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Development and Prevention: National Examples of Linkages

Development is an essential tool for conflict prevention, as often root causes are related to lack of equitable access to economic opportunities, or a combination of political and economic inequalities that fuel grievances—as highlighted in the 2011 *World Development Report* and the 2018 UN–World Bank *Pathways for Peace* report. Some risk factors may therefore need to be addressed with development tools. Drawing on field research and on member state reporting at the recent High-level Political Forum in July 2019, this briefing highlights development measures countries have taken to support prevention, and highlights ways the UN system can better assist these efforts.

A solid body of evidence has been built on the key role that development can play in prevention. The World Bank's flagship *World Development Report 2011* focused on "jobs, security, and justice" as critical development issues that need to be addressed if development efforts are going to also contribute to preventing conflict. The more recent UN-World Bank report, *Pathways for Peace*, echoed these initial findings and also shared more evidence on the role of economic, social, and political inequalities, including perceptions of inequality, in driving conflict—urging development actors to factor this into their programs.

Reflecting this growing consensus, the twin sustaining peace resolutions in the Security Council and the General Assembly acknowledged an integral role for the development pillar. In paragraph 16, the resolutions: "*Recognize[s]* that development is a central goal in itself and *recognize[s]* the important contributions of the United Nations development system to peacebuilding, particularly through economic development and poverty eradication."

With the secretary-general's reform initiatives, the UN development system has already taken important practical steps to realize this vision, including a new resident coordinator (RC) system, initiatives for more flexible country teams to respond to national needs, and the development of a new funding compact.

Other important actors are moving ahead quickly to make ensure that prevention is integral to their work. For example, the World Bank is developing a new strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) that promises to change the way that it works at country level for countries at higher risk of crisis.

In this briefing, we highlight practical examples of how countries are using development tools for preventive purposes. We draw on field research from Colombia, where there has been a high degree of creative and innovative initiatives to address violence, as well as presentations for the voluntary national reviews on SDG16 at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). We conclude by drawing lessons for the UN system.

Three practical ways development contributes to prevention

In practice, at country level, there are three different ways that development can contribute to conflict prevention: through universal prevention; targeted prevention; and through a conflict prevention lens (conflict-sensitive approach).

As discussed in our previous prevention briefs, the simplest form of upstream prevention is **universal prevention**, which consists of general efforts aimed at the overall population to build healthy societies and strengthen the social contract.[1] The 2030 Agenda offers a relevant framework for developing healthy societies resilient to violent conflict. In particular, its "leave no one behind" approach is crucial for prevention, since new evidence from the *Pathways for Peace* report shows that economic and social exclusion and inequalities (including unequal growth) can create grievances that contribute to conflict.

One example of universal prevention concerns initiatives for gender equality. Cross-national studies show that "high levels of gender inequality and gender-based violence in a society are associated with increased vulnerability to civil war and interstate war and the use of more severe forms of violence in conflict."[2] Development measures that reduce gender inequality and gender-based violence—for instance, implementation of SDG 5—also reduce vulnerability to internal conflict, even when prevention is not a specific objective.

In the **targeted prevention approach**, the government identifies risk factors for violence to emerge in particular geographical areas—hot spots—and then

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[1] Paige Arthur and Céline Monnier, "Unpacking Prevention: Member State Perspectives" (New York: Center on International Cooperation, April 2019). See also Sarah Cliffe and David Steven, "An Integrated Approach to Prevention: The Links between Prevention, the 2030 Agenda, and Sustaining Peace" (Center on International Cooperation, December 2017), https://cic.nyu.edu/publications/integrated-approach-prevention-links-between-prevention-2030-agenda-and-sustaining.
[2] Caprioli et al. 2007; GIWPS and PRIO 2017; Hudson et al. 2009; Kelly 2017 in World Bank and United Nations, eds., *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC, USA: World Bank Group, 2018).

