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Department of Political Affairs



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# EMERGING PROMISING PRACTICES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING

The Peace and Development Advisors and the Joint UNDP-DPA  
Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention

June 2014



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# LIST OF RELEVANT ACTORS AND ROLES

## **Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building**

**National Capacities for Conflict Prevention:** The partnership, established in 2004, which supports and manages the deployment of PDAs, also serves as a forum to link UNDP and DPA on issues pertaining to conflict prevention.

**UNDP Regional Bureau:** The primary point of contact for UNDP Country Offices, UNDP Regional Bureaux provide support to UNDP Country Offices on issues such as day-to-day policy and administrative support, with technical and programmatic guidance provided through the UNDP Regional Service Centres in coordination with UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programming Support.

**DPA Regional Divisions:** DPA's Regional Divisions monitor country developments and provide the Secretary-General with analytical reports and briefing notes that inform his decisions and shape diplomatic engagements with Member States, regional and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

**DPA Mediation Support Unit:** Established in 2006, DPA's Mediation Support Unit (MSU) works closely with DPA's regional divisions to plan and support mediation efforts at the country level. Among its functions, MSU: provides advisory, financial and logistical support to peace processes; works to strengthen the mediation capacity of regional and sub-regional organizations; and, serves as a repository of mediation knowledge, policy and guidance, lessons learned and best practices.

**DPA Electoral Assistance Division:** The Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) provides technical expertise and ensures coherence across the UN System regarding the provision of electoral assistance to Member States. More specifically, EAD works to support Member States to select systems,

design institutions and support processes that foster peaceful and nationally accepted elections; in some instances this involves providing technical expertise, in others it is more focused on facilitating dialogue. Assistance.

**Peacebuilding Support Office:** Established in 2005, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) helps to sustain peace in conflict-affected countries by fostering international support for nationally-owned and nationally-led peacebuilding efforts. The office assists and supports the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), administers the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), and supports the Secretary-General's efforts to coordinate the UN System in its peacebuilding efforts. Increasingly, connections are being sought between the PBF and the work of PDA's.

**Resident Coordinator:** In most country contexts, the Resident Coordinator (RC) is the most senior UN official, and the direct supervisor of the PDAs. PDAs are expected to provide the RC and the UN Country Team (UNCT) with analytical support on political and conflict-related issues, while also supporting the RC's engagements with government, opposition, and civil society actors, making use of the entry-points available to advance the UN's support to conflict prevention activities.

**United Nations Country Team:** The UNCT is the name given to the configuration of UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes that operate within a given country context, under the leadership of the RC. The PDA is expected to provide up to date analysis on political and conflict dynamics to both the RC and the UNCT, with a particular focus on strategic advice and guidance related to conflict prevention programming. The PDAs also help ensure that conflict-sensitivity is mainstreamed across the UNCT's programming.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The urgency of preventing violent conflict in fragile and crisis-affected settings has catalysed efforts across the United Nations (UN) system to develop and enhance its strategic capacities and human resources to meet the pressing and evolving needs in terms of conflict prevention and resolution. The changing nature of conflict, and the shifting roles of international development actors puts additional requirements on staff to enhance their skills in a range of areas that go well beyond traditional programme management functions. The ability to facilitate dialogue between different national and local actors to address deeply rooted conflict and diverse manifestations of violence, while simultaneously supporting national efforts to develop sustainable mechanisms to deal with potential disputes and tensions in a proactive manner, is paramount.

Amongst the wide range of experts and advisors working across UNDP Country Offices specifically on crisis prevention and recovery is an emerging cadre of senior staff with specialized skills, expertise and knowledge: Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs). Deployed under the auspices of a partnership between UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), PDAs play a unique role: they are responsible for guiding and supporting UN initiatives at the field level to ensure national capacities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding are strengthened. This Practice Note profiles the work of PDAs, identifying areas of promising practice and the factors that are driving them. The note is part of a growing effort by UNDP and DPA to document, reflect upon, and share the work of PDAs – with the goal of ultimately enhancing the quality and coherence of conflict prevention programming across the UN system and in support of national partners.

This Practice Note begins by discussing the institutional context in which the work of PDAs takes place. It then identifies and investigates a number of emerging areas of promising practice from PDAs’

work globally, exploring both the challenges and the innovative practical responses to such challenges, as well as the general factors that tend to facilitate success or hamper progress. The Annex of this Practice Note includes three case studies of PDA experiences in Ghana, Guyana, and Kyrgyzstan, with a view to providing a greater level of in-depth analysis.<sup>1</sup>

The three main areas of engagement conducted under the ‘umbrella’ of PDA activities, as well as the sub-areas that fall within them are summarized here:

1. **Political and conflict analysis:** Conducting and/or facilitating political and conflict analysis lies at the heart of a PDA’s work. While the purpose and audience of such analysis can vary across country contexts, PDAs typically facilitate the use of such analysis to inform the UN’s engagements in-country and, oftentimes, the wider UN Country Team (UNCT) and national actors. As the report highlights, there are numerous types and forms of analysis that manifest in different country settings. First, all PDAs conduct political and conflict analysis to inform the UN’s positioning both in-country and at HQ level. This support is primarily geared towards, and produced for, the Resident Coordinator (RC) of the UN system in-country. By-products of this support are also shared with relevant DPA and UNDP counterparts at Headquarters to facilitate greater awareness of the local political context in order to inform strategic decision-making. Often PDAs are responsible for ensuring that political and conflict analysis processes are participatory or stakeholder-led to help build consensus (both within a UNCT and with national and international partners) around the drivers of conflict and the appropriate responses.

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<sup>1</sup> The main body of the report was researched and authored by Erin McCandless, and the Annex, by Kwaku Nuamah.

## 2. **Conflict prevention strategy and programming:**

A key function of PDAs is linking analysis to strategy and programming. In this area PDAs undertake various functions, including: developing joint strategic frameworks and programmes, ideally through participatory processes; supporting conflict-sensitive programming; supporting the design of specific conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes; and, lastly, supporting the evaluation and assessment of such activities. PDAs are also often influential in the development and facilitation of strategic processes around politically sensitive issues, given their backgrounds and unique role in supporting the UN system as a whole (rather than one particular agency, fund or programme). In situations where the UN enjoys a productive relationship with the government, the PDA can play a valuable role in linking government and UN efforts to support national actors in developing strategies and frameworks for national dialogue and infrastructures for peace; this often involves encouraging alignment and/or complementarity with system wide UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and Country Programme planning processes. The inclusion of a “conflict-sensitive lens” into UNDAF programming can be particularly catalytic for ensuring that the UNCT pays sufficient attention to conflict dynamics and utilises key entry-points to support conflict prevention and/or peacebuilding.

