

CONCEPT NOTE: SESSION 7

Strengthening Dialogue in Fragile and Conflict Settings

Tuesday, 13 December 2022, 15:30 – 17:00 CET

Background

Fragile states are likely to be marginalized in terms of progress and sustainable development. Indeed, most bilateral development partners have a limited presence in such States. The humanitarian share of development partners' commitments is particularly high in these crisis contexts. That limits the capacity and means for these partners to understand the complexity of the contexts when the sources of fragility are multiple and interconnected. This complexity further justifies the need to invest in joint, coherent, and complementary action to leverage partnerships with both international and national development actors.

However, these actors are more challenged by the implementation of the principles of effective development cooperation. In some cases where state authority and legitimacy are weak, the principles of country ownership and working with state institutions can be difficult for Development Partners to respect. In addition, alignment with country priorities may be challenged by issues of continuing conflict, lack of a national development plan, or lack of capacity or incentive in the public sector to define results frameworks or set priorities.

These constraints inhibit the achievement of conditions for sustainable development outcomes with a clear risk of leaving many people behind. This is why fragile states are a top priority for development cooperation actors. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States endorsed this objective as an international consensus on partnership modalities for addressing fragility, as expressed in the conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Panel on Fragile States¹ in Africa.

According to the New Deal, in fragile or conflict-affected contexts, development cooperation partnerships must be built on mutual trust. Along with other norms, the application of the principles of development cooperation effectiveness helps to build this trust. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States recognizes that states emerging from or threatened by conflict require a different approach to partnerships and engagement than those designed for less fragile environments.

Based on the New Deal, actors have been able to draft national plans (in Liberia), conduct evaluation and monitoring (in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)), empower government, and improve aid effectiveness (in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste). However, for these development cooperation partnerships to be successful, they must be built on a foundation of mutual trust.

Building this trust among stakeholders is essential because demands for inclusion and equity are among the sources of fragility - in addition to the economic, social, political and environmental dimensions - as important drivers of fragility. Therefore, inclusive dialogue to leave no one behind is undoubtedly a perspective for the implementation of development effectiveness in fragile contexts. But what are the constraints to sustaining inclusive dialogue in fragile contexts? How can the implementation of development effectiveness principles in turn build trust and exit from cycles of conflict and fragility? What are the possible directions for the improvement and effectiveness of dialogue at the country level that take into account the specificities of fragile contexts and resilience as a confidence-building factor?

¹ African Development Strategy for "Addressing fragility and building resilience in africa: group strategy". The High-Level Panel on Fragile States in Africa was established on the initiative of President Kaberuka of the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Purpose of the session

The session aims to take into account the specificity of fragile contexts for implementing the principles of development effectiveness and to recall that the fight against fragility represents a major global challenge. Secondly, the session aims to propose solutions, in the implementation of the principles of development effectiveness, for the promotion of peace, crisis prevention and the exit from situations of fragility and conflict. These solutions are based on good practices identified by all development actors.

Objectives

The main objective is to deepen the reflection on the mechanisms of partnership and inclusive dialogue in order to strengthen the effectiveness of development cooperation, in order to build resilient and peaceful states.

The specific objectives are:

- To discuss among stakeholders the experiences of constraints on maintaining inclusive dialogue to leave no one behind in conflict situations
- To discuss ways in which the application of development effectiveness can contribute to confidence building, success factors and risk management for exiting cycles of conflict and fragility
- Propose guidelines for the improvement and effectiveness of dialogue at country level that take into account the specificities of fragile contexts as a confidence-building factor.

Expected results

- The constraints on maintaining inclusive dialogue in conflict situations are identified and discussed
- A debate is conducted on the contribution of development effectiveness principles as success factors and risk management in ending cycles of conflict and fragility
- Guidelines are proposed for the improvement and effectiveness of dialogue as a factor of trust between stakeholders at country level, taking into account the specificities of the contexts and lessons learned ten years after the New Deal and existing processes such as the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) as a platform to support these efforts.

Deliverables

- Call for the implementation and monitoring of the principles of development cooperation effectiveness, in particular the New Deal, in fragile and conflict contexts in a synthesis document.

Format

The debate will be limited to 01 hour 30 minutes. The Moderator will introduce the opening remarks from the Session Chairperson (05 minutes) and the interventions of the panelists (06 min x 7 = 42 minutes). This will be followed by an interactive debate (36 minutes) led by the moderator and including interventions from the audience (6 x 3 min = 18 minutes) and reactions from the panelists (6 x 3 min = 18 minutes). Finally, the moderator will summarize the discussions leading to the call to action (07 minutes).

Format: "Classroom" style (panelists are all seated at the podium each with their own chair and table, the moderator is in the middle, participants facing each other as in a classroom).

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