

Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting:

‘Peacebuilding and Development’

Wednesday 17 October 2012, Brussels

Meeting Report

Introduction

Since the last [EPLO Seminar on Peacebuilding and Development](#) in 2010, important international policy developments on peacebuilding and development include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) policy guidance on ‘[Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility](#)’, the World Bank’s [World Development Report \(WDR\) 2011 on ‘Conflict, Security and Development’](#), the conclusion of the first phase of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding and the adoption of the ‘[Monrovia Roadmap on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding](#)’, and, at the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF 4), the ‘[Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#)’ and the ‘[New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States](#)’.

At the EU-level, recent institutional developments include the launch of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the establishment of a unit for Fragility and Crisis Management in the European Commission’s (EC) Directorate General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid (DEVCO). On the policy front, communications on ‘[Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change](#)’, and on ‘[The Future Approach to EU Budget Support to Third Countries](#)’ have been published, as well as the EC proposal for next EU multiannual financial framework (2014-2020), the ‘[Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace-building](#)’, and [legislative proposals for the next set of external EU funding instruments](#).

In light of these and upcoming developments such as the adoption of the next set of external EU funding instruments and the ongoing process for programming the EU’s assistance to its partner countries, this policy meeting was convened in the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN). The CSDN is a three-year project funded by the EC aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policy makers. It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO).

The meeting brought together representatives of civil society peacebuilding and development organisations, officials from the EU institutions (EC and EEAS), the United Nations (UN), the OECD, and other experts. The objective was to identify the main obstacles to and conditions for the EU’s implementation of the new and existing principles linking peacebuilding and development into policies and then good practice.

This report, by consultant Laura Davis, summarises the discussion and the key recommendations made by participants during the meeting, which was held under the Chatham House Rule. No opinion expressed in the report may be attributed to any participating individual or institution, nor necessarily represents the views of EPLO or its member organisations. For more information about this meeting, please contact Ben Moore at EPLO (E-mail: bmoore@eplo.org).

Session 1: Implications of the WDR 2011, the OECD's policy guidance and the New Deal for the future of the EU's co-operation with countries and regions in situations of fragility

Around 50% of EU development aid goes to states which are fragile or in conflict. As human and financial resources are scarce, we need to make sure that aid is changing people's lives for the better. Principles exist, but the challenge is translating principles into practice on the ground. The EU is keen to hear ideas from other international organisations and civil society for how to do that. It is not easy to change how we do things, as the EU is a big institution.

(A) WDR 2011

Translating the conclusions of the report into action is a work-in-progress for everyone: bi- and multi-lateral institutions.

The WDR 2011 had four essential recommendations:

1. To focus more on building legitimate institutions to deliver security, justice, and jobs

Previously, security, justice, and jobs fell through the cracks in international assistance: it was easier to get assistance on building up the army than reforming the police, for economic growth than for job creation. The emphasis is now on political, not technocratic, processes of change.

The EU invests in these areas through both the EEAS and DEVCO. Member States also have the experience of their own domestic reform, which can be relevant for others. With the Arab Spring, there was a lot of interest in how Member States (in Central and Eastern Europe, Spain and Portugal, and Northern Ireland) had experienced vetting the police, opening secret service files, developing an independent judiciary, etc. The demand is there, but the EU does not link its external relations to its domestic experience.

Political, security and development actors need to work together recognising, for example, that local violence prevention requires working with the local police on their budget and public expenditure as well as on policing strategy. This is a work in progress for all multilaterals and most bilateral donors. After one year of discussion, the UN has now brought the different rule of law units from the UN's Development Programme (UNDP) and Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) together.

2. Practical agency procedures on how to respond quickly and stay engaged

There has been great change in the EU: the Instrument for Stability (IfS) can support programmes very quickly. Speed of response is important for building confidence, but so is staying the course. In the countries where rule of law reform takes root quickly, it takes 20 – not three – years for reform to become resilient. The EU has always had long-term programming (e.g. the European Development Fund (EDF)), which has recently become more adaptable.

A more difficult challenge for all donors is addressing universal norms and standards such as human rights and corruption. The WDR 2011 shows that these cannot be changed overnight, and donors need to recognise short-term progress towards the norms without diluting the norms and communicating this effectively to taxpayers.

3. Complement national-level support with regional and global support on key issues, e.g. trafficking

The regional nature of the EU is a strength, as is its support to other regional organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Arab League etc.

