UNDP 50th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting

UN Conference Building, New York, 24 February 2016, 11.15h – 13:00h

DRAFT AS OF 5 FEBRUARY 2016

SESSION OUTLINE

IV. Thematic Break-out Session
Preventing Violent Conflict, Building Peaceful Societies

Introduction

The number of people affected by crises around the world has almost doubled over the past decade; over 90% of people in extreme poverty are living in countries that are politically fragile, environmentally vulnerable or both. Contemporary violent conflicts are increasingly protracted and characterized by multiple layers of complexity, in terms of national and international actors involved, cross-border spill overs and push and pull factors. In 2014, there were more than 400 politically driven conflicts and 30 countries are now dealing with impacts of violent extremisms.

As a result of the rise in conflicts, environmental pressures, and social deterioration, today more than 60 million people are forcibly displaced. Eighty percent of humanitarian crises today are long-term crises, forcing the United Nations to boost its humanitarian aid appeal to a record $20.1 billion for 2016, to fund its work in 37 countries.

Humanitarian assistance, while needed in the immediate aftermath of a conflict, cannot be a substitute for longer-term investments in recovery and development. More efforts are required to mitigate these conflicts and better address their root causes. The UN Secretary-General and Member States have therefore called for a stronger focus on the "prevention" of violence and conflict, and for more comprehensive and predictable investments towards "sustaining peace." Building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies is also one of the goals of Agenda 2030, calling for greater attention to rule of law, addressing violence, insecurity, and corruption, promoting participation in decision-making, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

Objective

The panel discussion will have two objectives. *First*, it will debate how best to address the challenges of protracted conflicts and difficult transitions that keep countries and regions trapped in a cycle of political turbulence and violent conflict. The panel will investigate whether, and if so why, investing in inclusive

development, democratic governance, conflict prevention, rule of law, and the promotion of human rights is the best pathway towards sustaining peace.

Second, development assistance in fragile and conflict-affected countries remains underfunded. The panel debate will also address the question how best to bridge the divide between humanitarian assistance, peace and security, and development so that investments in the prevention of conflict and sustaining peace take a more prominent place in the new UN agenda of building sustainable peace, helping realize SDG16 on peaceful, just and inclusive, and just societies.

Guiding Questions

- There can be no development without peace and there can be no peace without development. That is why the SDG agenda includes a goal 16 on building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, a universal goal that applies to all countries. Does that mean that the traditional dichotomy between conflict and stable countries is a development model of the past? What are the implications on how to best organize the international support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding? Are the current national, regional, and international development and peacebuilding arrangements structures still fit for purpose?

- The rise of violent extremism challenges the way we do development. What is the role of development assistance in trying to deal with the root causes of violent extremism in the crisis-affected countries or (sub) regions? Are the old tools of conflict prevention and peacebuilding still useful to address this global challenge?

- The Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325 recognized a need for further efforts to involve and support the capacities of women across the spectrum of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Women have hardly been part of peace agreement negotiations. And they are hardly part of the discussions on preventing violent extremism. What is needed to foster the role of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention?

- Many people associate the challenge of violent conflict and violent extremism with the increasing cohort of unemployed and frustrated youth in many countries. The Security Council recently issued Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. What development investments are needed to ensure that youth are provided more opportunities to contribute as a positive force for the reduction of violent conflict and the building of peaceful societies?

When discussing these questions, panelists will pay particular attention to the kind of strategic partnerships, beyond governments, with whom UNDP and the UN more broadly will need to interact and collaborate in the prevention of violent conflict and the building of peaceful societies

Expected Outcome

At the end of the session, participants will have a better understanding of how political decision-makers see the role of development and development actors in addressing the problem of protracted conflicts and difficult transitions and setting countries on a path towards sustainable peace. The debate will also help to answer the question whether the current divide between humanitarian, peace and security, and development is conducive to finding durable solutions to many of the current challenges when dealing with protracted conflict and contested, violent societal transitions.

Format

The session follows a Davos-style discussion format. A moderator will provide a brief overview of the session objectives and pose questions to each of the panelists to respond, before opening the session for interventions from the floor.