

## EC Consultation : Towards a post-2015 development framework

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Saferworld welcomes this opportunity to input into the EC's thinking on the post-2015 global development framework. Rather than seeking to respond to every question included in the consultation, the following submission by Saferworld focuses specifically on questions where we have relevant expertise.

### A: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): benefits and limitations

#### 1. To what extent has the MDG framework influenced policies in the country/ies or sectors you work in/with?

According to the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011* (WDR 2011), not one low-income fragile or conflict-affected state has achieved a single MDG.<sup>1</sup> One and a half billion people live in areas affected by conflict, fragility and violence and the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda has recognised that "violence and fragility have become the largest obstacle to meeting the MDGs".<sup>2</sup> In situations of fragility and conflict, the MDG framework has been of limited relevance for two main reasons:

- Firstly, it failed to recognise that structural weaknesses and challenges faced by both state and civil society actors in these contexts meant that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to address the problems such as lack of access to healthcare and education that the MDGs were designed to tackle.
- Secondly, the framework failed to focus on the relevant areas of engagement critical to ensuring a transition out of conflict and fragility towards sustainable development. These include security, justice, good governance, political agreements and more. Saferworld research also shows that, while there is a high degree of agreement among existing peacebuilding frameworks about the building blocks for peace, the majority of these are not included in the current MDG framework.<sup>3</sup>

The growing challenges posed by situations of fragility and conflict make the *New Deal for international engagement in fragile states*, elaborated in 2011, a particularly relevant framework to address the specific challenges of conflict-affected and fragile states (CAFS) and overcome this critical gap in the MDG framework, especially given the backing it has received from CAFS and donors alike.

#### 2. To what extent has the MDG framework been beneficial for the poor in the country/ies or sectors in/with which you work?

While the aspirations set out in the MDG framework are as relevant for people living in conflict-affected and fragile states as elsewhere, the framework has had limited impact in those contexts because conflict

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2011* (2011), p 1.

<sup>2</sup> UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Peace and security thematic think piece* (2012), p 3.

<sup>3</sup> Saferworld, *Approaching post-2015 from a peace perspective*; (2012), p 4-5.

and fragility have prevented progress. The framework has therefore been of limited value for the poor in those contexts.

The poor are the most vulnerable to the consequences of countries slipping into conflict and fragility in terms of access to basic services and income generation, but also in terms of security, access to justice and enjoying human rights. However, because the MDG framework does not address the underlying causes of conflict and fragility, it does little to help prevent countries from slipping into fragility and conflict, and as a consequence progress towards achieving the MDGs has been slowed, halted or even reversed in some contexts. As noted by the UN Task Team, the results of this have been shocking: "Sixty percent of the undernourished, 61 percent of impoverished, 77 percent of children not in primary school and 65 percent of people without access to safe water live and 70 percent of infant deaths occur in fragile or conflict-affected countries."<sup>4</sup>

The lack of attention to and investment in areas such as people's security, their access to justice and good governance can be seen as a missed opportunity to address some of the critical obstacles to development in situations of conflict and fragility, as recognised by the WDR 2011.

## **5. In your view, what are the main gaps, if any, in the MDG framework?**

From Saferworld's perspective, the main gap in the MDG framework has been the failure to focus on the challenges that have held back human development in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The key neglected challenges that have been omitted from the mainstream vision of development hitherto are insecurity, injustice, disregard for human rights, and concomitant failures to make states fully inclusive, responsive, fair and accountable toward society.

Neglect of these issues has diminished the relevance and applicability of the MDG framework in CAFS, and contributed to the failure to spot emerging fragility pre-emptively in many societies that have been presumed stable before lapsing into violence. Thanks to, *inter alia*, the WDR 2011 and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), there is now growing consensus as to the gaps that need to be filled to address fragility and poverty in CAFS, and to prevent other societies from lapsing into violence. Recent Saferworld research<sup>5</sup> identifies that the current MDG framework does not include goals and targets in the following six issue areas that are prioritised within six of the most prominent contemporary peacebuilding frameworks:

- All states are able to manage revenues and perform core functions effectively and accountably
- All social groups can participate in the decisions that affect society
- All social groups have equal access to justice
- All social groups have access to fair, accountable social service delivery
- All social groups feel secure
- The international community is effectively addressing the external stresses that lead to conflict.