4. Reaffirming the international consensus on development

There has not been great progress in the past two to five years. At the UN there are many divisions over the course of action: North/South, between and within regional groupings. We need to think of different approaches and (linked to point 1 above) assume a more equal partnership between donor and recipient. Donors are more likely to be heard if what they say is drawn from their own experience.

A more systematic approach is needed to North/South and triangular relationships. The idea of South-South partnership has been around a long time, but is rarely seen in practice. For example, during the Arab Spring, there was no experience in that region of transition, but there was experience in Europe and Latin America. There are cultural and linguistic obstacles to overcome, but we need to develop strategic relationships.

Recommendations to the EU

- Link external relations with Member States' domestic experience
- Use all the instruments together to address reform in a comprehensive way
- Emphasise the political, not technocratic, nature of reform
- Support regional organisations
- Change the nature of relationships with developing countries towards a more equal partnership, drawing on domestic experience, and support strategic North-South and triangular relationships

(B) OECD policy guidance on 'Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility'

There has been enormous progress on policy and on the knowledge front, but bridging the gap between rhetoric and action is difficult. Monitoring in 2011 showed that the principles for engaging in fragile states are generally not applied. The New Deal provides a good reference point as it distils thinking to five peace- and statebuilding goals, gives guidance for developing priorities and allocating resources, and on how to engage with countries.

The nine priority areas for reform identified by the OECD are:

1. Ensuring that the policy and funding frameworks of donor agencies recognise the specific challenges of engaging in fragile states

This includes: the need for long term transitions, not short-term results; a whole-of-government strategy owned within the country; examining the relationship between humanitarian and development assistance. The EU has made progress here, as have Member States.

2. Strengthening results measurement and risk management

New approaches are needed to measure progress and the contribution of programming to change. This has to be included in all sectors, measuring, for example, how programming in the health sector contributes to legitimate governance. Effective support requires donors to consider risk in relation to opportunity. Donors should adopt risk management approaches, simplify their procurement and financial management procedures, and use effective communication to change the way parliaments and the public think about risk in difficult situations.

3. *Make country strategies more peace- and state-building focused*

These should be grounded in political economy and conflict analysis, taking into account the country's fragility, capacity for dialogue and conflict drivers. Projects should then be tailored to address these factors. Bureaucratic procedures such as changing templates can assist with this.

4. *Greater collective action (compacts)*

Agencies should use compacts as the basis for a different type of agreement with governments and for strategic dialogue to align resources behind priorities identified by the government. The EU needs to think about how to position itself to engage in relation to others. At the UN, there is a commitment to the New Deal and compacts, but bilateral donors want to get moving quickly. We need to create incentives for agencies to use compacts and devolve authority to the country representatives to participate in them.

5. *Financing instruments*

The EU should use compacts as a way to change from donor to government systems of financing, increasing over time the use of government systems and ownership. This involves considering predictability, criteria for financing, and how different funding instruments fit into the bigger picture. Multidonor trust funds, for example, are part of the solution. More thinking is needed on how to use country systems in fragile contexts, such as putting dual accountability mechanisms in place from the start (i.e. country-systems with additional safeguards).

6. *Designing portfolios for fragile states which support peace- and state-building*

This includes adapting the programme cycle to take into account the specifics of fragile states. The EU's cycle is not adaptable. There needs to be better learning and cross-country initiative. There are positive examples but they are often not documented well enough and so agencies constantly reinvent the wheel.

7. *More and better staffing in fragile states*

Staff should be high quality, with the right mix of skills (geographic, political, technical). Agencies need to deploy people for longer with the right incentives.

8. *Reform project delivery and incentive practices*

Agencies need to reform management systems to avoid parallel implementation structures and practices such as salary top-ups, which do harm. Collective action may be most effective at country-level.

9. *Influence and multilateral policies and procedures*

Many of the key changes take place within the UN, the World Bank, the OECD etc. The EU should lobby within these organisations.

The EU will take the lead role in the Central African Republic (CAR) which is a New Deal pilot country. It will be interesting to examine EU practice in this context.