Causes of violence: evidence from WDR

The *2011 World Development Report* (p. 74) summarized major factors causing violence, noting that the relationship is complex: factors that can trigger conflict are similar to the "relationship between health threats and risk factors at individual, relationship, community, and society levels found in the public health/ecological framework developed by the World Health Organization." Factors include:

Security: internal issues (e.g., weak security institutions); external issues (e.g., invasion, external support for rebels)

Economy: internal issues (e.g., low income, youth unemployment, rapid urbanization); external issues (e.g., price shocks, climate change)

Justice: internal issues (e.g., human rights abuses, ethnic competition); external issues (e.g., global injustice in treatment of ethnic groups.)

addresses them in a concerted way.[3] Some of the risks that can bring groups to the brink of violence are development related. For instance, one study found that natural disasters will increase the risks of violent civil conflict—particularly in low- and middle-income countries—when combined with high levels of inequality, mixed political regimes, and sluggish economic growth.[4] Other evidence highlighted in the *Pathways for Peace* report relates to the finding that "exclusion from access to power, opportunity, services, and security creates fertile ground for mobilizing group grievances, especially in areas with weak state capacity or legitimacy or in the context of human rights abuses."[5]

A targeted prevention approach uses development tools as part of a broader strategy to address other risk factors simultaneously. Tackling development risk factors together with human rights, political, and other risk factors is more effective than re-branding existing activities—such as those mentioned in the universal prevention approach– as explained in our previous brief on national cross-pillar strategies.[6]

The third approach consists of using a **conflict prevention lens** for development activities. It is based on the principle that economic development activities can heighten the risk of conflicts, for instance, by reinforcing group division and grievances.[7] One study notably showed that "economic growth in locations where people and property are insecure heightens incentives to use violence to capture economic rents."[8] Hence, the core of conflict-sensitive development is to undertake an analysis at the start of new projects to assess the conflict dynamics and find ways to avoid feeding them.

Using development for universal prevention: country examples

Most countries implement development initiatives that contribute to reducing the risks of violent conflict on a daily basis. The examples below show how countries have used different aspects of the 2030 Agenda to address issues relevant to universal prevention—also ensuring a preventive approach by being sensitive to disparities among groups.

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[3] Paige Arthur and Céline Monnier, "Breaking the Silos: Pragmatic National Approaches to Prevention" (New York: Center on International Cooperation, August 2019).
[4] Philip Nel and Marjolein Righarts, "Natural Disasters and the Risk of Violent Civil Conflict," *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 52, no. No. 1 (March 2008): 159–85.
[5] World Bank and United Nations, eds., *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC, USA: World Bank Group, 2018).
[6] Arthur and Monnier, "Breaking the Silos."
[7] Frontier Design, "The Strategic Prevention Project: Assessing the Role of Foreign Assistance in Preventing Violent Conflicts in Fragile States" (Washington: Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources, 2019), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Strategic-Prevention-Project.pdf.
[8] Collier and Hoeffler 2000, Fearon 2008 in Eli Berman et al., "Effective Aid in Conflict Zones," *VoxEU.Org* (blog), May 26, 2013, https://voxeu.org/article/effective-aid-conflict-zones.

Tunisia

Tunisia, for instance, has invested heavily after the revolution in gender equality and in protecting women from gender-based violence. In 2011, it adopted a parity law to ensure that 50 percent of the Constituent Assembly's members are women. In its 2014 constitution, Tunisia included two new far-reaching articles on gender equality relating to equal rights and responsibilities of citizens (article 21) and to state responsibility to protect women's rights, to guarantee equal opportunities and parity in elective councils, as well as to work to eradicate violence against women (article 46). In 2017, the Law to Eliminate Violence against Women was also adopted, which is recognized as the best in the region and among the best in the world. These laws have triggered impressive results in terms of political inclusion—with for instance a higher percentage of women in the national assembly that the United Kingdom, France or the United States—and an important civic dialogue.

Timor-Leste

Access to a fair justice system is one of the key elements to strengthen the social contract, improve the legitimacy of the state, and prevent violent conflicts—particularly in post conflict settings.[9] In **Timor-Leste**, accessing the justice system for people from rural areas means traveling to a city, which is often time consuming and costly, hence discouraging many. Since 2008, the government has introduced mobile courts, which give citizens better access to justice in remote areas, and also provides education and socialization of justice procedures. The mobile court system also works with interpreters to facilitate the participation of all Timorese in a country with fifteen languages.[10] These courts are now present in nine out of thirteen municipalities and the government is keen on expanding to the remaining ones.[11]

United Kingdom

In its Voluntary National Review on SDG16 presented in June at the HLPF, the **United Kingdom** reported its efforts in the protection for the rights of minorities.[12] It has, for instance, implemented a Race Disparity Audit, and shared publicly its results on a website that also serves to highlight disparities in services across ethnic groups.[13] The use of this information to increase inclusion can contribute to reducing risk factors for social conflict, as highlighted in the *Pathways for Peace* report.