## 3. **Catalysing and facilitating conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives:**

PDAs can help identify specific, strategic initiatives that respond to the needs of particular contexts, as identified through robust analysis and mapping of strategic efforts and entry-points. This Practice Note focuses on three areas that increasingly serve as core building blocks of PDAs work, supporting the UN to build the capacities of national actors for conflict prevention and peacebuilding:

- **Dialogue and mediation support:** PDAs work with national and local stakeholders to develop a common understanding of

contextual challenges and to collaborate on resolving them, ideally working towards preventing the risk of violence and conflict from occurring or re-occurring. PDAs also help develop national capacities in conflict prevention broadly speaking, including in areas pertaining to dialogue, mediation and facilitation. By working to build the capacities of key stakeholders, including from civil society, government and the opposition - while simultaneously facilitating the development of a conducive environment - dialogue processes are supported at all levels in an inclusive and sustainable manner. When attached to the RC’s office, PDAs benefit from the perceived neutrality of this office and are able to leverage both the in-country networks of actors that have been built up over time, as well as the convening power the office holds with national actors. PDAs are often able to create space for effective civil society engagement in these processes, and they work to build capacities to enable inclusion and participation in them.

- **Reconciliation and social cohesion:** PDAs catalyse and facilitate initiatives that bring divided communities and societies together. These efforts are designed to build social cohesion through political, economic and social processes and to strengthen relationships; they support communities to tackle livelihood and other socio-economic challenges, and to map more peaceful, co-existent futures. These efforts take different forms in different country contexts, with some PDAs supporting reconciliation and social cohesion at the community level, whilst others focus on supporting UN engagements at national levels - or sometimes a combination of both. It is important to note that the nature of a PDA’s support for reconciliation and social cohesion processes depends on the insights garnered from the conflict/political analysis, and the appropriate entry-points for engagement that it revealed.

- **Infrastructures for peace (I4P):** Emerging as one of UNDP's flagship areas of work, I4P are networks of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills that, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building in a society. In the vast majority of countries where PDAs work, I4Ps are developed to support the overall mission of the PDA, the Joint UNDP/ DPA Programme and the wider UN system work in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding i.e. supporting national actors to take the lead in, and to sustain, conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes. PDAs help develop and strengthen I4P, commonly, around several areas, including: early-warning; election-related violence prevention; conflict management; social cohesion and reconciliation; and by targeting specific conflict drivers and/or key stakeholder individuals or groups, to encourage and/or support their peace efforts.

Regardless of the specific activity or area in which a PDA engages, PDA efforts are designed to build national capacities to build peace and prevent conflict. Depending on context, this may involve supporting institutions, community stakeholders, political actors, or civil society organizations. Many of the examples cited in this Practice Note and the accompanying Case Studies highlight the different ways PDAs have been able to engage with a range of national stakeholders in this regard.

Understanding what drives promising practice requires attention to the risks and challenges that accompany a PDA's role and how the operating environments affects the UNCT as a whole. These include:

- Political instability and/or an unstable security context, which can limit the PDA's ability to move beyond the capital city in order to understand the broader conflict/ political dynamics;
- Not having sufficient political will, openness or support of national actors. It is important to note

that the level of support may vary at different levels of society and amongst different actors;

- Deteriorating or challenging relationships, particularly in the context of supporting change that some national actors may not support;
- Limited entry-points within the UN system for the PDA to engage in the development of programming or provide other types of support;
- Managing expectations and the difficulties of showing results in short time frames; balancing the relatively short-term nature of a PDA's deployment with the need to embed certain capacities within the UNCT and amongst national stakeholders to support a measure of sustainability can be particularly challenging; and,
- Attracting PDAs and developing UN staff with the appropriate mix of substantive and process skills required - both in-country and at Headquarters.

The context-specific nature of the demands placed on a PDA mean that there is no blueprint that creates a 'successful' PDA. What works in one context may result in failure in another context. However, in reflecting on almost a decade of PDA deployments, and in particular on the exponential growth seen in PDA deployments in the last few years, there is growing evidence across a wide range of cases that point to a number of issues and strategies driving the emergence of promising practice. These factors can provide useful insights for current and future PDAs and for other conflict prevention specialists concerning possible 'tricks of the trade' to keep in mind when undertaking similar assignments. The following factors are discussed in the Note:

### STRATEGIC FACTORS:

- Building relationships, partnerships, and trust, and identifying entry-points;
- Gathering robust information and conflict analysis and involving as wide an array of



stakeholders as possible in the development and interpretation of that information and analysis;

- Drawing on that analysis to develop strategies and frameworks for coordinated, coherent action;
- Prioritising the development of national capacities across all areas;
- Informing the UN's engagement with national stakeholders and programming with a rich understanding of contextual factors.

### **OPERATING ENVIRONMENT FACTORS:**

- Government support and openness regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding-related work;
- Openness and support of a PDA role within the UN (both at UNCT-level and at HQ);

- Ensuring PDAs possess the appropriate skill-set and are encouraged to learn new skills;
- Sufficient funding to sustain PDA posts; and,
- Ability to engage with a broad range of stakeholders – across geographical and social, political, and economic spheres of the country.

There are various efforts underway within and through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme to address the challenges that PDAs face and to strengthen improved practice. By spotlighting promising practices and the factors that drive them, this Practice Note contributes to on-going efforts to strengthen clarity and consensus around PDA roles and comparative advantages, to support national partners in preventing conflict and building resilient and peaceful societies.

# 1.0 BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Over the last two decades, awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the UN in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has grown exponentially, coupled with an understanding of the need for integrated “One UN” approaches to address the evermore complex and unpredictable challenges in conflict-affected, fragile states and development contexts. PDAs are a growing cadre of UN staff deployed at the field-level to strategically guide the UN in fostering the “One UN” approach, with a view to ultimately support and develop national capacities in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Evolving in a manner largely independent of, and separate from, Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions, the growing number of PDAs reflects increasing recognition of the convergence of politics, conflict, and development.

As a key instrument of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme, PDAs are typically deployed in areas where there is no UN Security Council mandate. This is largely due to the Joint Programme’s focus on upstream conflict prevention, although the lines between post-conflict contexts and those where a PDA has been traditionally deployed are increasingly blurred. However, PDAs are shortly due to be deployed in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, with PDA capacity explicitly referred to in relevant Security Council Resolutions in both Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone. Nearly a decade since the programme began, there are now approximately 25 to 30 PDAs deployed worldwide, in addition to a number of other conflict prevention specialists supported by UNDP/BCPR, DPA, and/or Country Offices. While the specific role of a PDA depends on the country context and UN configuration in-country, there are three broad areas of work that characterise the post:

- Provision of political and conflict analysis;

- Connection of this analysis to specific conflict prevention programming; and,
- Catalysing and facilitating strategic conflict prevention initiatives.