Recommendations to the EU

- The EU institutions should revise their development policies and procedures in line with the OECD guidelines to ensure that their interventions address specific peace- and statebuilding challenges, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states, and states at risk of fragility

Specific recommendations to the EU

- The EU's programming cycle needs to be made more adaptable in fragile contexts
- Programming should be based on sound political economy and conflict analysis
- The EU should seek to work collectively with other donors through compacts with host governments
- EU delegations should work with other donors to develop a collective approach to project delivery and management practice in order to do no harm
- The EU should seek to influence multilateral policies and procedures in the UN, the World Bank, the OECD and other international organisations

Recommendations to (European) civil society:

- Monitor the EU's engagement in the CAR in light of its own and multilateral commitments to reforming development aid, to identify good practice and areas for improvement

(C) Operationalising peacebuilding in development

Operationalising peacebuilding in development has challenges for NGOs as well as for (inter)governmental organisations.

1. Good conflict analysis is key

NGOs can use methods such as World Vision's 'Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts' (MSTC) set of tools to facilitate organisation-wide analysis. Integrating peacebuilding into development work makes it difficult to isolate and assess impact, and evaluating the impact of peacebuilding is difficult more generally.

World Vision's research at grassroots-level identified good governance, sustainable and equitable economic development, peacebuilding and reconciliation (including transitional justice), civic participation, engagement and empowerment as key drivers of conflict and peace. At the grassroots-level, social exclusion (often involving access to land) is the most important dividing factor, while social occasions, local community-based organisations (CBOs) and other civil society organisations (CSOs) are important connectors. Political inclusion/exclusion is key to the success or failure of peace processes and a direct determinant of success of peacebuilding initiatives. Conflict-sensitive poverty reduction includes therefore empowering children and young people to mobilise for peace and to have their voices heard by local, provincial and national authorities.

2. Building resilience

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention are central to building the capacity of communities or systems to manage shocks without damaging the community. Including non-violence in life-skills courses for children and young people tends to empower them. Once they know their rights, children in countries such as Colombia, Kosovo, and Sri Lanka often ask to be connected with other children across the conflict divide.

Rights and empowerment are deeply connected to building resistance and also lead to movements for peace.

3. *Engaging civil society*

Donors may be committed to engaging with civil society in principle, but lack staying power. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) process shows serious reform is needed to include civil society in these processes. The recent EC communication on '[The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations](#)' states that engagement should be 'timely, predictable and transparent.' This is echoed by other donors but the involvement of CSOs in the IDPS was usually untimely, opaque and unpredictable, and often tokenistic. If this happens with orderly process guided by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), how can fragile states do better? The EU needs to practice what it preaches: engaging civil society is messy but crucial. One way of including civil society is to undertake joint fragility analysis, pulling together academics, UN policy-makers, CSOs and think tanks.

4. *Implementing analysis*

Even when fragility analysis is undertaken, the aid machine often carries on as usual. It is difficult but necessary to change systems to take conflict analysis into account. There is no need for new methodologies; there are plenty. Analysis conducted by different groups such as CSOs, private sector actors, donors and multilaterals, and the host government needs to be more joined-up. This could be achieved by convening the different actors separately then bringing them together to unite their analyses.

Better knowledge management and information sharing is critical; analysis is not worth the resources if it is not implemented. Wikipeace and the [Ushahidi Platform](#) are innovative tools for open-source, crowd-sourced conflict analysis.

In order to ensure that it remains up-to-date, fragility analysis should be an ongoing national conversation. There may be resistance to convening this conversation; the UN and EU are candidates to convene the multi-stakeholder dialogues discussed in the WDR 2011. The stakeholders should then hold each other accountable for implementing the analysis in programming. There is promising practice for joint fragility analysis in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, Afghanistan and Democratic Republic of the Congo. CSOs need to contribute to improving the thinking, the people and the processes in each.

The New Deal is a game-changer. We need to seize the political moment to nail conflict and fragility to the post-2015 mast.

Recommendations to the EU

- Ensure the EU conducts high-quality joint fragility assessments. This may include separate processes for different stakeholders (private sector actors, CSOs, donors and the host government) culminating in joint analysis
- Model good practice in engaging civil society in a timely, predictable and transparent way, learn from this experience and use it to support inclusive processes in-country
- Integrate empowerment, particularly of young people, to foster resilience
- Where appropriate, the EU should convene ongoing national multi-stakeholder dialogues to keep analysis up-to-date

Recommendations to peacebuilding organisations

- Contribute creative thinking and good practice to making consultation work effectively

(D) Discussion

Putting policy into practice

- Despite good policy statements, during the Arab Spring support to governments and civil society continued to be separated. Civil society engagement should be integrated across all programming.
- The CSDN is a positive example of civil society engagement
- Before the Lisbon reforms, the EU was trying to mainstream conflict and fragility issues into development-oriented processes. There has been some progress in flexibility and adaptability, but the EU needs to be more proactive and less reactive. If the instruments cannot be joined up, then at least the institutions need to be able to see the global picture.