A caveat on development as universal prevention

The use of general development for prevention will have different impact depending on the activities and the context. Development efforts can also have no impact on prevention, or they increase the risks of conflict, if they are not conflict-sensitive. In addition, there is a need ensure that development is not equated with prevention. In the development of its Fragility, Conflict and

Violence strategy, the World Bank acknowledges this by "challenging the notion that economic and social development alone will curb fragility."[14]

The *2011 World Development Report* also demonstrated that institutional strengthening is a key element of developmental contributions to prevention—that is, gains in youth employment (for example) may not on their own reduce the risk of conflict appreciably if institutions in the country are weak.[15] Interventions are more effective when prevention is an objective, and when they include development and non-development measures in a concerted way.

Targeted prevention: examples from Colombia

As presented in several previous briefs, targeted prevention is the most effective form of prevention.[16] For governments, interlinkages between development and other risk factors are evident, and an integrated, cross-pillar approach is implemented on a daily basis; some of them have even developed conflict prevention strategy.

Preventing recruitment in Cali

The city of Cali in Colombia has a long tradition of implementing violence prevention approaches. In 1992, Rodrigo Guerrero was elected mayor and started an in-depth investigation into the factors creating violence in the city. He has been a pioneer in the development of the science of violence prevention in Latin America.[17]

This legacy of evidence-driven approaches to tackling the root causes of violence in Cali lives on. Among the city's strategies to reduce violence, the current administration has identified young people who have joined or are at risk of joining violent groups. To prevent their recruitment, the mayor's office adopts a comprehensive approach that uses development measures—while understanding that they cannot be used in isolation.

> Development activities—such as job creation—have an important prevention dimension, but not a sufficient one. They need to be implemented in combination with other initiatives.

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9 See, for instance, Peacebuilding Initiative, "Access to Justice & Peacebuilding Processes," accessed August 22, 2019, http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/indexa8b0.html?pageId=1813.

10 The New Humanitarian, "Timor-Leste's mobile courts promote access to justice," The New Humanitarian, May 20, 2014, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/254620.

11 Government of Timor-Leste, "Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: From Ashes to Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Sustainable Development, Voluntary National Review of Timor-Leste 2019" (Dili, 2019).

12 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals" (London, June 2019).

13 Government of the United Kingdom, "Ethnicity Facts and Figures," Gov.uk, accessed August 23, 2019, https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/.

14 World Bank Group, "World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2025 - Concept Note" (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2019), 4.

15 *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2011), Part I, Ch. 2.

16 Arthur and Monnier, "Breaking the Silos."

17 The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, "El Dr. Rodrigo Guerrero Gana El Premio Roux Por Usar Datos Para Abordar La Violencia Como Una Crisis de Salud Pública En Cali, Colombia," IHME, September 29, 2014, http://www.healthdata.org/news-release/el-dr-rodrigo-guerrero-gana-el-premio-roux-por-usar-datos-para-abordar-la-violencia.

Using development funding for conflict prevention

Development initiatives can contribute to conflict prevention. When this is the case, funding for development will be the same as funding for prevention. That is, there is no diversion of funding from one to the other, because development activities will still be implemented, some of them will just also contribute to conflict prevention. **It is about doing development better and, indeed, sometimes even *increasing* funding for development**.

In some cases, conflict prevention activities may fall outside of the traditional development realm, for instance the implementation of national dialogues. However, the cost of these initiatives is very low in comparison with other development programs, and they can also trigger development gains. Indeed, both in the World Bank's new Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Strategy, as well as the 2030 Agenda and especially SDG16, there is a broad acknowledgement that for development goals (such as poverty reduction) to be achieved, violence and the risk of crisis should be addressed.