There is broad agreement and growing recognition within the system of the “added-value” of PDAs in these three general goal areas, and a recognition that PDAs are indeed producing tangible results.

At the field level the demand for PDAs continues to grow, with RCs increasingly requesting the presence of PDAs to support the work of Country Offices in recognition of the capacity gaps in crisis and post-crisis settings, including politically complex situations. The environment for conflict prevention in development settings is also growing, with governments increasingly requesting this type of support.

As demands for PDAs grow, so does the need to document and disseminate their experiences and lessons learned. This Practice Note aims to respond to this need: it seeks to capture and document some of the growing promising practices, and, therefore, to support the accumulation of institutional knowledge, experience and practice, and to share this with the wider peace and development advisor community to further catalyse the coherence, effectiveness and innovation of UN efforts to support national processes and actors in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This Practice Note greatly benefited from a wide range of sources and interviews with PDAs – both current PDAs and those who have moved onto other positions. Case studies drew upon their reports, evaluations and analysis, and interviews with Headquarter staff.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Many of the PDAs and former PDAs supported the research process, for which we are grateful. At Headquarters, Alex Shoebridge, Nirina Kiplagat, and Anne Kahl provided invaluable inputs and advice.

## 2.0 THE PDAS: EVOLUTION AND OPERATIONS

The Joint UNDP-DPA Programme that deploys PDAs was launched in 2004, though a number of PDAs and PDA-like specialists were deployed in similar roles prior to 2004 in a variety of countries, including: Guyana, Zimbabwe, and Ghana. Since 2009, the number of PDAs has doubled, with almost thirty PDAs currently deployed worldwide. The partnership brings together the political and developmental arms of the UN to strengthen national capacity for dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation. The programme is executed by UNDP on behalf of UNDP and DPA. It provides seed funding to emerging and on-going conflict prevention initiatives and enhances the ability of both UNDP and DPA to deliver on their respective mandates.

Since 2004, support from these initiatives have contributed to: violence-free elections or referenda; the resolution of specific conflicts or deadlocks; the sustaining of viable platforms for dialogue and conflict resolution; and, the more general reduction of insecurity in a wide variety of contexts. In the context of these dynamics, the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme has often been instrumental; the programme brings together technical experts, and desk officers from regional divisions and bureaux of both DPA and UNDP, as well as relevant field-based colleagues, to provide analytical, technical, and financial assistance for such initiatives as well as to provide direct support to the PDA's work in-country.<sup>3</sup>

While the roles of PDAs vary country to country, and the weight broadly given to analysis versus strategy and programming is dependent upon situational demands, it is agreed that the bulk of

time should be devoted to working with the RC to deliver specific conflict prevention results. In support of the "One UN" approach, it is expected that the PDA will spend approximately 20% of his/her time serving the UNCT. As such, the RCs are meant to encourage PDA participation in UNCT meetings to share analysis that can inform UNCT programming and strategy, and PDAs are meant to assist the UNCT with overall conflict analysis, and with applying conflict-sensitive practice to the development of UNDAFs. It is also envisaged that a PDA is accompanied by the deployment of an appropriately qualified national officer who will "understudy" the PDA with a view to taking over these responsibilities with time.<sup>4</sup> This also helps ensure that the PDA team possesses relevant language skills and a deep understanding of the political and development context that can complement the PDA's position as an internationally recruited 'outsider'. Augmenting this capacity through partnering with UN Volunteers (UNVs), the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme, or secondments have also been implemented, although opportunities to partner more systematically in this regard should be explored.

The Joint UNDP-DPA Programme supports PDAs in numerous ways, including: through the provision of induction programmes for PDAs; by linking PDAs to available resources and support across the UN system; and, by providing support on thematic issues identified by PDAs and RCs in areas of importance to the UNs work in conflict prevention. Support to PDAs is constantly evolving based on the needs identified by PDAs and associated DPA, UNDP, and PBSO counterparts.

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Programme, 'Report of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention: 2010-2012', 2013.

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Programme, 'Standard Operating Procedures for Accessing and Requesting Support from the UNDP-DPA Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention', March 2013, p.3.

Prioritization of requests for the deployment of PDAs through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme is based on the following set of criteria:

1. Analysis of potential for heightened societal tensions or violent conflict;
2. Analysis of the comparative advantages and added-value of Joint UNDP-DPA Programme's conflict prevention initiatives, as well as the availability of entry-points, or the potential for developing them;
3. Ability of the RC to innovate and undertake strategic initiatives for prevention;
4. Ability of UNDP/UNCT to co-fund interventions.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to agreeing to a given PDA post, a joint UNDP-DPA mission is usually<sup>6</sup> carried out to review and agree on the modalities with the RC/UNCT, and to examine the national context, and to explore the strategic opportunities and entry-points that programme support could help advance, as well as the specific roles of a PDA if deemed appropriate.

Of the 35+/- PDAs currently deployed, close to half are in Africa, followed by PDAs in Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific, and in the Arab states. Given the prevention mandate, they are generally located in countries where there is a threat of violence. Given the recognition of the propensity for conflict to recur, there is a common understanding that PDAs may often also be needed in post-conflict peacebuilding contexts. PDAs have been deployed to Burundi, Timor-Leste, and Sierra Leone following the respective missions' withdrawal. While this has ramifications for the types of work the PDAs will likely undertake, it also has implications at a more systemic level in terms of how the Joint UNDP-

DPA Programme relates to other parts of the UN's conflict prevention architecture (such as the PBF, PBSO and the PBC), as well as Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions in the context of on-going transitions.

There are a range of PDA "types", or conflict prevention specialists, deployed unilaterally by UNDP that fall outside of the purview of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme. This can be for a variety of reasons, as they may be aligned with a particular UNDP programme or they may work in countries that are either UNDP priority countries and/or mission settings. While they are considered to be separate from those PDAs that form part of the Joint Programme, many of them undertake similar types of roles, although they tend to focus more on programmatic leadership and are embedded in the UNDP Country Offices, not the RC's office. They also fall outside of the remit of the standard reporting lines of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme.

Numerous institutional and strategic challenges surrounding the smooth functioning and desired impact of PDAs have arisen over the years, notably: where they are deployed; how they are selected; the precise nature of their functions; the balance of how they spend their time; and, the conduciveness of the operating environment for their work. These issues are being systematically explored through the steadfast, on-going efforts of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme. Notably, a number of high-level workshops with senior staff and RCs from Headquarters and Country Offices took place under the rubric of "enhancing support to RCs and UNCTs in complex political situations" and have helped to address the wider contextual challenges, particularly in terms of building a conducive and collaborative environment amongst UN partners for conflict prevention and peacebuilding work in non-peacekeeping mission contexts.