Recommendations to the EU

- Go beyond engaging governments to reaching people affected by conflict, which will bring out different voices and opinions from those of policy-makers
- Make the inclusion of civil society in all sectors of engagement a condition for development aid
- Ensure that the institutions have the global picture of development programming and, within that, strive to join up the instruments as much as possible

Recommendations to the EU and civil society

- Consider how to implement the recommendations in the communication on engaging civil society, including how to replicate the strengths of the CSDN

Understanding resistance

There may be significant resistance to fragility and conflict sensitivity in the post-2015 framework. Some of this resistance will be over issues of sovereignty, but presented in the language of poverty reduction. Civil society will be divided – many development NGOs, for example, are concerned about the non-securitisation of aid. EPLO argued that development should have been integrated into the EEAS. This did not happen and resistance to the conflict sensitivity agenda remains in the EU development NGO community and European Parliament (EP). Civil society engagement is assumed to be positive in both the development and peacebuilding sectors. This is not shared across the security sector, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Recommendations to peacebuilding NGOs

- Reach out to development NGOs and the EP in order to encourage these constituencies to support linking peacebuilding and development

Recommendations to the EU and NGOs

- Identify and counter resistance based on issues of sovereignty but presented as poverty-related.

- Overcome security actors' resistance to the inclusion of civil society, especially regarding CFSP/CSDP

Developing indicators for complex problems

Fragility, security and justice are complex issues. The challenge will be to develop indicators which reflect this complexity, and which indicate short-term progress in long-term programmes. There needs to be broad discussion, including with and within CSOs on developing these indicators, and whether imperfect indicators are better than none for these complex issues. Indicators also need to be carefully communicated internally, including to parliaments.

There is also a tension between global goals and specific, tailor-made programmes. There may be a danger in setting the bar too high for fragile states, which will then lead to political resistance. National ownership of the indicators will be key. National civil society consultation will likely strengthen the analysis, including by challenging methodologies of elite capture.

We need to demonstrate the importance of addressing fragility through, for example, indicators which show the number of people at risk of dying a violent death, to demonstrate the value of investment.

Recommendations to the EU

- Consult national stakeholders and civil society to develop indicators which can show short-term progress towards long-term goals, are realistic and nationally-owned, and reflect the complexity of security, fragility and justice
- Communicate indicators and signs of progress effectively internally, including to parliaments and taxpayers

Challenges to civil society inclusion

Marshalling civil society to engage in joint analysis is very difficult and there are often significant logistical challenges, especially in fragile states. In some places such as the CAR, civil society may not have discussed these issues together before. The EU can enable civil society participation through basic logistical support, and support civil society tracking the implementation of New Deal agreements.

Recommendations to the EU

- Ensure basic logistical support to local CSOs, which may be key in enabling participation

Session 2: Assessing the EU's approach

Some of the progress (e.g. the WDR 2011) at the international level is reflected in EU policy (e.g. the Agenda for Change), and the new programming guidelines have conflict prevention goals, which is a big win. The Agenda for Change is also positive as it demands interventions to be more focused. The EU is also working on a comprehensive approach to working in situations of fragility, and is working in a more joined up way on security and justice.

The demand for conflict analysis from EU delegations has led to conflict analysis with civil society through the CSDN, which is very positive. The EU also needs to be able to agree analysis internally, without civil society engagement.

The EEAS relies on DEVCO for conflict analysis, and DEVCO needs the EEAS for political economy analysis. There is now agreement on jointly-badged tools for DEVCO and the EEAS, light touch conflict analysis and deeper political economy analysis. These are different tools but both appropriate for conflict-affected and fragile situations.

Challenges to more effective EU practice include inertia (i.e. it is difficult to change existing programmes which are the result of our history), inter-institutional rivalry with parts of the machinery running in parallel, structural separation between DEVCO, the EEAS, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD). Coordination mechanisms are not as good as they could be. In the security field, the challenges are greater as development decisions are largely taken at country level, while CSDP decisions are taken separately in Brussels.