These are the key peacebuilding issues, fundamental to successful human development that need to be explored and included in the new post-2015 framework.

## **B. Feasibility of a future framework**

### **6. In your view, in what way, if at all, could a future framework have an impact at global level in terms of global governance, consensus building, co-operation, etc.?**

A global framework would help to foster consensus, set common standards and a common vision among a broader range of actors.

The international environment has changed tremendously since the MDGs were adopted in 2000. Emerging powers at the global and regional levels have now become important donors and stakeholders with critical influence and leverage in world affairs. Any new global framework should bring those new actors around the table to ensure that there is the highest possible level of consensus. Agreeing on a global framework would also be a way to set common standards and a common vision among actors with

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<sup>4</sup> *Op cit* UN Task Team; see also Gates, Hegre, Nygard and Strand, 'Development Consequences of Armed Conflict', *World Development* Vol. 40, No. 9, pp. 1713–1722, (2012).

<sup>5</sup> *Op cit* Saferworld, p 4-7.

different approaches to development. As a result, a common global framework would also be conducive to more effective co-operation between traditional and emerging stakeholders.

At a time when more convergence is needed to tackle global issues at the global level, the absence of a framework could foster increasingly divergent views among development stakeholders and dilute efforts to reach higher standards and more effectiveness.

The EC and others should seek consensus with emerging powers as early as possible on the links between development, peace, rights and governance. Setting common standards and a common vision among a broader range of actors is particularly relevant on issues relating to peace, conflict and security. As the Saferworld report *China in conflict-affected states: between principle and pragmatism* illustrates, lack of agreement on the role of the international community in developing and conflict-affected contexts, and incoherence between development, security, diplomatic and economic co-operation by different external actors can frustrate the pursuit of peace and development results – whereas more complementary action between international actors can be transformative.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, more consensus, and therefore dialogue as early as possible, is needed between European donors and other non-traditional donors as to what development is, and especially the need to ensure it incorporates promotion of peace, human rights and good governance rather than simply economic development and regime stability.

The WDR 2011 argued that external stresses that lead to conflict must be addressed by the international community for progress to be achieved on the ground. The post-2015 framework, as a global agreement, presents the opportunity for member states to commit collectively to making progress in several critical aspects of global co-operation, which no one nation or bloc of countries can address by themselves. Important benefits for both peace and development would accrue from addressing any of the following issues: climate change, environmental degradation, illicit/irresponsible arms transfers, transnational crime including narcotics trafficking, irresponsible natural resource exploitation, illicit financial flows and unequal trade rules.

## **7. To what extent is a global development framework approach necessary or useful to improve accountability with regard to poverty reduction policies in developing countries?**

If it included commitments to foster more inclusive, fairer, more responsive and accountable state-society relations, a global development framework could be a useful tool to enable ordinary people in CAFS to hold their governments to account for their development progress.

The current framework does not offer people, civil society organisations or multilateral institutions in societies that are poorly governed with a frame of reference through which to encourage positive change in constructive ways – or for development actors within the international community to recognise a weak social contract as a threat to stability and development.

A global framework that took into account the specificities of fragility and conflict would enable people to hold both national state institutions and international donors to account over their ability to participate in decision making, to receive fair access to justice, security and social services and to make authorities accountable. These are all crucial aspects of human dignity. In order to understand the urgent need to make progress on these issues, it is critical to ensure meaningful participation from a wide range of stakeholders in affected countries and incorporate their views into the new global development framework in order that it accurately reflects the expression of people's needs and expectations.

## **8. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of a global development framework for your organisation/sector, including how you work effectively with your partners?**

The current MDG framework's failure to address the challenges posed by fragility and conflict has shifted the attention of the international development community away from these critical obstacles to development. The advantage of a new framework which fully takes into account a conflict prevention dimension would be to foster critical momentum and action at global and national levels to tackle conflict and build peace, thus supporting long term development.

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<sup>6</sup> Saferworld, *China in conflict-affected states: between principle and pragmatism* (2012).

It is also true that, whereas there have been concerted efforts in many countries to support transitions out of conflict and fragility, little has been done to prevent countries from slipping into conflict and fragility in the first place. The Arab Spring and crises in regional powers like Syria, Kenya, Nigeria or Côte D'Ivoire have reminded us that no society is immune to fragility. All societies experience tensions, which need to be constructively managed in order to prevent them from turning violent. A framework under which all countries commit to a vision of development that constructively manages these tensions and conflict dynamics can provide a crucial safeguard that will reduce the threat of conflict. Apart from the human benefits, the business case for doing this is very strong: according to the WDR 2011, a civil war costs a developing country up to 30 years of economic growth.<sup>7</sup>

A new global framework would also provide a huge boost for domestic and international civil society's efforts to promote social justice. If additional goals such as people feeling safe from harm, having access to justice and being able to participate in decision making can be agreed at global level, it will empower local and national actors to demand progress on these issues on the ground.

## **C. The potential scope of a future agenda**

### **9. In your view, what should be the primary purpose of a future framework?**

The primary purpose of the new framework should be to crystallise, in a clear, concrete and binding set of goals, targets and indicators, a holistic global vision, genuinely shared by both the people and the governments of the world, of human progress. This vision should be founded on the principles of equality, sustainability and human rights, with peace acknowledged and upheld as an integral and fundamental component of these.

### **10. In your view, should its scope be global, relevant for all countries?**

The scope of a new framework should be global in order to foster a common vision of peace and development and avoid discrepancy in standards, while remaining flexible for the most effective translation in different contexts.

The scope of a new framework should be global, setting out robust standards for all contexts, whereby every country is obliged to address obstacles to peace and development and whereby the international community addresses global factors fuelling tensions and fragility in-country. It is also important to be able to co-ordinate and monitor progress at the global level against a common framework. The translation of this global framework at country level should remain flexible to allow each society to tailor how it addresses the critical issues and pursues the highest standard of implementation.

### **11. To what extent should a future framework focus on the poorest and most fragile countries, or also address development objectives relevant in other countries?**

A future framework should integrate a strong conflict prevention rationale, i.e. focusing on the obstacles to development which the poorest and the most fragile countries face, while making sure the more stable and developed countries do not slip into, or fall back into, fragility and conflict.

Given the widespread effects of conflict and fragility, the challenges that cause fragility and severe poverty need to be taken up more urgently than they have so far and be central to a future framework. Whether it is believed that underdevelopment causes violence or vice versa, to be meaningful and improve results in these contexts, a future framework must address the interlinked challenges of conflict, insecurity and poverty. For the EU, promoting more consistent approaches to tackling the challenges of poverty, insecurity and conflict would be an important way to uphold the EU's strong cross-cutting commitments to conflict prevention.<sup>8</sup>

A framework integrating measures to address fragility will also support development efforts in other countries which are considered as more stable to prevent them from slipping into fragility and conflict. This is in line with the findings of the Institute for Economics and Peace, which has argued based on reviewing over 300 cross country datasets that:

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<sup>7</sup> *Op cit* World Bank, p 5-6.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance : *EU programme for the prevention of violent conflicts* (2001), *European consensus on development* (2005), *Council conclusions on security and development* (2007), *Council conclusions on a EU response to situations of fragility* (2007), *Council conclusions on conflict prevention* (2011), *Agenda for change* (2011).

Countries with higher levels of peacefulness tend to be more resilient to external shocks, whether economic, geopolitical or natural disasters. Peace is also associated with many other desirable characteristics, such as economic development, environmental health, and social cohesion.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, many of the elements which Saferworld suggests are vital to building peace – such as fair access to security and justice by all social groups, inclusive decision-making and fair service delivery – are valuable for peaceful states to pursue, both as goods in themselves and as measures to prevent future conflict. We therefore believe that these measures should be applied to all states, and not just those currently experiencing conflict and fragility.

## **12. How could a new development agenda involve new actors, including the private sector and emerging donors?**

The EU needs to engage emerging donors as early as possible and at different levels to foster consensus.

Many emerging donors, such as India and China, attach great significance to the MDGs. Many also have contrasting approaches, and are adapting based on rapid learning about the impact of their engagement on development, governance and peace. Ultimately, as the negotiations for the Busan Global Partnership Agreement illustrated, the buy-in of emerging donors will be one of the most important determinants of the strength and the results of the post-2015 framework. Emerging donors also have significant influence with numerous other governments with whom consensus will need to be forged if a genuinely progressive and inclusive framework is to be achieved.

The EU should therefore engage and encourage dialogue with emerging donors to identify and build consensus around a post-2015 framework that reflects the EU's commitment to the core values that underpin global co-operation, in service of which the UN was formed.<sup>10</sup> Early engagement is crucial to ensure that obstacles to consensus (and their nature – are they disagreements on terminology, policy or related only to capacity?) are identified soon enough to be addressed and to ensure the international community avoids setting low standards in a rushed process. Such a dialogue needs to take place at different levels: at the high political level, but also at technical and policy levels. It will be important, if these discussions are to be seen as legitimate, that civil society and members of the public from poor and fragile contexts are involved so that the focus can be firmly placed on their development challenges and the impact of existing approaches on rights, governance and sustainable peace.

The EU should also build on the IDPS process and support fragile states in leading a global response. In the run up to the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the IDPS brought together fragile states, donors and civil society to agree on a framework for international engagement in situations of conflict and fragility. The *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* sets out a number of principles as well as the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) which are designed to ensure a sustainable transition out of fragility and conflict.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the PSGs were conceived as interim goals to achieving the MDGs, and signatories to the New Deal committed to “work towards full consideration of the PSGs in the post MDG development framework beyond 2015”. The g7+, a group of fragile states, is now working to implement this new framework (among other initiatives) in-country.

The EU should support the efforts of the g7+ as well as other members of the IDPS to advocate for the inclusion of measures to address conflict and fragility such as the PSGs in the new framework. This is an opportunity for fragile states to lead the world in putting more emphasis on these issues in a future framework. At the same time, the efforts to promote PSGs will need to be sensitive to the political outlook of a range of governments. Therefore sensitive terminology, such as “legitimate politics” may need to be reframed so that the concepts underpinning the PSGs can attract a strong consensus in the new framework.

## **14. How could a new framework improve development financing?**

Any development financing elements contained in a new framework should be sensitive to the challenges faced by and opportunities to achieve positive change in CAFS.

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<sup>9</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, *Structures of Peace* (2011), p 2.

<sup>10</sup> “...democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law” (Lisbon treaty, Article 21.1)

<sup>11</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* (2011).

As set out in the EC communication *The future approach to EU budget support to third countries*, it is critical to ensure that financing decisions in these contexts are made on a case by case basis and supported by an assessment of the expected benefits and the potential risks, as well as taking into account the overall political and security situation in the country.<sup>12</sup> In this regard, it is, for example, important that development financing is made more conflict-sensitive, so that it does not serve to reinforce actors who are worsening conflict dynamics and violating human rights commitments. For the International Financial Institutions, who are heavily biased towards working with and through recipient governments, this may mean at times doing less of what they do best – reducing support to and through the state and large multilateral funding mechanisms, while tackling volatility of aid flows to these contexts by finding other channels for delivery.

Any improvement on financing mechanisms should also aim at supporting independent civil society voices and innovative initiatives to deal with sensitive issues in-country. Careful thought is thus also needed about which institutions are best placed to support genuinely challenging, independent voices. Multilateral institutions are often not as well positioned to do this as bilateral donors. While it is critical to build, strengthen and support state capacities in CAFS, support to a broad range of societal actors is equally important to contribute to the establishment of better governed societies.