The work of PDAs, and the related institutional and contextual obstacles, has been a prominent discussion in these meetings. Retreats specifically for PDAs have also been held in Kenya (2007), Panama (2008), Sweden (2010), and Morocco (2013).

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<sup>5</sup> Joint Programme, SOPs, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Joint missions may not be necessary if a prior UNDP/BCPR or DPA mission had recently been completed and provides sufficient information to duly inform the decision-making of the Technical Committee. Joint Programme, SOPs, p.1.

Partly in response to recommendations made on the occasions listed above, the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme has sought to standardise a number of aspects pertaining to the deployment, recruitment, and assessment of PDAs, as well as seeking to make reporting lines to DPA and UNDP more effective.

While these efforts have sought to bring some uniformity to the deployment and management of PDAs, it is important to note that the duties and responsibilities required of the position are largely determined by the country context.

## 3.0 EMERGING AREAS OF PROMISING PRACTICE

As highlighted in section 2.0, it is generally understood that the bulk of a PDA's work revolves around two broad and interlinked activities: analysis – in particular political analysis, and support to the design and development of appropriate policies, strategies and programming. Given the UN's commitment to nationally-led and owned processes, a PDA's orientation is often focused on providing technical and analytical support to national partners, particularly in the area of mediation, and in promoting linkages between high-level politics and grassroots work.

The following sections set out the broad areas of PDA engagement where there are emerging promising practices. The analysis builds upon and endeavours to integrate findings from previous

analyses of PDAs,<sup>7</sup> while drawing upon consultations with PDAs and UN staff at HQ engaging with the work of the PDAs.

It must be underscored that these areas of promising practice manifest differently in different contexts, and are - in most cases - working in tandem or provide building blocks for overarching integrated strategies designed to maximise positive peacebuilding and conflict prevention results.

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<sup>7</sup> An influential 2010 analysis of PDA work, for example, suggested that improved effectiveness would evolve through more integrated conflict prevention strategies at country level, rooted in stronger shared conflict analysis and theories of change, with attention to addressing *structural* issues (and not simply *crisis* issues). Stronger tools, clarified concepts and frameworks with commitments to mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity to guide decision-making, as well as M&E practices were also pointed to. Source: 'Assessment of BCPR Supported Conflict Prevention Initiatives', CDA, March 2010. More recently, an April 2013 report of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme suggested four areas of impact of the PDAs. These pertain to their ability to: 1) Address immediate triggers and prevent violence; 2) Support national stakeholders to implement peaceful elections; 3) Build national and local capacity for dialogue and conflict resolution; 4) Strategically position the UN and increasing the effectiveness of UNCT programming. 'Joint Programme', Report, 2013.

# 3.1 POLITICAL AND CONFLICT ANALYSIS

One of the key roles of a PDA is analysis i.e. practical analysis that can be used to inform conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategy and programming by the UN system as a whole. Bearing in mind the various types of analysis used in the UN system, including political, context, conflict, and risk analysis - to name a few - PDAs broadly tend to employ the following approaches:<sup>8</sup>

- Providing political and conflict analysis to inform the UNs positioning both in-country and at Headquarters;
- Undertaking or facilitating conflict analysis or targeted 'hot spot' analysis to support the identification of entry-points for programming, planning and strategy across the UNCT;
- Supporting participatory or stakeholder-led conflict and context analysis with the aim of building consensus around the drivers of conflict and appropriate responses. This often involves developing a contextual understanding of the types of dialogue processes and frameworks required to address the divisive issues. This can be particularly valuable in divided societies, where strategic choices and responses need to be made premised upon a nationally-owned understanding of what drives conflict.

Often understated, the PDAs play critical roles in undertaking conflict analyses as an integral part of their overarching role in supporting the development of national capacities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In this sense, PDAs in a wide variety of national contexts have worked in innovative ways and at varying levels to catalyse greater national

efforts. They have also worked to bring together national and international stakeholders to share and conduct analysis in order to better serve more coherent and coordinated responses overall. This may be undertaken as an overarching analysis of what is driving conflict in-country, as was done in Kenya prior to the development of integrated frameworks and joint programmes (see Kenya example, 3.2); or, it may be more targeted, addressing particular 'hot spots' or challenges, as was the case with Georgia (illustrated below). In Ghana, for example, the PDA also conducted a strategic, participatory 'hot spot' analysis around the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis, which shaped conflict prevention responses that helped support the conduct of peaceful elections. The identified priorities were supported by UNDP – notably conflict management institutions and processes (see 3.3.3, Infrastructures for Peace) – that served both in the short- and long-term to facilitate peaceful management of disputes in the region (discussed further in Part II, 1.0).

## TEXT BOX ONE - GHANA: STRATEGIC HOT SPOT ANALYSIS TO PREVENT ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

'Hot spot' analysis conducted by the PDA in Ghana in 2004 helped to identify the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis<sup>9</sup> as the biggest threat to the forthcoming national elections. The analysis helped to identify measures that supported the prevention of violence in the election that followed. Through stakeholder consultations in the Dagbon region involving chiefs, government representatives, and civil society, the PDA elicited perspectives on the causes of conflict, the potential for escalation (particularly during the elections), and options for peaceful resolution. This provided a deep analysis of the conflict dynamics, the security challenges – i.e. lack of trust of security agencies by some communities, and plausible entry-points for both the UN and the government to support peaceful responses. Priorities identified were supported by UNDP – notably conflict management institutions and processes (see 3.3.3, Infrastructures for Peace) – that served both in the short- and long-term to facilitate peaceful management of disputes in the region (discussed further in Part II, 1.0).

<sup>8</sup> While the first two conflict analysis functions related to the UN are often highlighted in documents pertaining to the PDA functions, the third area is clearly of equal importance given the key role of PDAs in building national capacities for conflict prevention.

<sup>9</sup> The Dagbon conflict is part of a long running dispute over succession to the Dagomba throne and a dominant feature of the security profile of Northern Ghana.

## TEXT BOX TWO - GEORGIA: FACILITATING A COMMON POLITICAL LEVEL CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Georgia still faces many challenges related to sustainable peace and development, resulting in large part from the two unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The international community's engagement has often been fragmented, lacking a shared, comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics. To address this, in 2011 the RC's office initiated a participatory context analysis process with ambassadors and international organizations present in Georgia. The PDA supported the RC's skilful convening of the parties and helped frame the difficult issues on the table, while an external consultant formally facilitated to ensure a participant owned process and result. After six months, the group conducted a common analysis of the drivers and structural sources of conflicts and a framework for collective action emerged. The framework was based on a shared vision of how to manage relationships with the parties more effectively.