Recommendation to the EU

- Crisis management structures should be part of joint fragility analysis, building on the example of Sudan

The WDR 2011 requires a step change in the way organisations do business but the EU is still in tweaking mode. We need to change how institutions function, particularly on getting analysis into programming and changing mindsets. The gap between policy and implementation is widening – joint analysis is a step change difference.

Changing the accountability framework would increase speed and adaptability. The development community is generally bad at learning because accountability frameworks only tell good stories; the bad stories are swept under the carpet but we could learn a lot from them. We should incentivise learning by revising accountability mechanisms so that actors are held accountable for what they learn not for the outputs, which may not necessarily still be relevant.

The regulations are constraining. There is currently an opportunity to engage on reforming them. Internally, officials recognise the need for flexibility, but there is debate between the EP, Member States and a range of other actors. We need to get the balance right between flexibility, control and oversight.

Reforming institutions and practice takes a long time. However, many of the changes needed are already in policy, but are not implemented because officials have not received the instructions through the hierarchy to do so. We need to create space for change; give officials time and space to think about options.

Recommendation to the EU

- Put policy into practice by issuing instructions to services to implement policy commitments, including joint fragility analysis and other forms of civil society inclusion

Recommendation to the EU and NGOs

- Use the opportunity to reform the regulations to push for greater flexibility while retaining oversight. This will require engaging with the EP and key Member States

Recommendation to NGOs

- Help the process by generating options for officials and decision-makers

There is currently strong political will for the post-2015 debate, but we need to plan for when that energy fades by developing a long-term vision. It is currently a “Biryani” debate (i.e. many issues are being discussed but they have not yet been mashed together).

Discussing fragile *contexts* rather than fragile *states* better reflects reality and also avoids restricting conflict-sensitive approaches to states which are already fragile. Issues such as good governance are applicable everywhere and have an important role in preventing fragility.

Recommendations to the EU

- Be more vocal in the post-2015 debate than it was on the aid effectiveness debate
- Discuss fragile *contexts*, not *states*, to emphasise that issues such as good governance are key in all situations and play an important role in preventing fragility

Concentration is important, as some EU delegations are working (superficially) on up to 11 sectors, and aid is fragmented. A better division of labour is needed in-country, and concentrating on fewer sectors creates space for policy dialogue. Prioritising will always be difficult and the fewer number of sectors means some principles will be in competition with each other.

There is some rebalancing of staff underway, generally to more difficult places, but the challenge is how to attract and keep the right people. We should do more on co-location and sharing staff with Member States.

There is both formal and informal consultation. The EU has a budget line for civil society in its programmes for all countries belonging to the African, Pacific and Caribbean (ACP) Group of States.

Recommendation to the EU

- To be effective, consultation should be a focused discussion with clear objectives, not a general forum

Recommendations to NGOs

- Civil society should avoid issue competition in consultation, perhaps talking more about a normative approach, rather than specific issues
- Look at the eighth EU Framework Programme for Research and Development for funding to deepen work on indicators and fragility

Conclusions

From Principle to Policy to Practice

There are upcoming opportunities to change policy through the post-2015 debate and reform of the financial regulations.

Recommendation to EU peacebuilding NGOs

- Reach out to the development community – NGOs and in the EP – and engage in dialogue on including fragility and conflict sensitivity in the post-2015 debate, and in the EU's position on it

Reform of the EU, like other institution-building processes, takes a long time and needs short-term indicators of success. Without reforming policy, there are a number key areas in which EU peacebuilding NGOs can immediately start to shape EU practice.

Recommendations to EU peacebuilding NGOs

- Help build the EU's narrative by identifying domestic experiences of reform from within the EU as a basis for dialogue with partners, and identify stories which also show how long reform takes, and how progress/regression can be measured in the short-term as part of this process
- Engage more with the EU in Brussels, as an integral part of advocacy with Member States, and in delegations by:
 - Showing specific examples from experience of how peacebuilding contributes to development and to international norms and standards on human rights and corruption, and how best to integrate civil society consultation in all areas of programming
 - Helping EU delegations to consult civil society by helping them overcome challenges of representation and participation and navigate the multiple voices of genuine consultation
 - Using positive examples such as the CSDN to further civil society engagement and push back against resistance
- Monitor and push the EU, but also support it. Recognising that the EU faces internal as well as external resistance, NGOs have to help create a safe space for the EU institutions to engage in good practice. NGOs want the EU institutions to take more risks, so they have to contribute to a safer environment for EU officials to do this.

Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policy makers. It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). For more information please visit the [EPLO website](http://www.eplo.org).