

## **Group 1: Land-related conflicts**

### **Guiding questions**

1. On which types of land-related conflicts would support from the Article 4 component of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace have an added value?
2. What kind of approaches and activities in this area, notably those undertaken by civil society actors, have been particularly successful?

### **Participants' comments and recommendations**

- Participants emphasised the importance of paying attention to, and addressing, the multiple types of sources of land-related tension and conflict. Examples of such sources raised included:
  - land reform (e.g. in Ukraine, the process may exacerbate tensions in some regions)
  - issues pertaining to natural resources management (in particular issues of ownership in the extraction process, as well as issues of access to trees, fish, etc.)
  - the return and resettlement of internally displaced people,
  - disputes pitting herders against farmers or indigenous people against settlers (in which the control of land is often linked to groups identities)
  - land degradation (due to natural events or, directly or indirectly (e.g. climate change), to human activity)
  - land acquisition (by actors from inside or outside the country)
  - the use of land for criminal activities (and/or the ownership of land by criminals)
  - tourism initiatives and environmental protection
  - inheritance laws (and, more broadly, the way land ownership is addressed in national legal systems, as these can be discriminatory (e.g. preventing women/minorities from inheriting land))
  - vacant land laws (which can differ substantially across countries)
  - differing types of ownership (informal, formal, traditional)
  - differing types of legal frameworks to settle disputes (informal, traditional, legal).
- Efforts to address the drivers of land-related conflicts must be cross-cutting. They should not constitute yet another silo in the EU's external action infrastructure. Likewise, when addressing land-related conflicts, the EU should pay attention to how they interlink with related issues (e.g. those related to natural resources management).
- The EU should take a conflict-sensitive approach to development and trade.
- The EU should take a multistakeholder approach to land-related conflicts and be willing to engage constructively with all relevant stakeholders. In particular, the EU should ensure that local, marginalised groups and civil society actors are enabled to participate in negotiations: inclusive approaches are essential to the design and implementation of sustainable solutions.
- The EU should engage in gender-sensitive context analysis and pay particular attention to local dynamics. For example, it is also important to take into account the impact of informal and traditional mechanisms for dispute resolution on local conflicts and the interactions of local groups. Local actors, including civil society actors and local authorities, should be consulted and involved in an inclusive manner in analysis, which should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. As land conflicts are

multidimensional, such context analysis is necessary to understand the complexity of individual cases.

- It may be necessary for the EU to work with – rather than against – traditional mechanisms so that local conflicts can be solved at the local level before they escalate. However, it is important to be aware that some traditional mechanisms may also be discriminatory against certain groups so it is necessary to adopt a case-by-case approach.
- The EU should help to provide spaces for interaction and dialogue between local actors who are involved in disputes.
- The EU should provide assistance to local communities and civil society actors in order to ensure that they are aware of, and able to defend, their formal rights (i.e. through legal representation, awareness raising actions, capacity building, etc.). As national legal systems may be flawed, cases can sometimes also be taken to regional mechanisms.
- In order to address the root causes of conflicts, land-related issues must be taken into account in post-conflict and post-disaster analyses and actions.
- When engaging in collaborations with the private sector, the EU should push for business investments to be conflict-sensitive, in particular in relation to land-related issues. The EU should work on incentives to achieve this goal.
- When relevant, the EU should approach land-related conflicts through both country-specific and regional lenses, as they can involve actors from both sides of national borders.
- Several participants argued that land ownership could be seen as a human rights issue.