

The DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF)

INCAF response to Pathways for Peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict

Preamble

1. *INCAF welcomes* the messages and emerging policy recommendations of the United Nations-World Bank Group Report: *'Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict'*. The Report raises important challenges to the international community to not only do more but also to work differently to address the underlying drivers of violent conflict through an inclusive, targeted and sustained approach to prevention.
2. The UN and the World Bank, both active members of INCAF, are well positioned to take concrete action in response to the recommendations of the Report. Their combined expertise, 'footprint' and resources mean they possess great potential to contribute to solutions that achieve inclusive development outcomes and countries' long-term peace.
3. Effective conflict prevention is critical to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the pledge that no one will be left behind. Conflict prevention is urgently needed to deliver on this pledge and to prevent the enormous costs – lost lives, economic opportunities and development gains – associated with violent conflict.
4. Violent conflict and its costs are on the rise: More countries experienced conflict in 2016 than at any other time in 30 years. More than half of the world's poor are estimated to be living in countries affected by high levels of violence and conflict by 2030. Forced displacement has risen sharply since 2005 to 65.6 million people, many of whom are women and children. Effective conflict prevention has the potential to deliver average net savings to nations and the international community of at least \$5 billion per year.
5. Development policies and programmes should be a core part of prevention efforts, in line with the 2016 *Stockholm Declaration on Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World*. Development actors should be a part of the process, together with diplomatic and security actors, providing support to local, national and regional prevention agendas. This includes: bilateral cooperation and multilateral approaches to strengthen inclusive nationally-owned approaches; advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda; aligning peacebuilding, humanitarian and development approaches, and; incentivising more effective cooperation for prevention.
6. Gender equality and women's empowerment, in particular, need to be promoted as a transformative force to prevent violent conflict. As noted in the Report, gender inequality often correlates with societies' tendency to resort to violence or military force to resolve conflict. On the other hand, gender equality correlates positively with conflict prevention. Countries with higher women's participation in the labour force are less likely to experience conflict, while women's active participation in peace processes contributes effective implementation and sustainability.
7. *INCAF calls for* the scaling up diverse sources of financing for prevention, including national and international public and private flows; while recognising that ODA can be a crucial catalyst for leveraging additional financial flows and remains a critical source of 'risk tolerant' financing to fragile and conflict affected situations.

8. INCAF *underlines* the renewed call for local, national, regional and international actors to prioritise attention and efforts – including both financial and political resources – on prevention. INCAF *commits itself* to contributing to prevention through the use of diplomatic, programmatic and financing approaches that include the meaningful participation of women, youth and under-represented groups.

Building inclusive approaches

9. Evidence tells us that sustainable development will not be achieved without a stable and peaceful environment. Where risks of violence are emerging, INCAF *stresses* the need for the whole development system to focus on understanding and addressing the grievances and exclusion which underlie and drive conflict. This entails a clearer understanding of the actors and processes that support peace and create resilience – including the crucial role that the meaningful participation of women, youth and under-represented groups plays in such processes.
10. Building inclusive approaches for prevention should be based on the understanding that preventing and resolving conflict isn't just about reducing poverty, nor is it just about 'peace deals' or 'more' development. Economic development does not automatically create peace – it requires policies that seek inclusive solutions that aim to remove the incentives of actors to act violently and create opportunities for people to achieve real change in terms of sustainable development and peace – implemented through a people-centred approach that includes the meaningful participation of women, youth and under-represented groups.
11. INCAF *recognizes* the importance of incentivising collaborative long-term approaches that address underlying risks. This requires deep changes in the way that all actors operate and INCAF *calls on* the full range of actors to implement inclusive approaches to development, recognising that:
 - a. All actors – local, national, regional and international – have to understand how their actions might mitigate or deepen real and perceived patterns of exclusion;
 - b. actors beyond the state have the capacity to heighten or mitigate risks, such as transnational threats, regional dynamics or local perceptions of inclusivity;
 - c. prevention requires sustained and targeted attention and we cannot rely on prevention to simply be a by-product of development programming;
 - d. a targeted preventative approach requires the right skills in the right places, and;
 - e. an inclusive approach to development puts an understanding of grievances and the agency of diverse groups, including women, youth and other under-represented people at the centre of interventions. It requires consultations with diverse groups and an understanding of their perceptions of risk, their experience of exclusion and injustice, and their trust in institutions. It also needs to recognise the complex intersection of peoples' identity, based on a range of factors including age, sex, disability, ethnicity, class, education, etc.

Supporting national strategies

12. INCAF *reiterates* the principle that the state bears the primary responsibility for preventing conflict and shaping a country's path toward sustainable development and peace, in line with the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Bilateral, regional and international actors have a crucial role to play in supporting those efforts.
13. INCAF *recognises* the importance of early, systematic and coordinated engagement with states, where perceived risks are heightening. This should also address the impact upon development

investments and programming and facilitate nationally-led early action, or where necessary, regional approaches, to prevent the escalation of crises.

14. INCAF members *offer* to continue to actively contribute at a country-level in support of the development of joint analyses, implementation and financing mechanisms for the prevention of violence and for the building of peaceful, inclusive and just societies

Aligning peace, security, development and humanitarian action

15. INCAF *supports* the recommendations of the Report to strengthen the relationship between development, humanitarian action, peacebuilding, and security – including through coordinated planning and targeted action, based on actors' respective comparative advantage and distinctive roles.
16. Achieving greater coherence between different approaches involves ensuring that development investments are not withdrawn but adapted in crisis contexts and continue to contribute to peace outcomes; while ensuring that humanitarian action is based on humanitarian principles; supported and complemented by effective and timely diplomacy.
17. INCAF *emphasises* the importance of stronger coherence as a crucial step in moving from crisis management approaches to effective longer-term risk management, including the risk of climate change as a contributor to conflict. INCAF will strive to work towards overcoming barriers to greater coherence, including through timely, effective and appropriate financing and closer collaboration with diverse actors, while recognising and respecting their different mandates.
18. *Recognising* that INCAF members have a key role to play, we strive to working toward bridging the sectoral silos within our own national systems and also between headquarters and the field. INCAF members will also strive to adopt a people-centred approach that engages diverse groups, including women, youth and under-represented people, in all planning and programming related to conflict prevention. We will work with national governments, the multilateral system, civil society and other actors, including the private sector, to incentivise and facilitate joint assessments and shared analysis, planning and action that take the needs and interests of diverse groups into account.

Overcoming barriers to cooperation

Strengthening shared, well developed analysis for prevention

19. Joined-up, well developed analysis, assessment and planning can play an important role in crisis prevention, especially when complemented by effective early warning mechanisms. INCAF *encourages* the exchange of information, methodologies and good practice between governments, international organisations and other actors with the purpose of ensuring that analysis and early warning is effectively translated into early, preventative action.
20. INCAF will strive to invest further in joined-up analyses between all actors and a better understanding of underlying risks. Where this is absent, it is more difficult to address the drivers of conflict, tackle areas of exclusion, support the agents of peace, and target collective resources where they are most needed.
21. While *recognising* that risk assessments can be potentially sensitive, INCAF will *support* joint, international efforts in this area, including fragility assessments as part of the commitment to the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. INCAF is a member of and *supports* the role of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in facilitating mutual collaboration to achieve this.

Financing coherent and sustained investment in prevention

22. INCAF *recognises* that incentives are a critical element in driving new ways of working and more effective approaches to prevention. Providing financing that incentivises change and coherent action is critical to achieving sustainable peace and the 2030 Agenda.
23. While cognisant of the constraints on international funding, INCAF will strive to advocate for and provide targeted financial and technical support to financing strategies for stability and to develop innovative and flexible instruments that incentivise adequate and sustained investment and address the gaps in the current prevention approach.
24. INCAF *emphasises* its adherence to the aspirations of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which require an updated approach to bringing together financial flows from public and private, and domestic and international sources. This is of critical importance in fragile contexts with the greatest potential risks, and the greatest potential returns.
25. INCAF members *affirm or re-affirm* their commitment to ODA spending that is conflict sensitive and also seek to further tailor our respective bilateral action to encourage other development actors to address the long-term causes of conflict, including where fragility is the barrier to achieving the SDGs.

Supporting an international system, 'fit for purpose'

26. INCAF *stresses* that better prevention is not only about more resources but also the right people with the right skills who understand the context in which they are operating. Engaging local actors, including women, youth and under-represented groups is critical to understanding the context. Stronger prevention requires world class capacity in the areas which make the most difference in preventing and resolving conflict, including the strengthening of dialogue and mediation efforts.
27. INCAF *encourages* increased UN and World Bank collaboration on the ground to address the root causes of conflict and support inclusive and locally-led peacebuilding programmes and the agents of peace. The two organisations should focus on areas of complementarity that work to their respective strengths and use these to inform programming that is conflict sensitive, inclusive and realises opportunities to address grievances and other risk factors. To this purpose, INCAF *calls on* the UN and the World Bank to ensure country strategies are aligned and coherent.
28. INCAF *notes* the proposed reforms at the UN to deliver coherently, efficiently and accountably to sustain peace. INCAF *is supportive* of a UN system that draws on all of its available tools in fragile contexts; a development system that addresses the root causes of conflict; and the efficient delivery of actions which build upon strong partnerships and enhanced high-level diplomacy to prevent and manage crises.
29. To this purpose, INCAF *welcomes and supports* UN plans to strengthen the role of Resident Coordinators as a necessary step toward greater coherence between humanitarian action, development and peacebuilding, including reform processes being undertaken to support this process.
30. INCAF also *commends* the World Bank for its IDA18 commitments to fragile and conflict-affected situations. More resources are, however, only part of the answer. The *Pathways for Peace* report demonstrates the need for tailored solutions. INCAF *calls on* the World Bank to adapt its operational model to ensure it can have the right staff on the ground; programming that is based on joint analysis; and broad and enhanced cooperation with other actors.

31. INCAF *acknowledges* that no one actor has the mandate, expertise or resources to address the world's complex and entrenched fragility and conflict challenges and that many of these challenges are inherently political in nature. Recognising this, INCAF members *offer* to actively take part in and contribute to working in partnership with the full range of actors at global, regional, national and local levels to support joint analyses, implementation and financing for prevention of violence and for the building of peaceful, inclusive and just societies.