

OPERATIONALISING THE 'NEXUS': PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES FOR STRENGTHENING AND ACCELERATING HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COHERENCE

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The OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) High-Level Roundtable *Operationalising the 'nexus': Principles and approaches for strengthening and accelerating humanitarian, development and peace coherence* facilitated conversations on how DAC members could better support, engage with, and accelerate the implementation of more coherent humanitarian, development and peace— 'the nexus'. The discussion focused on three critical themes:

- ▶ better multi-stakeholder **coordination** across the nexus;
- ▶ better **programming** within the nexus; and
- ▶ better **financing** across the nexus.

In addition to DAC members, the Roundtable included the participation of a wide range of stakeholders – from multilateral institutions and civil society organisations, including the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African development Bank, International Alert, the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Cordaid, World Vision International, Care International, Effective States Institute, IRIN news agency, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, and United Nations Resident Coordinators.

Context

Addressing conflict and fragility is key to meeting our collective commitments to the Agenda 2030 and ensuring that no one is 'left behind'. In 2016, USD 68.2 billion, or 65.5% of total earmarked official development assistance (ODA) was spent in fragile contexts, however, and despite efforts by OECD-DAC members, in 2016 more countries were experiencing violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. More coherent and coordinated efforts in crisis and conflict affected contexts are a critical element of addressing fragility and in achieving lasting peace and reducing humanitarian needs.

DAC members are key 'shareholders' in the multilateral system, as well as humanitarian and development actors in their own right, that deliver almost 80% of ODA through bilateral programming in fragile contexts. As such, they recognise their essential role in contributing to operationalising greater coherence to complement the efforts of governments, the multilateral system and civil society in delivering more coordinated actions to 'leave no one behind'.

Highlights from the discussion

- ▶ Roundtable participants **reiterated their support** for the proposed DAC Recommendation, with a call to **strengthen the language** of the Recommendation and to **be 'ambitious'** in their commitments;
- ▶ A wide range of institutions beyond the OECD membership expressed their **interest in becoming 'adherents' to the Recommendation** to accelerate and strengthen operationalisation of the nexus;
- ▶ Participants emphasised the importance of **joint analysis**, the need for **empowered leadership** for coordination across the nexus, and the use of **constructive political engagement**;
- ▶ The **critical role of the financing** including the right bilateral financing instruments, that create the right incentives to move beyond institutional divides and to deliver results together; and
- ▶ The need to have a **shared understanding of vulnerability** and the importance of a common approach to better identify who's 'the furthest left behind'.

Introduction

The Roundtable began with remarks from the **DAC Vice-chair, Dr Filippos Pierros**, who noted the need to ensure that humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts are complementary and mutually reinforcing and underlined the necessity to find an agreement on the proposed set of principles for the DAC Recommendation on the nexus. **Ms Karla Wursterová, Director General for International Organisations, Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic**, welcomed the progress made on the draft Recommendation on the nexus and stressed the role of the DAC in supporting and incentivising effective multilateralism.

Better COORDINATION across the nexus

The first session focused on how to achieve greater coherence between meeting the immediate needs of crisis-affected people and longer-term actions that contribute to development and peace. In particular, this session discussed the DAC Recommendation to undertake joint analysis, provide appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for coordination across the nexus, and the use of constructive political engagement.

This session began with remarks from the **UN Resident Coordinator for Burkina Faso, Ms Metsi Makhetha**, who brought valuable insights from her experience leading the UN system in Burkina Faso. She highlighted existing challenges between different actors at country-level and stressed that greater coherence across the nexus necessitates 'constructive disruption' – i.e. shifting the boundaries in order to create a context of appreciating the shared risks and vulnerabilities. She noted that in Burkina Faso, the framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has served to bring partners around the table and to identify gaps. Ms Makhetha presented the SDG acceleration and nexus platform as a tool used to enhance operational coherence, to define collective results and to identify SDG accelerators. In Burkina Faso, the nexus has been identified as a key element to accelerating progress on the SDGs. Concerning the architecture of engagement with the government in Burkina Faso, a Troika of partners has been established, led by the UN, the EU and bilateral partners, including most OECD-DAC members in country. In order to bring these efforts forward, Ms Makhetha emphasised that more work needs to be done around coordination and accountabilities – identifying triggers, incentives and 'feedback loops' to sustain action.

Ms Puteri Watson, Senior Operations Officer for the World Bank programme in Somalia, reiterated the current fragmentation across humanitarian, development and peace actions, citing the international community's re-engagement in Somalia since 2012. In this context, she stressed the difficulties supporting the establishment of sustainable and coherent government systems – an undertaking that has been both costly and time intensive. Reflecting on this, she noted that a way to avoid such a situation would be to establish coherent and coordinated systems right from the beginning of humanitarian crises, which could then be transferred to government systems. When thinking about how to strengthen the nexus, she welcomed joint analysis approaches but also stressed the need to go further in collective outcomes. In this context, she highlighted the need to build a common understanding of collective outcomes and to think about appropriate frameworks and leadership for this to work. She also emphasised the importance of considering the drivers of fragmentation, particularly with regard to financing. She then challenged participants to think about what they are collectively afraid of losing if we combine humanitarian and development financing into a common fund. In Somalia, a well-functioning multilateral 'centre of gravity' has been developed, bringing together multilateral actors in a collective approach. However, she also stressed the challenges that arise from the fact that 88% of financing happens outside of the multilateral system in Somalia.