This was the first time that international actors had engaged substantively on the issues, and several valuable initiatives spun off, including a Joint Consultative Forum chaired by the PDA to address gaps identified in the analysis. The process also reinforced the RC's convening function and the ability to link critical political, security and development concerns to forge a more integrated strategic agenda for UN support both at national levels, and on geopolitical issues within the region. The RC coordinated closely with the UN co-Chair of the Geneva Discussions,<sup>10</sup> which has strengthened the UN's ability to support a structured and deeply informed dialogue and related action at both levels on sensitive issues. This approach helped to ensure greater protection for UNDP and its partners working in Abkhazia, including by leveraging political support among international partners to advocate with relevant authorities with a view to maintaining access to the conflict regions and continuing to deliver assistance to conflict affected communities.

## INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS IN ANALYSIS

Emerging trends in PDA analysis reflect growing global awareness around the need to centrally engage society in analysis, and to ensure action flows directly from this analysis. The use of public surveys to support the development of more publically-owned analysis and decision-making around priorities is illustrative of this awareness. There is wide agreement that better use should be made of the results of public opinion surveys and research, which can help to identify risks and provide a basis for scenario-planning<sup>11</sup> (see Cyprus case, 3.3.1).

The demand for regional conflict and peace analysis is also rising in light of the propensity for conflict drivers to cross borders. PDAs themselves have been particularly proactive vis-a-vis this need; the PDAs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, for example, have analysed the drivers of emerging inter-state conflict in the Fergana valley of Central Asia, which has informed cross-border programming. The Sahel is another region that is illustrative of situations where conflict drivers cross borders, and strategic responses can only be effective if tackled in a regional manner.

Other innovations include the use of analysis processes to directly inform current national political decision-making processes. In Bolivia, for example, the Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios (PAPEP) project - being used by a "PDA type" located in UNDP's field governance team - is a high-level knowledge network for strategic political analysis and advice. PAPEP's work involves the production

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the RC has coordinated closely with the UN co-Chair of the Geneva Discussions, which is co-chaired by the UN, OSCE, and EU and seeks to bring international stakeholders together to address the problems of the 2008 conflict in Georgia, and to identify ways to improve security and humanitarian conditions. This has strengthened the UN's ability to support a structured and deeply informed dialogue and related action at both levels on sensitive issues. This approach also ensured greater protection for UNDP and its partners working in Abkhazia, including by leveraging political support among international partners to advocate with relevant authorities with a view to maintaining access to the conflict regions and continuing to deliver assistance to conflict-affected communities.

<sup>11</sup> Joint Programme, 'Enhancing Support to RCs and UNCTs in Complex Political Situations: Debrief on Montreux II', June 2014



of applied research and analysis, and prospective political scenarios to foster dialogue and consensus-building for decision-making on strategic issues in national development processes. The PAPEP approach has inspired similar tools in other countries, including the Political Analysis and Emerging Scenarios initiative (PAESi) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Launched in October 2012 after a series of consultations with PAPEP, PAESi aims to strengthen national capacities to undertake political analysis for mid-term development planning, and to generate prospective political scenarios that development actors – including national institutions and international partners – can respond to.<sup>12</sup> As stakeholders participate in defining, shaping and then interpreting the analysis, opportunities are created to discuss potentially divisive issues, and to build relationships. The very act of analysis thereby becomes an opportunity for peacebuilding.

Conflict analysis as a practice has evolved over the past decade and is now generally accepted within the international system (and within the UN in particular) as the foundation for effective conflict prevention programming. As such, the UN system as a whole is working to improve its capacities for analysis and cross-agency coordination, and a number of initiatives are underway in this regard. There is also agreement on the need to have a common methodology for identifying and integrating political, economic and social analysis in a manner that highlights risks for development, and entry-points for addressing these risks. Moreover, there is an increasing appreciation of the comparative advantages of various approaches to understanding and analysing a particular context, whether it is from a human rights, political economy, gender, or conflict-related standpoint. By virtue of

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12 PAESi's three-staged methodology involves: 1) Defining and establishing the analytical framework by bringing national policy practitioners and international advisors and academics together to identify key trends, challenges, and emerging opportunities for the country's development; 2) Research and data collection, which combines both primary and secondary data, drawn from subject-matter experts on key issues facing the country, public opinion polls, as well as focus interviews with key individuals; 3) Examination and verification of research findings by national political, social, and economic stakeholders, involving a scenario-building exercise.

their work with agencies in the UNCT, PDAs often operate at the nexus of these different approaches.

An agency-neutral version of UNDP's Conflict Related Development Analysis (CDA) has been finalised and will be adopted by the UN Development Group (UNDG) in late 2015. Presented in modular format, it offers tools for conflict analysis, with guidance for analysing the strategic positioning of the UNCT, and how to engage with political processes and programme design that respond to the analysis of the conflict dynamics. The CDA can also be used with national stakeholders to support a participatory engagement to enhance their understanding of the situation and context, and to build consensus on the approaches to address conflict drivers. The CDA strengthens the effectiveness of the UN's development engagements by helping to mainstream conflict-sensitivity while also informing programmatic and other engagements pertaining conflict prevention and peacebuilding specifically.

Political analysis and reporting by PDAs has been streamlined, with bi-monthly reports now regularly submitted to both UNDP and DPA alongside PDA annual work plans. This regular reporting also provides the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme with the ability to raise awareness about the activities and impacts of PDAs on the ground, and to ensure timely and coherent streams of support from Headquarters. More emphasis is also being placed upon exit reports and systematic handover processes for RCs and PDAs, to ensure more effective sharing of experiences, lessons and ideas, as well as policy and programming continuity.<sup>13</sup> Sharing of bi-monthly reports amongst PDAs in the same geographical region is also increasingly practised, offering another opportunity for information and analysis-sharing while also creating linkages between PDAs to informally share experiences, good practices, and lessons learned. In addition to the submission of regular reports, the collaborative development of PDA work plans allows for DPA and UNDP (and PBSO) support to be aligned to the country-level priorities and initiatives.

