

## **OWG 8 discussion on conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance**

### **Australia, Netherlands UK Troika statement**

We are standing at a crossroads. We have a historic opportunity to build on the ambition and success of the MDGs and work towards a future where everybody will be able to live a dignified life, free from violence and exclusion. The Millennium Declaration, the Rio+20 Outcome Document and the Outcome Document of the Special Event on the MDGs stress the importance of peace and the rule of law. Now we have an opportunity to reflect these priority areas into an ambitious yet practical roadmap. It can and should be done.

Lessons from around the world have taught us that we cannot ignore government institutions and work around them. Similarly, we know that sustainable development and the eradication of poverty are not possible without building peaceful and resilient states and societies. Because of violent conflict, aid has long been volatile in too many countries. Donors and International institutions have to commit long term, stay the course and help countries deliver safety, justice and jobs through effective and accountable institutions.

We endorse the recommendations of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons, published in May last year, for separate goals on good governance with effective, open and accountable institutions for all, and building peaceful societies. This is a universal agenda: the issues are as relevant to the citizens of Australia, the Netherlands and the UK as they are to citizens in Africa, Asia or North or South America.

We must now come together to agree a new global action plan to eradicate poverty, increase voice and wellbeing, and ensure safety and justice for all. In agreeing the post 2015 framework, we must recognise that durable peace and good governance are intrinsically valuable outcomes in themselves as well as essential for growth and development. Consequently, we believe that the post-2015 development framework should include goals and targets on governance and the rule of law, peace, stability and justice for all.

The MDGs helped rally national and international attention and efforts around the most difficult challenge of our time – that of endemic poverty and lack of access to basic services such as health and education. A lot has been achieved. But what use is a good school or clinic if the path leading to it is unsafe?

#### **Peaceful Societies and personal safety**

Both the UN and the World Bank agree that durable peace is a critical condition for sustainable development while violence is one of the greatest obstacles for the achievement of the MDGs. By 2015, more than 50% of the world's poor are likely to live in conflict affected and fragile situations, and this is expected to rise to 82% by 2030.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ensuring Fragile States are not left Behind: 2013 Factsheet on resource flows and trends, OECD, 2013.

Personal safety for individuals is a priority for everyone around the world, in particular for girls and women. One in three women globally will be beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Over half a million violent deaths occur annually, three quarters of which are in countries considered to be peaceful.<sup>3</sup> This agenda is relevant to everybody, and is at the heart of establishing trust and prosperity in societies. The findings of the MYWorld survey confirm that 'freedom from crime and violence' was in the top seven of the priorities listed by people globally.

Goals and targets for building peaceful societies can be measured. For example, the increase in decent jobs and livelihoods and the reduction of avoidable deaths are measurable. Inequalities between social groups, violence against children and women, the number of displaced persons and refugees can all be monitored. This also holds for capacity building and accountability in the police and security forces, and illicit flows of arms, drugs, finance, natural resources and human trafficking where the international community has a clear responsibility. These are relevant examples for possible targets that demonstrate progress on building peaceful societies.

### **Rule of Law and Governance**

At the national level, the rule of law is at the heart of the social contract between the state and its citizens, ensuring justice permeates society at every level and governments are accountable. It is also essential for ensuring a stable and predictable environment for investors. Legal identity is a first step to accessing public services as well as to inclusion in economic and political processes. Yet as the TST issues brief highlights, lack of legal identity continues to be an enormous challenge. Globally the births of 240 million children under the age of 5 have not been registered<sup>4</sup>. Approximately 12 million people remain stateless and without effective citizenship rights<sup>5</sup>.

At the same time, we know there is enormous demand from the poorest people in the world for justice. The issues brief also notes that up to four billion people live outside fair and functioning justice systems<sup>6</sup>, denying them redress for abuses, protection from violence, and basic property rights. A recent World Bank report found that 128 countries have at least one legal difference between men and women, restricting women's economic opportunities.

Citizens want governments that are capable and responsive and able to deliver on their commitments. People want to be able to speak out without fear, register land in their own name, establish businesses that create jobs, have a police force that will protect their families and property, and a judicial system that enforces agreements made. Reflecting this concretely in the post-2015 framework will meet the call expressed by the citizens of all UN Member States in the MYWorld survey, which

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<sup>2</sup> Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. WHO, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council, 2013

<sup>3</sup> Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011, Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development 2011.

<sup>4</sup> From UNICEF Global Databases (based on data from DHS, MICS, other national surveys and civil registration systems)

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR estimates that about 12 million people are stateless in dozens of developed and developing countries around the world, though the exact numbers aren't known.

<sup>6</sup> Making the Law Work for Everyone, Report of the UN Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor, 2008, p1.

found that an 'honest and accountable government' was among the top four priorities of ordinary people globally.

We believe building accountable and effective institutions that support open societies and inclusive participation in decision making should be an integral part of the post-2015 framework. This will strengthen the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the framework, and be part of a comprehensive approach for sustainable development. With inclusive institutions in place, targets across the framework are more likely to be reached, and success is more likely to be embedded and sustained. Formulating tangible goals and targets will rally the international community.

Objective measures could include:

- access to a legal identity;
- access to independent media, information and government data;
- addressing legal restrictions on women's economic opportunities;
- securing equal rights for all to land, property and other assets;
- freedom of speech, association and peaceful protest;
- accessibility and independence of security and justice institutions;
- public participation in political processes and civic engagement;
- the reduction of corruption, and accountability of public officials.

Such objective measures can be complemented by baskets of perception-based indicators, providing a more direct measure of outcomes. Experts at UN Statistics have confirmed the value of subjective indicators as a measure of governance.

### Conclusion:

We want to see goals and targets on governance and the rule of law, peace, safety and justice for all. These are integral to eradicating poverty in a sustainable way, and should not be viewed as something that will squeeze out other priorities. They should fit within a framework that is both ambitious in addressing these core issues and flexible enough to be useful in preparing national development plans, whilst recognising that priorities will be different from country to country and region to region. It should be clear that States retain their sovereign prerogatives to ensure peace and stability within their borders.

In the statistical note for this OWG debate experts conclude that measuring progress for building institutions and ensuring peaceful societies is feasible<sup>7</sup>. The key challenge is ensuring data sources are widely trusted, and that governments have the skills to gather a range of reliable data to track progress. More work is required on collecting disaggregated data that can be used to measure girls' and women's progress on access to justice, safety and voice.

There is global recognition that peace and inclusive and effective institutions are development outcomes that require country leadership and ownership combined with coordinated international support. They are important goals in their own right and will help us eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

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<sup>7</sup>Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) Statistical note for the issue brief on: Conflict Prevention, Post-conflict Peacebuilding and the Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance