

SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT

A TRANSATLANTIC CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE

Improving transatlantic approaches to fragile and conflict-affected states

Civil society recommendations for the
EU-US High Level Consultative Group on Development

April 2014

Background

To increase information sharing, coordination and policy alignment, political leaders in Brussels and Washington, DC decided in 2009 to reactivate the EU-US High Level Consultative Group on Development (“EU-US Development Dialogue”). With almost two-thirds of global official development assistance flowing from the United States and Europe, this dialogue has the potential to align European and American approaches to foreign assistance and improve the effectiveness of development programs at the country level.

It is essential that the EU-US Development Dialogue focuses on more effective development assistance in situations of conflict and fragility. Around 1.5 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected states and ensuring their safety and prosperity is one of the central challenges of our time. Development actors, that is governments, donors, civil society and international organizations, must act jointly and decisively to ensure development opportunities in these challenging contexts.

European and American civil society organizations are keen to provide input to the EU-US Development Dialogue on this issue. They have considerable experience and close familiarity with the challenges and dynamics of fragile or conflict-affected countries. They also mobilize significant private resources for country programs in a time of limited public resources. For these reasons, European and American civil society organizations are eager to add to official governmental dialogues on strategies and approaches to these issues.

Process

The Transatlantic Civil Society Dialogue on Security and Development is a loose network of European and American civil society organizations concerned about progress in fragile and conflict-affected states. Convened by the Global Public Policy Institute, InterAction and Saferworld and funded by the European Union, participating organizations developed their recommendations over the past 14 months.

Two workshops, in Berlin in May 2013 and in Washington DC in November 2013, helped to reflect on initial ideas and refine positions. In between, the draft recommendations were extensively shared among a broader group of European and American civil society organizations and aid experts for further input and validation. This included an African Civil Society Dialogue on Development in Fragile Contexts workshop, which took place in Johannesburg on 18 October 2013 and gathered input from African civil society organizations and African aid experts.

Results

The Transatlantic Civil Society Dialogue on Security and Development offers four sets of specific and action-oriented recommendations to improve European and American cooperation on both a strategic and at the country level:

- Improving the EU-US Development Dialogue
- Supporting the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States”
- Addressing political, social and economic drivers of fragility
- Conflict, violence and peace-building in the post-MDG framework

Project partners



GPPi is an independent think tank based in Berlin. Its mission is to develop innovative strategies for effective and accountable governance and to achieve lasting impact at the interface of the public sector, business and civil society through research, consulting and debate.



InterAction is an alliance organization in Washington DC of US-based international organizations. What unites InterAction is a commitment to working with the world's poor and vulnerable, and a belief that the organization can make the world a more peaceful, just and prosperous place.



Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. Saferworld works with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis.

Support



The Transatlantic Civil Society Dialogue is co-funded by the European Union.

Participating organizations/individuals

The following organizations and individuals participated and provided input:

ActionAid (South Africa)

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (South Africa)

Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (Kenya)

Alliance for Peacebuilding (US)

Brot für die Welt (Germany)

Catholic Relief Services (US)

Center on International Cooperation, New York University (US)

Centre for Democracy and Development (Nigeria)

Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria (South Africa)

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (South Africa)

Christian Aid (International)

Clingendael (Netherlands Institute of International Relations; Netherlands)

Cordaid (Netherlands)

Crisis Management Initiative (Finland)

Crisis States Research Center, London School of Economics and Political Science (UK)

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German Development Institute (Germany)

Global Call to Action Against Poverty (International)

Graduate School of Public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)

Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)

International Alert (UK)

INTERSOS (Italy)

Kehys - The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU

Management Sciences for Health (Finland)

Overseas Development Institute (UK)

Oxfam America (US)

Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University (US)

Quaker United Nations Office (International)

SADC Council of NGOs (Botswana)

Small Arms Survey - Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (International)

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Society for International Development – Washington (US)

South African Institute for International Affairs

The Fund for Peace (US)

The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (South Africa)

TrustAfrica (Africa)

Uganda National NGO Forum (Uganda)

United Nations Foundation (International)

Verband Entwicklungspolitik deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen (Germany)

Womankind Worldwide (UK)

Working Group on Peace and Development – FRIENT (Germany)

World Learning (US)

World Vision (US)

World Vision (Germany)

Addressing political, social and economic drivers of fragility

Development actors will be more effective in fragile and conflict-affected settings if they address the ‘drivers’ or ‘root causes’ of instability. Apart from a number of global factors shaping fragility, which are not addressed here, the root causes of instability are in many cases linked to domestic political, social and economic exclusion and inequality. Without inclusive and responsive political, social and economic processes, a society can hardly achieve the social cohesion and healthy state-society relations it needs for lasting peace and stability.

Political and social factors that underlie instability are often a lack of inclusive, accountable and responsive governance, contributing to the political and social exclusion and cohesion of different parts of society. Oftentimes, this fuels mistrust for public affairs and indifference for active and demanding citizenship among populations.

Beyond addressing political and social factors, development actors must encourage both governments and private actors in fragile and conflict-affected states to increase economic opportunities for those previously excluded and marginalized. In addition to growing numbers of urban poor and increasing populations, hundreds of millions of poor rural dwellers in fragile or conflict-affected states struggle to support themselves and their families. Mostly subsistence farmers, they have little resilience to economic, environmental or political crises. The recent famines in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel show the close connection between pervasive marginalization of rural populations and the difficulty of building enough resilience to withstand economic hardship.

Priorities and recommendations for addressing drivers of fragility

Priority: Stronger state-society relations and good governance

Fragile and conflict-affected states can only turn into capable and responsive states if they adequately address the underlying destabilizing political, social and economic issues. A good governance agenda that focuses exclusively on the public sector and formal state institutions but leaves out its engagement across social groups cannot ensure stability in the long run or build lasting peace. Though time-consuming, development actors must prioritize fostering social cohesion and improved state-society relationships over quick results.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Promote equity, transparency and accountability in government activities to counter bias, secrecy and corruption that contributes to grievances and social fragmentation.
- Prioritize the strengthening of justice systems and the rule of law to reduce grievances and perceived inequities.
- Strengthen local government services and broad political inclusion in local institutions to counter political cleavages or social tensions.
- Support and where necessary protect an independent media landscape capable of holding the government to account.
- Ensure gender equality and inclusion of marginalized groups in all donor-funded activities.
- Jointly identify non-state (community-based, civil society and private sector) actors that may be potential partners and add substantial value in designing, implementing and monitoring programs. These actors should be independent, non-partisan, inclusive and peaceful in their approach to development.
- Invest more in capacity-building of local non-state actors beyond project-based funds, for example through longer-term venture or basket/pooled funds.

Priority: Economic opportunity and jobs

Fragile and conflict-affected states can only strengthen the resilience of their citizens and reduce widespread poverty if they ensure equitable and inclusive economic opportunities. It is essential that development actors promote economies that support skill building and capacity development; that support the economic integration and market opportunities for the rural population; and that are premised on norms for transparent, equitable and accountable collaboration between the public and the private sector.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Support diversified job opportunities and skills-building as well as economic integration of local economies. Focus on youth employment and accessible educational opportunities responsive to the needs of the local labor market. Encourage micro- and small-scale entrepreneurship, including by women, through access to credit.
- Link small farmers and cooperatives to local, regional and international markets. Jointly design programs that increase productivity of food crops for domestic consumption, allow subsistence farmers to 'reach up' to expanding markets and meet export standards.
- If desired by the partner country and its citizens and if potential negative effects of trade liberalization are actively mitigated, support integrated and open economies. Opportunities for local value addition must be central to an export-led growth strategy.
- Mobilize high-level policy dialogue between donors and governments to encourage sensible foreign direct investment and Public-Private Partnerships that contribute to job creation, economic opportunities and increased public revenues.