In the subsequent discussion, participants noted the need to understand incentives at national, regional and local levels. The discussion also highlighted the need to enable partnership and joint action without generating additional 'transaction costs', noting the need to build on existing architecture. Participants also discussed the challenges

involved in aligning bilateral aid and programming behind collective outcomes, in contexts where coordination is lacking and stressed that leadership, or the lack thereof, serves as one of the main blockages to implementing the nexus. Finally, a number of participants emphasised the importance of balancing more coherent actions with principled humanitarian action and the need ensure that the peace aspect of the nexus is well understood, defined and integrated into the nexus to allow for better coherence.

Better PROGRAMMING within the Nexus

The second session of the roundtable focused on the DAC Recommendation outlining the need for more inclusive, joined-up, people-centred programming approaches.

This session began with remarks from the **UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Cameroon, Ms Allegra Baiocchi**, who welcomed the DAC Recommendation's focus on prevention. She highlighted the need to identify structural drivers as a means to better anticipate needs. She further welcomed the strong support for the SDGs in the DAC Recommendation, with regard to 'leaving no one behind'. Speaking from a country-level perspective, she stressed the importance of using the SDGs as a framework to influence programming and to ensure collective outcomes. In this context, she highlighted the influence of bilateral actors, while stressing the importance of further linking them to multilateral actors. For the nexus to work, she stressed the importance of joined-up programming and highlighted the principles of transparency in order to reach to those who are the furthest behind, first.

Mr Claus Sorensen, the former Director General of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), focused on current incentive structures and how they impact upon implementation of the nexus. In this context, he highlighted the role of financing as a means to connect all actors. With regard to the humanitarian part of the nexus, he emphasised the moral duty humanitarian actors have to share their knowledge to better inform vulnerability analyses and reminded Roundtable participants that humanitarian principles should not stand in the way of cooperation across the nexus.

In addition, the importance of including the security sector within the nexus was reiterated. Moreover, he stressed the crucial role of politics in shifting current incentive structures towards more collaboration and emphasised the need for longer-term programming, multi-year financing, less earmarking and empowering the UN Resident Coordinators in-country. Finally, Mr Sorensen suggested giving the issue of migration and displacement more prominence in the Recommendation.

In the subsequent discussion, it was noted that peace is often the bridge between humanitarian action and development interventions and that reconciliation in post-conflict settings also had an important role. The need for better foresight was also highlighted, however recognising that adapting programmes and processes on the basis of foresight depended on the political appetite to do so. As such it is also important to ensure that global frameworks like the SDGs are better aligned with a country's own developmental and political actions.

Better FINANCING across the Nexus

The third session was dedicated to discussing how to operationalise the 'nexus' through the right bilateral financing instruments and through financing that creates the right incentives for the multilateral system to move beyond institutional divides and deliver results together.

Mr Peter de Clercq, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, explained that more than US \$800 Million was spent in total, on famine last year. Against this background, he called for greater investments in building national resilience, while simultaneously ensuring life-saving financing. Furthermore, he emphasised the need to coordinate humanitarian and development financing

from the onset. Drawing from the situation in Somalia, he also reiterated the importance of country ownership and the importance of finding durable solutions to forced displacement and to reach a common understanding of who is the furthest left behind. Overall, he mentioned that Somalia was on a relatively good track, which he considered to be linked to the legacy of the New Deal.

Mr Carsten Staur, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Delegation of Denmark to OECD emphasised the increasing role of humanitarian ODA and its link to fragility. Given the current peak in financing for humanitarian interventions, he mentioned the *New Way of Working* as an entry point for incentivising better financing across the nexus. Although he recognised that some progress has been made, he also noted that discussions about staffing capacity issues, management approaches to risk and incentives to collaborate have been an on-going discussion since 1987 and that it was imperative that we capitalise on current opportunities and make progress on these issues.

Participants again highlighted that the majority of development financing in fragile contexts is channelled through bilateral funding mechanisms, highlighting the important role that INCAF and the DAC has in ensuring that bilateral actors contribute to operationalising greater coherence. This was backed by the call for an ambitious Recommendation that also helped to incentivise the system through UN reforms and the use of pooled funding but also in terms of driving coherence and looking at systemic barriers in the UN system. The importance of ensuring that development financing can be used to react at earlier points during a crisis was also highlighted, as was the role of effective leadership, both at the donor and country level. At a county level, participants reiterated the important role of UN Resident Coordinators in ensuring that bilateral actors are engaged in and supportive of collective outcomes and greater coherence.

Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks, **Mr Jorge Moreira da Silva**, Director of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, thanked all participants of the roundtable and reiterated calls for ambitious and, at the same time, realistic DAC Recommendation. Mr Moreira da Silva, emphasised that the Roundtable and the proposed DAC Recommendation is a unique opportunity to consolidate the DAC's efforts over the past two years and to accelerate the implementation of more coherent humanitarian-development-peace action. He stressed that, if we could get this right, then we have a real chance of achieving a step-change for the lives of people affected by crises and fragility but if we fail in this task, we will collectively fail to reach our commitments to Agenda 2030 and our aspiration of 'leaving no-one behind'. He closed the Roundtable, thanking participants for their inputs and assuring them of the OECD's highest commitments to help drive these commitments forward and ensure to support DAC members in improving the effectiveness of ODA in fragile settings.

DAC Recommendation on humanitarian-development-peace nexus: next steps

- ▶ Further consultation with INCAF members will be held between now and late December, 2018;
- ▶ OECD- DAC members will have an on-going opportunity to review the draft Recommendation including, potentially, further informal DAC meetings;
- ▶ The draft DAC Recommendation will also be circulated to a wider group of stakeholders including civil society and the multilateral system;
- ▶ The draft DAC Recommendation, following further review by INCAF members and the DAC, will be tabled for approval at the DAC Senior Level Meeting in February 2019 and will then be open to both OECD-DAC members and non-OECD DAC members as adherents.