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13 Montreux II, 2<sup>nd</sup> Progress Report Final, DATE

## 3.2 CONFLICT PREVENTION STRATEGY AND PROGRAMMING

At the core of the PDA role is the ability to connect political and conflict analysis with strategy and programming. PDAs support the analysis, design and planning of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programming and strategy across UNCTs, and work with government and other international and national stakeholders to do the same. This often involves building skills, entry-points and buy-in for conflict-sensitive approaches; more specifically, this means ensuring that conflict prevention and peacebuilding concerns are integrated into new and existing development planning, policy and programme frameworks. At the level of the UNCT or UNDP Country Office, this can enable the PDA to help break the silos that often exist around sectorial work and, therefore, to support integration and coordination. This fosters greater engagement and coherence in strategy across the political and development sides of the UN – a historic obstacle to the realisation of the “One UN” reality.

When linked to the RC’s office and supervised by the RC, the PDAs support the work of the wider UNCT, although they are used in different ways in different contexts. Across all deployments, the vast majority of PDAs reside within the RC Office. While a PDA’s natural affiliation may lie with UNDP’s conflict prevention or governance programming, PDAs are expected to bring the system together to jointly assess conflict-related issues and to discuss the implications of these issues for the UNs activities and engagements in-country (see 3.1). Building upon or complementing existing UN planning and strategy processes such as the UNDAF, and national processes such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the PDAs help:

- Facilitate processes to develop joint strategies and programmes, ideally through highly participatory processes;
- Support conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming in development programming, and;
- Support the design of specific conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming and the development of appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems.

Strategies and programmes are often aimed at both addressing immediate triggers and deeper drivers of violence, preventing conflict, and building national and local capacities for dialogue and conflict resolution (Section 3.3 highlights common thematic areas of focus). Often, joint strategic frameworks and programmes are developed to maximise resources and impact (see the case of Kenya below).

Due to the very nature and flexibility of PDA roles – and in light of the fact that they have access to a range of different stakeholders in-country (and often in the region) – at times they may have access to unique information and analysis, and awareness of strategic entry-points that have the potential to catalyse transformative change and proliferate positive impacts for preventing and transforming conflict, and building resilient, peaceful societies. They are thus well-placed to support the development, humanitarian and political sides of the UN to foster strategies and programming that are conflict- and peace-sensitive. They can also be influential in terms of facilitating and developing strategic, integrative processes around politically-sensitive issues, as illustrated by the Sri Lanka case below.

### TEXT BOX THREE - KENYA: CREATING UNIFIED FRAMEWORKS FOR PROGRAMMING AND STRATEGY

In Kenya, the PDA spearheaded efforts to foster integration and coordination of programming around conflict prevention and peacebuilding amongst both national and international partners. In order to guide the UN engagement with Government, the PDA led the development of an overarching framework that focused on community security and social cohesion – a first of its kind in a UNCT. The framework complemented the UNDAF, with a particular focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding issues. A technical committee, with members of the UNCT and Government, was established and mandated to identify priority areas and to: i)

ensure synergies with the UNDAF; ii) develop common programming; iii) establish an effective monitoring and evaluation framework. A similar trajectory was then followed with Government.

Working with the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, a concept note which established coordination arrangements between the UN and the Government on peacebuilding and conflict prevention was developed. As part of this overall process, trainings in conflict-sensitivity were conducted for both UN programme and operational staff, and for Government planning officers in all regions of Kenya. A

joint programme with UNDP and Government followed, focused on strengthening Kenya's infrastructure for peace (see section 3.3.3). A Programme Executive Group was developed to oversee the programme and to ensure results. It was jointly chaired by the Government and involved implementing partners and non-implementing partners across Government and civil society, as well as donor representatives. The mechanism helped to improve information-sharing, joint planning and implementation, and is considered a best practice in UNDP and among donors as a result of the way it improved collective action and manifested clear results.

### TEXT BOX FOUR - CYPRUS: SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL COHESION EFFORTS

In Cyprus, the PDA's work in support of both the UN's Good Offices and the UNDP- Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT) programme is one example where 'Track II' activities have facilitated crucial inter-communal engagement in the peace process (see section 3.3.1). In light of an on-going political stalemate, the PDA in Cyprus has supported on-going community-level activities

critical to building social cohesion from the bottom up. This involved bringing UNDP-ACT's local partners from both the Turkish and the Greek Cypriot communities together to enhance the role of civil society in the wider reconciliation process. This process is supportive of the official negotiations, but goes further by providing space for communities to map a common vision for a future

Cyprus. Working with partners, the PDA's activities have focused on supporting public awareness and engagement in community-level reconciliation efforts, on building partnerships between key civil society actors and decision-makers to support policy and action on reconciliation, and on supporting a strong vibrant network of actors advocating for reconciliation.

## TEXT BOX FIVE - SRI LANKA: DEVELOPING STRATEGIC ENTRY-POINTS IN HIGHLY POLITICISED ENVIRONMENTS

At the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka about 11,000 individuals alleged by the Government of Sri Lanka to be members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were separated from the rest of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in holding centres without any access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or UN protection agencies. The Government requested the support of the UNCT, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in the relief and rehabilitation of these individuals. Given the sensitivity of this case, the UNCT agreed to base any support on a carefully negotiated plan with the Government that would allow for full access to the detainees. The PDA was nominated to head a Disarmament

Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Inter-agency Working Group to coordinate the response.

The response began with a rapid stocktaking exercise to determine precisely what individual agencies had already committed to DDR processes country-wide, and was followed by the development of two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) – one on ‘release and return’ and the other on reintegration. Weekly meetings were held with the Minister of Social Welfare and the RC, cultivating in the Government’s acceptance and endorsement for the use of the SOPs. An important action in the SOP on release and return was the full identification and establishment of a database - despite

Government reluctance - for all the “separates” prior to their release. IOM led the development of database, which provided the UN with a deeper understanding of who was in the centres, including their physical condition, gender, and community of origin. The PDA also led helped coordinate the UN Agencies to support the Government to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for the Reintegration of Former Combatants in Sri Lanka. The PDA was also involved in mediating tensions amongst UN agencies about whether and how the UN should be involved in the DDR process. Key to the success of the process was ensuring transparency as a means of building and maintaining trust, in particular with Government partners

PDA's are not meant to participate in programme implementation; while in early years of the programme this was more common, there is increasing recognition that PDA's can add most value by providing strategic guidance, regular and robust analysis, and technical support to the UN's programming and political engagements in-country. That said, at times, PDA's can implement specific and discreet conflict prevention initiatives and programmatic activities that are deemed too

politically sensitive to be conducted via regular UNCT programming (see the Sri Lanka case above). Involvement in programming at a technical and strategic level can also grant the PDA access to key stakeholders that reinforce the PDA's ability to develop sound analysis and, in turn, help to inform entry-points for UN programming and political engagement in-country.