Priority: Public services and revenue

Increasing support to the marginalized poor, including smallholder farmers, ethnic minorities, and women and children, must become a priority for development actors. Governments must acquire the capacity to protect land rights, rule of law, personal security and equitable opportunities to ensure these outcomes. States need revenue to deliver public goods and to provide key services. Fair and consistent mechanisms for generating public revenues are essential to underpin any agenda for improved governance, rule of law and sustainable economic and social development in fragile and conflict-affected states. Development actors should support these efforts by emphasizing transparency and accountability in all aid spent in fragile states.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Promote agricultural research and extension, and increase access to affordable insurance and credit for smallholder farmers, including women farmers, to reduce the risks of volatile food prices and changing weather patterns.
- Focus on high-impact, low cost services such as vaccines, skilled birth attendants or subsidized seeds to allow governments to demonstrate results, increase their legitimacy and provide a tangible "peace dividend" to the populations most negatively impacted by years of conflict and instability.
- Encourage a high-level policy dialogue among donors, governments, civil society and businesses on best ways to mobilize revenues for public investments and development services and tackle corruption and financial mismanagement.
- Encourage the taxation of those most capable, including international corporations, larger domestic companies and the wealthiest sectors of society. Include less affluent populations in taxation only after poverty levels have fallen to a level where these groups can reasonably afford supporting government services.

Supporting the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States”

Context sensitive and situation-specific approaches are needed to address poverty and insecurity for the 1.5 billion people who live in fragile and conflict-affected states. Governments, donors, civil society and international organizations, must act jointly and decisively to ensure development opportunities in these challenging contexts.

The g7+ group of 18 fragile and conflict-affected countries, their development partners, and international organizations took an important step towards realizing this vision by endorsing the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States” in 2011 as a guiding agenda. The New Deal revolves around country-owned transitions out of fragility based on a more effective and coordinated use of resources. It centers on five peace-building and state-building goals (PSGs): 1) Legitimate Politics; 2) Security; 3) Justice; 4) Economic Foundations; and 5) Revenue and Services.

The New Deal is a promising Southern-driven process that fully embraces country ownership and shared responsibility and requires strong, smart and politically sensitive support from donors and development actors.

Priorities and recommendations for supporting the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

Priority: Civil society support

A strong, vocal and capable civil society is essential to help transform fragile and conflict-affected states into stable, secure, accountable and responsive states. Creating mutually beneficial, effective and legitimate state-society relations requires greater support for local civil society. Providing financial, technical and political support acknowledges the need for democratic governance and citizen ownership in the New Deal pilot countries.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Promote the central New Deal vision that functioning state-society relations and citizen ownership are essential for successful development processes by providing political, technical and more accessible financial support for local civil society organizations. They oftentimes face serious capacity constraints and are underrepresented or involved too late.
- Create political space and a supportive policy environment for local civil society actors, including women groups, business associations and media, in all processes by making their participation, in particular in the New Deal compacts, conditional of further donor support.
- Act as a facilitator for inclusive national dialogue processes; support regular multi-stakeholder meetings between donors, civil society and the government to monitor progress, challenges and opportunities for more robust New Deal implementation.

Priority: Donor harmonization

Experiences from the New Deal need to inform the post-MDG development framework. Further, other donors and actors currently not aligned to the New Deal and its goals should be encouraged to do so. Emerging donors could be constructively engaged in New Deal processes to share experiences from their own transition processes, provide additional resources for New Deal implementation, and ensure that their engagement is consistent with New Deal principles. International Financial Institutions and the private sector should be brought in more systematically to ensure their engagement supports the

New Deal goals. Also, when mandated under explicit guidance from the country-led programs and under full democratic and civilian oversight, military actors including peacekeeping operations may offer valuable support in stabilizing and reforming a security sector.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Assess on a regular basis the priorities and capacities of the USAID missions and EU delegations to identify engagement gaps and avoid overlaps.
- Conduct, share and regularly update context analysis for building shared understanding of the main challenges of the New Deal partner country in the short- to medium-term.
- Undertake joint efforts to develop risk management strategies with an explicit “do no harm” policy.
- Conduct scenario planning exercises together with other state and non-state development actors to better anticipate potential risks and facilitate contingency planning.
- Incorporate emerging donors and rising powers into all New Deal activities.

