

## **DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE ACTIONS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES**

### **1. Poverty, marginalization, and vulnerability:**

- Economic, social and political inequality among culturally, ethnically, or socially defined groups.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Concentrate on the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Determine and address the root causes of poverty.

### **2. Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and environmental deterioration**

- Direct harm of natural resources and ecosystems, for example, through hazardous substances or overtaxing renewable resources.
- Indirect harm to the environment often caused by coping strategies of local and displaced people in emergency situations or via uncontrolled overexploitation.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Set priorities and timing early, as inaction or poor choices can easily lead to locking development into an unsustainable path that undermines peace.
- Properly manage resources to encourage economic growth and employment; and to foster multi-level and multi-group engagement, cooperation and reconciliation.

### **3. Insecurity, militarization, and lawlessness**

- Distorted traditional power structures that include active non-state armed groups and easily accessible weapons.
- Human rights abuses and violent crime.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Improve political processes so that they are inclusive and legitimate.
- Implement state-society contract formation and reformation.

### **4. Societal divisions**

- Residual politicisation and stereotyping.
- Bridges between social groups are weak, though group ties and identities within groups are strong.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Negotiate long-term goals and create a shared vision for the future to build trust and bridges, and confidence in the government's interest in equality.
- Openly discuss differences and understand the benefits and losses of certain policies and trade-offs.

## **5. Poor governance, corruption, and low capacity**

- Decimation of government institutions and organizational linkages.
- Poor coordination among local and national institutions, formal and traditional institutions, the state and the (newly developing) civil society.
- Corruption.
- “Brain drain,” the loss of the country’s most skilled workers.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Implement policies to fight corruption.
- Build capacity; working toward better governance is crucial.

## **6. Poor economic performance, limited fiscal resources, and disruption of infrastructures and public services**

- Damaged infrastructure, scarce employment opportunities, reduced foreign investment, big shadow economies, and increased capital flight.
- Inability to collect taxes, manage resources, implement policy, or uphold the rule of law.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Consider growth strategies of several dimensions: social, economic, and environmental.
- Strengthen policies by seeking to achieve multiple goals at once, where possible. For example, using resources more efficiently is better socially, economically and environmentally.

## **7. Regional and external risks**

- Receipt of support or intervention from other countries that is not context-sensitive.
- Conflict as a result of the direct or spill-over effect from external involvement.

*How to Handle Challenge through Sustainable Development:*

- Coordinate and cooperate across borders. For example, joint infrastructure projects can stimulate economic growth and create employment.
- Build relations between neighbouring countries. For example, transboundary environmental cooperation and management of ecosystems or natural resources can be a stepping stone to (re)build relations and trust between countries.

This handout features a summary of the Guidance Notes.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development. *Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries*. Development Account Project (ROA 105). (2011): 20-23, 35-36. Strengthening National Capacity for the Integration of Sustainable Development Principles into Development Strategies in Countries Emerging from Conflict. Available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd\\_aofw\\_nsds/nsds\\_pdfs/guidancenotes.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_nsds/nsds_pdfs/guidancenotes.pdf)