Finally, making financing more swift and flexible in CAFS is key to ensure stakeholders can tailor their support and activities to the actual needs of each specific context, which are often fast-changing.

## **D. The potential shape of a future agenda**

### **15. What do you consider to be the "top 3" most important features or elements which should be included in or ensured by any future development agenda?**

According to Saferworld, the most important features at this point of the process are the following 3 elements:

- First, peace and security should become core dimensions of a new comprehensive development framework. As stressed throughout this submission, it is now widely acknowledged that conflict and fragility are among the biggest obstacles to development. It is therefore critical that a new framework is designed to maximise potential of the international community to prevent conflict and build peace in a proactive way. It will also be worth exploring how it can address a range of the key drivers of conflict around the world – for example by drawing on peacebuilding frameworks such as the PSGs (with language adapted in light of the sensitivities of member states). In order for the future framework to be able to support progress in-country, it will have to be supplemented by and linked to concrete actions to also address 'external stresses' or 'global factors' such as climate change, environmental degradation, illicit/irresponsible arms transfers, transnational crime, irresponsible natural resource exploitation, illicit financial flows and the unequal trade rules that disadvantage many fragile states.
- Second, a future development framework should provide a solid basis for co-operation and partnership between a broader range of actors, including emerging donors. The 2015 deadline provides a great opportunity to take stock of new global power dynamics and bring on board emerging donors as well other actors such as fragile countries. An early engagement with those actors is necessary to ensure a future framework reflects the EU's commitment to its core values, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty.
- Third, the process leading to the adoption of a new framework should be as participatory and inclusive as possible, both globally and in-country. In order to support the democratic ownership of development processes and the independence of civil society as a development actor in its own right (as agreed in Busan), it is vital to ensure that there is meaningful representation and participation of civil society organisations and people (including those from CAFS) in the processes leading up to the adoption of the new framework for development.

### **16. What do you consider to be the "top 3" features or elements which must be avoided in any future development agenda?**

- Firstly, a framework that defines development as a technical process that does not intrinsically require the promotion of social justice to succeed must be avoided.

<sup>12</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions 'The future approach to EU budget support to third countries'*, 14 May 2012.

- Secondly, the future development agenda must also not be overburdened. Thus the UN Task Team proposals<sup>13</sup> to include a parallel set of 'enablers' to accompany the core goal, target and indicator framework, and to have different frameworks at regional and country levels risk a degree of complexity that would diminish the crucial clarity of the new framework – and therefore its power to motivate and incentivise positive change.
- Thirdly, when addressing peacebuilding issues it is important to note that the absence of violence does not equate to just and sustainable peace. A single goal related to peace, a clear, concise and measurable target on violence, and indicators on battle-related deaths and intentional homicide, as considered by the UN Task Team,<sup>14</sup> would not be sufficient. Peace-related elements of the new framework must be based on an evidence-based dialogue asking 'what are the elements of just and sustainable peace?' As there are not one but many mutually supporting elements, targets for addressing them need to be woven through the post-2015 framework rather than brought together under a single peace goal.

### **17. Should it be based on goals, targets and indicators? If any, should goals have an outcome or sector focus? Please give reasons for your answer.**

Goals, targets and indicators should be part of a new framework. The targets should include outcomes that address drivers of conflict (drawing on peacebuilding frameworks such as the PSGs, as well as the best evidence regarding effective approaches to peacebuilding). These outcomes should be integrated cross-sectorally within a range of targets designed to address other development priorities and global challenges: a coherent framework has the potential to break down the barriers between sectors into an integrated, progressive vision.

#### **About Saferworld**

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from insecurity and violent conflict. We are a not-for-profit organisation with programmes in 17 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and Europe.

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<sup>13</sup> UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realising the future we want for all* (2012),p 22-24.

<sup>14</sup> UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Peace and security thematic think piece* (2012), p 9.