Priority: Aid delivery

Driven and owned by the g7+ states, the New Deal nonetheless requires strong, smart and politically sensitive support from donors. It calls for a commitment by donors to uphold its central vision, support its processes and undertake additional responsibilities, including defining lead donors in pilot states, accepting such a lead or agreeing on a shared lead role, committing to a longer time-frame, changing aid deliveries to conform with New Deal demands, being more sensitive to pacing of activities and to not measure success by short-term projects only.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Support regularly updated country-led fragility assessments which explicitly involve civil society representatives to direct and prioritize donor programming and allocations.
- Ensure that country-led fragility assessments include analysis of transformational change opportunities and priorities, and how those could be leveraged; emphasize the importance of assessing demographic processes, inequalities, economic opportunities, and the status of security sector reform in such fragility assessments.
- For countries emerging from violent conflict, make peace-building and reconciliation (as expressed through the PSGs) an explicit priority of working in New Deal countries. This can facilitate a peace agreement, structure post-conflict transition and foster a new renewed social contract.
- Provide long-term, flexible funding that can be used as necessary for humanitarian assistance, stabilization or development programs; mobilize private resource flows through greater use of securitized public loans or venture capital; hedge fiduciary risks by exploring partnerships and by diversifying funding to various actors (think tanks, CSOs, etc.).
- Report all aid for each country in consistent formats and in a publicly available database and jointly support an independent annual audit of public expenditures to hold donors and governments to account and strengthen citizen ownership. Donors must be serious about transparency and accountability – particularly of their own activities.
- Measure progress against the global partnership indicators and also the indicators agreed for New Deal monitoring by INCAF and the g7+ and regularly support the update of Compact monitoring tools.
- Emphasize the importance of learning and knowledge management around the New Deal. Such learning requires systematic and consistent monitoring and evaluation of activities in fragile and conflict-affected states, in particular after the finalization of the pilot phases of New Deal implementation. Consider supporting peer learning and peer support among New Deal countries.

Conflict, violence and peace-building in the post-MDG framework

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have played an important role in defining international development priorities since their adoption in 2000 and with their expiration at the end of 2015, discussions on a future global development agenda are underway. The post-MDG framework must be mindful of the threat that political and social instability, conflict and violence pose to development.

Fragile and conflict-affected states lag seriously behind other countries in progress toward the current MDGs and their situation challenges the prospects of long-term development. As the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda stated, “violence and fragility have become the largest obstacle to the MDGs.” For these reasons, development actors must ensure that peace-building features much more prominently in any post-2015 framework and they must be committed to changing their own perceptions, practices and priorities.

The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda advocates in their final report for the inclusion of the universal goal “Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies”. With further support by the UN Secretary General’s report on the post-MDGs (September 2013), the results of global civil society consultations and other fora, this is a starting point for a constructive discussion on how to address conflict, violence and peace-building in a future global development framework.

Priorities and recommendations on conflict, violence and peace-building in the post-MDG debate

Priority: Universally applicable post-2015 framework for addressing violence and fragility

Donor commitments must support the building of inclusive, responsive, fair and accountable states with respect to human rights, the rule of law, as well as equal access to decent livelihoods and social services. It also requires a willingness from donors to effectively address global factors that drive conflict and instability, such as transnational organized crime, flows of illicit arms, money laundering or tax evasion. A post-2015 framework should:

- Achieve a genuinely transformative framework that includes the voices of local civil society.
- Be conflict sensitive and include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- Be universally applicable for promoting peace and stability rather than a selective focus on developing countries or the global South. This includes accepting responsibilities that go beyond aid, particularly by addressing global factors driving instability.

Priority: Integrating violence and fragility throughout the post-2015 framework

It is critical to ensure that a post-2015 framework includes a set of cross-cutting goals and targets that effectively address drivers of conflict and violence and support progress towards sustainable peace – in addition to a dedicated goal on peace and security. If not, violence and fragility will not receive enough attention and will continue to undermine long-term development.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Support and promote goals and targets addressing the fundamentals of good governance and functioning state-society relations: voice and participation of all parts of society, access to justice and rule of law, transparency and accountability of the public sector, and human security.

- Insist that the post-2015 agenda addresses the global causes and exacerbating factors of instability and conflict such as the illicit trade of arms, the international drug trade, capital flight, or environmental degradation.