Joint programming on peacebuilding within the

UN system in many country contexts has increased following the development of the PBF, now in operation for over seven years. PDAs often play strategic roles in the development of these joint programmes, based on shared conflict analysis. The applicability of such analysis to concepts such as human security and democratic governance have also led to opportunities for PDAs to support UNCT proposals to both the Human Security and Democratic Governance Trust Funds.

## CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY MAINSTREAMING

The PDAs have been at the heart of a growing demand for conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming in programmes across the UN system, epitomising a similar trend across the international system. RCs and UNCTs have also increasingly called for more training in this area, and a greater systemisation of tools and resources to support their work.<sup>14</sup> The UN is responding, building its awareness and expanding its toolbox in this area, with PDAs seen to be a key mechanism for rolling out conflict-sensitivity training and practice.

In addition to the CDA (see section 3.1), which facilitates an understanding of how to embed strategic analysis into programming, a Task Team on Conflict Prevention<sup>15</sup> is developing an online, self-paced training course on conflict-sensitivity and conflict-sensitive programming. The online course will offer UN staff the opportunity to acquire deeper understanding, practical knowledge, and hands-on skills to use conflict-sensitive approaches in humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and security work, among others, within the UN system and with our partner organisations.

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<sup>14</sup> PDA retreats and Montreux meetings have consistently identified this issue. As noted in the Montreux II recommendations, “More rapidly deployable analytical expertise is needed as part of existing HQ rosters in order to assist with risk mapping and conflict analyses in the context of UNDAF processes, development of peace-building priority plans, and the onset of potentially violent tensions.”

<sup>15</sup> The Task Team is comprised of DOCO, DPA, OCHA, PBSO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNSSC, and UN Women.

Despite progress in tool development, there remains a need for greater consensus around the use of design, monitoring and evaluation tools for peacebuilding and conflict prevention programming. The lack of a common UN approach in this area negatively impacts the ability of PDAs to support programme design.

Ideally, conflict analysis is undertaken jointly with government and other stakeholders, feeding into the identification of strategies and programming, and the infusion of conflict- and peace-sensitivity into national planning processes such as the PRSP. Conflict analysis, however, is a sensitive process for many governments and their willingness to participate in such processes depends on political and security factors often beyond the influence of either the PDA or the wider UN system. As the case studies throughout this Practice Note illustrate, however, government engagement in conflict analysis does occur in a myriad of ways, and this trend is set to continue. Often this begins with discreet engagements that create opportunities for more in-depth discussions, which – in turn – create space to identify challenges and potential solutions, often with the participation of a wide range of other stakeholders.

The following innovative example from Ecuador, for example, illustrates how training programmes offer a means to lay the foundations for conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding engagements. Training workshops can offer a “safe space” for bringing national stakeholders together in new ways, inviting a level of openness to engage in collective reflection that can lead to innovation and/or at least a willingness to try new approaches. The Kyrgyzstan case that follows demonstrates an example where the Government took ownership of integrating conflict-sensitive review practices in the development and approval of legislature.

## TEXT BOX SIX - ECUADOR: TRAINING AS AN ENTRY-POINT FOR STRATEGY AND PROGRAMMING

The PDA in Ecuador has conducted several trainings of Government officials that have served as entry-points for developing initiatives to address actual conflicts and, in some cases, as platforms to begin negotiating sensitive issues. Training courses on conflict prevention and conflict transformation have provided space to undertake analysis of specific conflicts and to generate a better understanding of the conflict parties' positions, interests, and needs as well as the underlying causes of the conflict, and possible transformative approaches to address them. Specific thematic conflict issues been given particular

attention, including those pertaining to indigenous rights, land issues, illegal trade of small arms, citizen security, and protection issues.

The Vice-Ministry of Interior has sought to replicate these training programmes for local staff. Training material on conflict prevention and transformation has also been included in the curricula for capacity-building of the Ministry's field staff. Upon the request of government, the PDA has further sought to carry out similar processes on some of the most sensitive conflict issues in the country. For example, following violent conflict in an oil-rich area in

the Amazonia Rainforest between the indigenous Huaorani and Taromenane, a training programme involving a participatory conflict analysis was conducted in this forest-protected area, with Police, Military and Ministries staff, including indigenous people from the Huoarani ethnic group.<sup>16</sup> This produced a strategy for conflict transformation that will be discussed in an ad-hoc commission created by the President to address the conflict, comprising the Minister of Justice, Minister of Politics, and recognized members of civil society.

## TEXT BOX SEVEN - KYRGYZSTAN: FACILITATING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE LAW-MAKING

In Kyrgyzstan, the UN has sought to infuse conflict-sensitivity across its UNDAF and programming, and to support the Government to do the same. As part of these efforts, and in response to rising social tensions (caused by the collapse of Bakiev government in April 2010 and violent ethnic clashes two months later), the PDA, with UNDP support, assisted the Government of Kyrgyzstan to develop a methodology for ensuring that laws passed by its young parliament do not create or exacerbate underlying social and political tensions. After a global search produced no compelling methodology to learn from, a team of experts and stakeholders (including

MPs, Government officials, legal experts, and experts in conflict prevention and resolution) were gathered to develop, test, and pilot the methodology.<sup>17</sup> The methodology was applied to twenty-nine draft laws under consideration by Parliament. They found nearly half (14 of the 29) to be insensitive to conflict and recommended revisions. With Kyrgyzstan still in need of conflict-sensitive laws and policies, the PDA (and the UNCT in general) continues to work for a universal application of the methodology to all new laws passed by the Kyrgyzstan Parliament.

Examples of mainstreaming conflict analysis across strategic frameworks

and programmes at a national level with government partners remain limited. This likely has much to do with the challenge of creating buy-in from existing sectors, departments and/or ministries and other organizing structures for planning around thematic areas. Adopting a conflict-sensitive approach requires a change in thinking about the core problems and challenges in a particular sector, and a distinct methodology in terms of design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and/or strategy, with requisite funding and programme implementation implications. This asks a lot in a setting where all actors are under pressure to produce results.

In most cases to date, UNDAFs and PRSPs adopt a stand-alone output or pillar to deal with issues related to conflict prevention or peacebuilding concerns, or they may link it to another sector, such as governance or security. PDAs can play an important advocacy role in this regard. In the case of Niger, for example, where governance deficiencies are considered a key root cause of conflict, the UNCT established an output combining governance, peace and security.

Nepal, with PDA 'type' support is also considered to be a good example of conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming within UN programming. Through the RC's office, conflict-sensitivity strongly influenced the country analysis for the UNDAF 2013-2017, and it is a guiding principle for the five-year plan. This involves RC/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) Field Coordination Offices undertaking regular regional and national context analyses and district profiling; furthermore, the RC/HC's office is supporting the mainstreaming of conflict-sensitivity into the principles, selection criteria and reporting requirements for all future programmes funded through the UN Peace Fund in Nepal.

