

Towards Sustainable Peace: Peace, Stability and the Post-2015 Agenda

Tuesday, March 4th, 2014

8:30 am – 9:45 am

Workshop Summary

Background

On Tuesday March 4th, the permanent representatives of Australia, Benin, Ireland and Timor-Leste to the United Nations co-hosted senior representatives from UN member states for an interactive discussion on peace and sustainable development. The workshop provided a forum for an informal, interactive discussion on the linkages between peace and development in the context of framing the post-2015 development agenda through the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals. The draft OWG “Focus Area Document,” which was published at the end of February 2014, had listed “Peaceful and non-violent societies, and capable institutions,” and the workshop provided a timely opportunity to informally exchange views on this framing. This note provides a brief summary of the main themes that emerged during the discussion. The workshop was held under the Chatham House Rule and was facilitated by the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

Linkages between peace and development

There was broad consensus on the links between peace and development. Development processes can be transformative. They can address the root causes of conflict, build social and political consensus and economic opportunity, and enable states and societies to prevent conflict. And peace is undeniably a necessity for development; the developmental and human costs of conflict are profound.

At the same time, there was also a concern to ensure that issues of peace did not overwhelm the whole development agenda. Countries would need to strike a balance to ensure that the strong inter-linkages were reflected without subordinating development priorities to separate questions of international security.

Therefore, a central theme of the discussion was how, rather than whether, to reflect upon the linkages between peace and development in the post-2015 framework.

A wide variety of views and options were shared. There was a general agreement that a positive (not punitive or conditional) framing around the linkages between building peaceful, stable and resilient societies and development was important. A positive framing should be applied with language focused on development outcomes for all people, and based on the principle of building national ownership and capacities. The need for combating social exclusion; promoting participation, social justice, rule of law,

good governance and equity; building national capacities for conflict resolution; developing national institutions and revenue management; creating economic opportunities; creating an environment to attract investment; building resilience to shocks and stresses and reducing people's vulnerabilities and fears; and promoting human and citizen security, were all suggested as potential development priorities. They reflect the linkages between peace and development and the desired transformation of societies, whether societies want to emerge from conflict, to build national consensus or to prevent conflict.

There was a diversity of views on whether peaceful societies should be reflected as a stand-alone "goal" or "targets" which would be mainstreamed across the Sustainable Development Goals. Some of the options included a universal goal around building peaceful and resilient societies; a universal goal around national capacity and institutions for the SDGs; and a range of development outcomes, which reflect the linkages between peace, and development that could be mainstreamed as targets throughout the agenda.

Countries want to consider the framework as a whole and the balances within it. A number of countries also want to consider issues of finance and conditionalities, and were concerned that development ODA would be diverted to more security- or peace oriented objectives. There is also caution to ensure that the post-2015 framework does not create new aid conditionalities attached to peaceful societies. In addition, the new agenda should be transformative, which means empowering people and countries, not infringing upon sovereignty. These concerns could be addressed as the negotiations progress.

The co-hosts and facilitators of the workshop were grateful for this highly enlightening conversation, which revealed many rich insights, lessons, perspectives, ideas and opportunities.