Priority: Monitoring, measuring and improving implementation

To effectively measure progress towards peace and avoid counterproductive incentives, it is essential to develop indicators which help measure changes in situations on the ground as well as public perceptions. Using disaggregated and flexible data helps to recognize and tackle unequal levels of progress towards peace and stability and design context-responsive programs accordingly. Development actors must strengthen capacities among civil society to measure progress effectively, impartially and sensitively and to generate a sense of ownership for any post-2015 monitoring process.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Recognize that long-standing conflicts or conflict systems need a coherent and long-term, high-level diplomatic and development approach.
- Recognize the trade-offs or conflicts between security, commercial, and development objectives, and commit to creating more policy coherence for reaching development goals.
- Document “good practices” in violence reduction to serve as examples.
- Commit to greater transparency of aid, especially aid directed at the security sector.
- Support and collaborate extensively with civil society organizations in recipient countries and from the global South to ensure transparent, inclusive, effective and sustainable implementation.
- Support measures, both in the public sector and within civil society, to enhance and/or build the necessary capacities, especially in the global south, to monitor and measure progress post-2015.

Priority: Communication and advocacy

The post-2015 framework requires champions – both among governments and civil society – to uphold and implement the vision of peaceful and stable societies. On an intergovernmental level, this requires an engagement with a wider coalition of states, in particular with the G77 as well as traditional and non-traditional donors. Simultaneously, development actors must support and strengthen local civil society engagement as the building block of peaceful development.

Recommendations for the EU and the US

- Develop a coordinated communication and diplomatic strategy to promote a global discourse on security and peace-building.
- Broaden the base of non-EU/US champions and avenues for contested issues surrounding the post-2015 framework, especially its aspects dealing with conflict and violence.
- Lead by example and demonstrate commitment to post-2015 security and peace-building through diplomatic, political and security actions.

Recommendations for improving the EU-US Development Dialogue

The EU-US Development Dialogue can positively influence the coherence and operational coordination of the EU and US at the policy level and in partner countries. The Dialogue is the only transatlantic high-level forum with such a mandate. In the critical area of security and development, the dialogue can be a model for a) improving the effectiveness of international coordination; b) sharing existing knowledge and approaches towards providing assistance; and c) coordinating technical programming at the country level.

Priorities and recommendations on strengthening EU-US Development Dialogue

Priority: Balancing short-term crisis response with longer-term development approaches

- When addressing security and development, focus Dialogue discussions on longer-term, proactive strategies for addressing fragility, peace-building and an effective transition to sustained development.
- Avoid a default strategy of attempting to manage acute crises on a case-by-case basis. Priority themes should be a) addressing the social and economic drivers of fragility; b) supporting the New Deal on fragile States; and c) integrating peace-building in the post-MDG framework.
- Act as a multiplier for existing knowledge and approaches for addressing the security and development nexus. Utilize insights generated in other fora, such as the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) or the G7+ group to inform the policy choices of the EU-US Development Dialogue.

Priority: Management and accountability

- Establish a clear roadmap for the Dialogue, with an aspirational schedule for expected outcomes and further discussions on priority areas.
- Delegate concrete activities to the relevant units and ensure clear roles and expectations of all actors involved in jointly implementing the decided work program.
- Include EU delegations and US embassies in the formulation of priorities and activities for easier and more effective EU-US in-country coordination.
- Monitor the progress of activities and its results to determine good practices of EU and US cooperation and to encourage further activities and the champions of the Dialogue.

Priority: Inclusiveness

- Establish a sustained mechanism to incorporate civil society input and recommendations into the EU-US Development Dialogue. This mechanism should enable civil society to track and support official Dialogue discussions on the security and development nexus and beyond.
- Consistently engage with civil society organizations to strategically determine how international and local civil society can play a role in implementing activities relating to peace-building, stabilization and a successful transition to development.

Priority: Transparency

- Increase publicly available information around the EU-US Development Dialogue and its agenda. Identify civil society and other expert resources that can support and inform Dialogue discussions on specific issues and regions.
- Publish annually or bi-annually a joint report on activities and steps taken to improve coordination between the EU and US on issues related to the security and development nexus.
- Ensure that the EU-US Development Dialogue tracks its initiatives and their effectiveness, and that it shares that information with stakeholders in a timely, transparent way.