For instance, although job creation for youth at risk of joining armed groups is often perceived as an important development tool for prevention, Cali's Security Secretariat emphasizes that the approach cannot be a standalone measure. Even if jobs were created for the vulnerable people currently involved or at risk of being involved in illegal activities, they may not be fit to take them; most of them have not complied with a schedule for years, and many lack skills, including necessary soft skills. In addition, at-risk young people might not want to take the jobs being offered. In the violence-plagued neighborhoods where they grow up, many of them are convinced that they will die in their twenties. Even if this information is wrong statistically, on the basis on this belief, they may prefer easy, quick money.

The municipal analysis also identified other root causes for young people to join violent groups, or illicit activities. For instance, sensation seeking and difficulties with anger management—which is often associated with criminal behavior.[18] Many of them have also been victims of intra-family violence, and they look for protection or for a family structure in an armed group.

As a result, development activities—such as job creation—have an important prevention dimension, but not a sufficient one. It is thus important to implement them in combination with other initiatives to address young people's needs, such as helping them identify and plan for life goals, cognitive behavioral therapy approaches, providing alternate social structures and sense of community, correcting the perception that they will die young, and so on.[19]

Preventing the repetition of violence in the most vulnerable regions

As part of the implementation of the peace agreement, the Colombian government is directing an ensemble of resources to the 170 municipalities most affected by the conflict, illicit crops, multidimensional poverty, and lack of state presence. This approach—named the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET for its Spanish acronym)—have been developed through an extensive participative diagnosis, where local communities have been consulted and shared their priority needs. The PDET is made of eight pillars, to structurally transform the countryside and achieve an equitable relationship between the countryside and the city—which was one of the most fundamental root causes of the conflict.

The PDET put a strong emphasis on development, including reactivating economic and agricultural production and striving to ensure service delivery in the countryside. In addition to these efforts, there is a specific pillar on reconciliation, coexistence and culture of peace. This complementary pillar

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[18] Atkinson, A., Anderson, Z., Hughes, K., Bellis, M. A., Sumnall, H., & Syed, Q., "Interpersonal violence and illicit drugs" (Liverpool: Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, 2009), p. 6.
[19] Andrés Villamizar, Interview with the Cali Security Secretary, July 3, 2019.

includes very few development measures, looking instead at measures targeted to promote peaceful coexistence, such as courses in peace, reconciliation and human rights; strengthening rural spaces for participation; humanitarian demining; and the creation of community radio stations for peace.[20] The PDET is an illustration of how a government can design and implement plans at national level that include a development component to prevent violence (or in this case its recurrence), while simultaneously implementing complementary measures in other areas that will foster peaceful coexistence.

Conflict prevention lens approach

As highlighted above, development projects can inadvertently feed into existing conflict dynamics if they are not designed with these dynamics in mind. To prevent this possibility, the project can use of tools and methodologies to understand the risk of conflicts in a given context and planning accordingly to adopt a "do no harm" approach or actively contribute to peacebuilding. For instance, in Timor-Leste, UNDP has provided training on conflict sensitivity planning and implementation for the Ministry of Social Solidarity.[21]

The UN has also sought to integrate this lens into its development programming. For instance, in the aftermath of the wave of violence that followed the Kenyan elections in 2007, a "Conflict Sensitive Integrated Program Framework" was introduced to the UN country team. Its objective was that "the UN system's multifaceted development programmes and activities contribute to the prevention of conflict by design rather than default."[22] The World Bank has also implemented many conflict-sensitive programs. For instance, in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Bank has implemented a conflict filter approach; as a first step, it carried out a countrywide conflict analysis and developed a conflict filter matrix, which was then applied to all projects in the portfolio.[23]

Practical recommendations for a better use of development tools in conflict prevention

Development is an essential tool for preventing violent conflicts since important risk factors—such as youth unemployment or gender inequality—are directly related to it. Evidence shows that development actors who implement efforts that are risk informed and whose efforts are more integrated across sectors to address multiple risk factors from different fields can be more successful in

[20] Agencia de Renovación del Territorio, "Portafolio PDET Cooperación Internacional" (2019).
[21] UNDP, "Timor-Leste Resilience and Social Cohesion Project Fact Sheet," October 1, 2015, http://www.tl.undp.org/content/timor_leste/en/home/library/governance/timor-leste-resilience-and-social-cohesion-project-fact-sheet.html.
[22] UNDP Kenya Country Team, Workshop ToR, 2010 in Irénées.net, "Conflict Sensitive Integrated Program Framework - Case Study," Irénées.net, 2010, http://www.irenees.net/article138_en.html.
[23] World Bank Group, "Developing a Conflict-Sensitive Strategy and Portfolio: Lessons from the Kyrgyz Republic," (2011), http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/843381427220199415/FCV-Forum-KG-Conflict-Filter-2.pdf.

heading off potential crises. Below are three approaches multilateral actors can take with existing tools to strengthen prevention approaches at field level.

