy agendas is not guaranteed, as women’s representatives will face during policy-making the same structural barriers to their voice and participation that they faced when running for office. Also, women officials sometimes fail to prioritize women’s issues on their own agenda or adopt the same conservative positions on women’s rights and needs than their fellow men officials. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 108 UNDP-BPPS inputs into the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 109 United Nations Development Programme, 2015, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund: 2014 Annual Report*.
- 110 Since institutional hybridity and a weak state presence across the national territory is often a prevalent feature in post-conflict settings, gender-responsive approaches cannot just focus on formal state institutions or civil society. Working with informal institutions and community-level gender norms can provide the most effective entry points for addressing gender inequalities and discrimination, as well as renegotiating women’s role in governance. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 111 UNDP-BPPS inputs into the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 112 According to UNDP Youth Strategy, 2014 - 2017, more than 600 million youth (15-24) live in fragile and crisis-affected settings.
- 113 United Nations, Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding & Peace. Nexus Foundation, 2016. Young People’s Participation in Peace Building: A Practice Note available at <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/Practice%20Note%20Youth%20&%20Peacebuilding%20-%20January%202016.pdf>.
- 114 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 of 9 December 2015, S/RES/2250 (2015), reissued on 5 January 2016.
- 115 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282 of 2016, S/RES/2282.
- 116 The Role of Youth in Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities | Sustainable Security.
- 117 Sarah Freedman, Professor of the Graduate School, Berkley, response to the call for inputs for this report.
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- 119 United Nations, International Youth Day, Youth Building Peace, August 2017 available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/international-youth-day-2017.html>.
- 120 For instance, through supporting gender and youth-sensitive violence reduction strategies (SDG 16.1) in conflict-affected settings, in particular against sexual and gender-based violence (SDG 5.2) and the violent assertion of masculinities. UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 121 United Nations Development Programme, UNDP Offer on SDG Implementation in Fragile Situations, 2017.
- 122 UNDP-BPPS inputs to the World Public Sector Report 2018.
- 123 The World Bank Group, 2014, Tunisia: Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion, available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/publication/tunisia-breaking-the-barriers-to-youth-inclusion>.
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