

Fund from assessed contributions has been accompanied by declines in contributions supporting peace operations and overall voluntary financing to the Peacebuilding Fund and UN programmes. The systemic financing crisis is evident.

Despite the groundbreaking 2018 UN/WB report *Pathways for Peace*, which highlighted the importance of collective action for improved investment in peace and prevention, the UN, MDBs and financial institutions continue to struggle to galvanise coherent action. More structural-level financial coordination has not been forthcoming. The IFIs are also reflecting on their role in anchoring peace and stability, and considering how the MDB reform process needs to frontload a focus on prevention and peacebuilding as a way of addressing the drivers of conflict and instability.

To this end, **the G7 is committed to prioritising a focus on fragility and collectively advocating, through the IFIs, for more and better financing in fragile contexts.** However, this call for a greater focus on fragility in the reform of MDBs comes up against a plethora of growing demands to increase impact and financing for transitions in digital transformation, climate and food systems.

Despite significant discussions on the de-risking of private investment in fragile contexts (peace-positive investments) this is still marginal and ODA remains a key resource for supporting transitions from fragility. Given this, and the need to engage an increasingly diverse ecosystem of peacebuilding actors, **there may be a need for a deeper rethink of what we are calling peacebuilding.**

Purpose

This briefing note to be submitted as **an outcome document** summarises the results of **a thematic consultation with senior peace and peacebuilding experts, organised by ODI in London on 17 June 2024** in the presence of **ASG Elizabeth Spehar** and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The consultation was attended by 14 people in the room and four online (see Annex for list of participants). The note has been approved by those in attendance (except observers)²

rise, funding for building peace is diminishing. Four key questions were addressed:

- 1 **What narrative changes are required to increase understanding of peacebuilding among audiences outside the UN system?**
- 2 **How can the multilateral system, especially the World Bank Group and the UN, work better together?** What are the positive experiences of joint funding programmes by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs) and MDBs, and how can we build on them?
- 3 **Is there a case to be made for a global fund for peace in addition to the Peacebuilding Fund?** Could such a fund focus on priority thematic areas which are vital for peace, but where

recognising the roles of actors such as China, the Gulf states and India, and other countries with significant investments in peacekeeping.

Language and terminology are critical components. The term 'peace dividends' often serves as a shorthand for sidestepping the complexities of building peace and social cohesion at the local level (the traditional focus of peacebuilding), instead focusing on development results (infrastructure for reconstruction). **A franker discussion about the nexus and very complex relationship between development and peace is vital.**

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their coordination with UN Permanent Representatives to reduce operational silos and improve strategic alignment.

The UN could also play a pivotal role in monitoring IFI peacebuilding milestones and providing conflict sensitivity expertise in a peer reviewer-type capacity. The UN must be seen not as an implementing partner for the World Bank, but as a strategic actor with convening power, political levers and accountability considerations of its own. This is particularly important considering the complexities when governments themselves are part of the conflict. The UN could have a significant role ensuring that civil society and local peacebuilders are part of the discussions about how IDA funds are allocated.

The **FCV** which is more focused on crisis and conflict reduction than proactive peacebuilding, highlights the need to **shift the language and approach towards Sustaining Peace and Upstream Action**. This semantic and strategic shift is necessary to encompass broader and more effective peacebuilding measures. Whilst peacebuilding is not necessarily being reflected in on-the-ground implementation, the status of Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) as a **cross-cutting** issue rather than a substantive Global Challenge Programme area, is raising concerns that FCV may be de-prioritised at the World Bank.

In summary, more strategic, systematic collaborations between the UN and IFIs in ways that involve diverse stakeholders in funding decisions should be considered. This should not be stalled because of caution about how it could be facilitated. There needs to be a shift towards a more proactive use of peacebuilding language to ensure that the funding available, including wider IDA funding, is more conflict-sensitive and peace positive.

3. Is there a case to be made for a global fund for peace in addition to the Peacebuilding Fund? Could such a fund focus on priority thematic areas which are vital for peace but where progress has been limited, such as Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth Peace and Security (YPS)?

While it is important to consider financing, there is a recognition that significant increases in funding may not be forthcoming. Thus, the critical issue is how to leverage existing resources more effectively. **One approach could involve reallocating budgets from peacekeeping missions to peacebuilding efforts.** The current drawdown of peacekeeping missions, and the absence of new ones

international actors, local businesses tend to stay in their communities during crises and should be rewarded with better access to global finance.

Regional development banks, which were among the first to engage in innovative ways in fragile contexts, play a crucial role in changing how fragility is framed and understood, showing greater openness than other MDBs. These banks and regional and continental actors and emerging actors should be considered vital for peacebuilding.

Conclusion

The consultation underscored the pressing need for coordinated action and financing to tackle the increasing challenges in the peacebuilding space. Engaging a broader range of actors, including IFIs, philanthropy and the private sector, and redefining peacebuilding narratives to resonate with wider audiences could help to address some of these challenges. The UN could play an important role in ensuring that the funding that is available is spent in ways that promote peace and that centre the efforts of local peacebuilding actors, in particular young people and women. The UN could also contribute to documenting more effectively what works

List of Participants

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