Leveraging the 2030 agenda for prevention

The 2030 agenda is a universal prevention framework to build more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.[24] Notably, certain goals, such as SDG5 to achieve gender equality or SDG10 in reducing inequality, directly address well-known risk factors for conflicts. In addition, the whole agenda adopts **an approach of leaving no one behind; this crosscutting approach enables a more targeted focus on inequalities and exclusion**, which can reduce the risk of conflict in a society, as highlighted in the *Pathways for Peace r*eport.

Ensuring that development initiatives are systematically risk informed

Development programming can affect conflict drivers positively or negatively. At a minimum, therefore, initiatives that take a "do no harm approach" and that take prevention as one of their objectives will be more successful.

It is important to acknowledge important shifts currently underway in this regard, especially in the wake of the *Pathways for Peace* report. Significant progress has been made on implementation through identification of focus countries, the creation of new facilities to support joint UN-World Bank efforts, and internalization of the report's risk-informed approaches in policy documents and operational plans. Successful dissemination of the report has also created solid awareness of the report's findings.

Building upon this, the **World Bank's new Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Strategy** will create new opportunities and models to integrate a prevention lens into development programming at national level, in cooperation with governments. The OECD has also produced a note mentioning the need to prioritize prevention when investing in development.[25]

The **UN system also possesses tools that can be further strengthened to better integrate risk-informed approaches**: the recent reforms of the development system have redefined the RC system, the county team role, and the cooperation framework with governments, with a view to creating more integrated and cohesive efforts. In addition, 80 percent of UN entities offer guidance and training on conflict prevention, conflict sensitivity, sustaining peace, and peacebuilding—and some agencies such as WFP are analyzing the impact their programming has on peace.[26] The Common Country Analysis, in

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[24] Cliffe and Steven, "An Integrated Approach to Prevention."

[25] Development Assistance Committee, "DAC Recommendations on Humanitarian, Peace Development Nexus, FCV Strategy," February 21, 2019.

[26] General Assembly and Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General: Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace" (A/73/890–S/2019/448), May 30, 2019, para. 19.

particular, can be used to inform the Cooperation Framework on conflict dynamics, and the PDAs also contribute to a better cross-pillar analysis.

Overcoming fragmentation in prevention approaches

These are positive steps forward. That said, there is still a need for a higher level of ambition in order to implement the preventive approach foreseen in *Pathways for Peace*—an approach that moves beyond project level and ad hoc cooperation to shared objectives and more joined up strategies that leverage comparative advantages.

As the country examples show, national ownership is key. But opportunities exist to increase national ownership of prevention through **identifying champions within relevant ministries, municipalities, and elsewhere**, as well as doing advocacy around the benefits of a preventive approach. SDG16 can also be used to build national ownership on a preventive approach, as the VNRs demonstrate. UN actors are also well placed to help reduce fragmentation by playing a convening role in order to guide a more strategic conversation among national government and international actors. A **convening platform would provide an opportunity for key actors to align on agreed priorities**, and to bring comparative expertise and political capital to bear on resolving problems

Additional tools to reduce fragmentation and to promote effective cross-pillar approaches include the new **UN-World Bank Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding Partnership fund**, which can be leveraged to facilitate joint analysis and better align objectives. In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission can be a voluntary forum for member states to present their priorities and strategies, and request support in terms of funding or exchange of good practices, including to non-UN actors such as the World Bank. This can be an important platform to design a concerted prevention strategy, including development measures. **The PBC provides an opportunity for all concerned entities—government, UN, and other actors like the World Bank—to have a specific discussion around risks and resilience**, **and to agree on priorities**.