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16 The Huoarani live in voluntary isolation in the forest while several of their members work within the Ministry of Justice.

17 It was approved by MPs and other participants in an international conference on the role of parliament in conflict prevention and peacebuilding held in early November 2012.

## 3.3 CATALYSING AND FACILITATING CONFLICT PREVENTION INITIATIVES

PDA play an important role in catalysing and facilitating the development of conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives that respond to the needs of the particular contexts they work in. As highlighted above, these often - and ideally - stem out of robust analysis and strategic conceptual and programming frameworks. While the precise role of a PDA may change in countries that have seen a number of PDA deployments over a period of time, PDAs are expected to sustain the work undertaken by previous PDAs while also supporting the creation of new entry-points. A core intention is always to work alongside national actors, and to support the development of their capacities to undertake and sustain these initiatives, in line with UN principles and standards and often necessitating cooperation with the political and security elements of the system. These engagements also have to be carefully premised on the analysis developed by the PDA (in collaboration with others) and upon consideration of the political sensitivities and potential added-value of the UN engaging in such support.

The following three areas – 3.3.1 dialogue and mediation support, 3.3.2 reconciliation and social cohesion, and 3.3.3 infrastructures for peace – are illustrative but not comprehensive. At the same time, they increasingly appear in a wide range of country settings where PDAs are deployed as core building blocks of UN support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. All three focus on supporting the development of skills, capacities and resources of national stakeholders to address potential triggers and drivers of conflict, and to systematically build structures and processes to investigate and transform the root causes of conflict. The processes are inter-linked and mutually supportive.

### 3.3.1 DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION SUPPORT

PDAs support dialogue and mediation efforts in many if not all countries in which they are located. They work with national and local stakeholders to develop a common understanding of problems and to collaborate on resolving them. These dialogue processes take place at national or sub-national levels, bringing together government and civil society actors, including key stakeholder groups such as youth, traditional leaders and women, and faith-based organizations, as appropriate. They often begin even before conflict escalates, with the aim of supporting national actors to find consensus-based solutions, transform conflict dynamics, and ultimately prevent the risk of violent conflict from emerging or recurring. Attached to the RC's office, PDAs benefit from the perceived neutrality of the UN (and UNDP in particular), and the convening power that it has with stakeholders at all levels of society, as well as national actors. PDAs are often able to create space for effective civil society engagement in these processes. They often build local capacities to be able to manage difficult conversations and to facilitate social exchanges that enable a society to effectively deal with the challenges it faces.<sup>18</sup>

As the cases in this section illustrate, support for dialogue and mediation activities occurs at multiple levels, often in tandem and/or sequentially, as entry-points are developed, new actors and stakeholder groups engaged, and processes are deepened and broadened over time. The cases also illustrate the extent to which the UN is engaged at different levels, and the important role that PDAs can play in fostering collaborative, multi-sectorial and multi-track levels of engagement.

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Development Programme, 'Bureau For Crisis Prevention And Recovery (BCPR), Bureau Strategy, 2007-2011', January 2007.



## TEXT BOX EIGHT - FIJI: FACILITATING A NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Roundtable on Peace and Development in Fiji is a multi-stakeholder social dialogue process that, since 2009, has brought together 100 representatives from government, military and civil society actors on an annual basis; the goal of the Roundtable is to build consensus around the conflict drivers and to provide a forum for discussion on sensitive national issues. It is organised

by a full-time Secretariat directed by a Committee of 12 members drawn from civil society organizations, the Government of Fiji, academia, media and businesses. While UNDP has convened the dialogue and the RC has led the process, the PDA played a key role in supporting the preparatory phases of meetings with different actors. DPA, UNDP headquarters and the UNDP Sub-Regional Centre in Suva

have lent additional support to the process.<sup>19</sup> The Third Roundtable held in 2012 had the objective of enabling mutual points of convergence regarding governance in Fiji, and identifying areas requiring further discussion.<sup>20</sup> While trust of international actors has not always been strong, this process appears to have the trust of all parties, cultivating a sense that positive results will emerge.<sup>21</sup>

While the example from Fiji illustrates the formalisation of a multi-stakeholder mediation process around sensitive conflict issues, the cases of Lesotho and Cyprus point to a growing trend whereby PDAs bring track one and track two efforts together in a genuinely nationally-owned process. These cases illustrate the shift away from a purely elite-level or state-based approach to resolving

conflict towards a more holistic approach, which involves a variety of actors in “Track II” processes – a theme underscored in the Secretary General’s 2009 “Report of the Secretary General on Enhancing Mediation and its Support Activities.” Cyprus illustrates the ways in which the political and developmental sides of the UN can work together to support these tracks to maximise results, while the Lesotho case illustrates the role the UN can play in supporting civil society actors, in this case religious leaders, to play a significant role in mediation processes.

<sup>19</sup> Report and Recommendations on the Third Roundtable, UNDP, July 2012, p. 1  
<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> UNDP/Fiji, ‘Report and Recommendations on the Third Roundtable, UNDP, July 2012.

## TEXT BOX NINE - LESOTHO: SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES TO ACHIEVE PEACE

In Lesotho, the UN, with strong PDA facilitation, played a key role in ensuring stakeholders remained committed to dialogue in the run-up to the Parliamentary elections in May 2012. For the first time in the nation’s history, the transfer of power during civilian rule passed without violence, thanks in no small part to the ability of the church-led mediation efforts and the willingness

of political leaders to place faith in the electoral process. Strong support for the Church in general gave these “insider” mediators strong legitimacy, which made it impossible for them to be ignored by politicians. Behind the scenes, the UN (the RC and PDA in particular) assisted the Heads of Churches in their role as brokers, while encouraging political leaders to stay in the talks and to actively

support the election. The PDA played an important role in providing technical and operational support to this initiative, supporting key actors to keep the process moving. Led by the RC, the UNCT was able to draw on a range of resources in order to effectively support national stakeholders, including DPA’s Electoral Assistance Division and Mediation Support Unit.

## TEXT BOX TEN - CYPRUS: BUILDING TRACK I AND II LINKAGES FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE PEACE PROCESS

In Cyprus, with the DPA Special Political mission, the Office of the Special Advisor for the Secretary General (OSASG), and the UNDP-ACT Programme,<sup>22</sup> the PDA has created linkages between the formal peace negotiations and wider civil society driven “Track II” reconciliation efforts to address the longstanding divides between the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot communities. These have included public polls and analysis for: the negotiating teams (Cyprus 2015 project); the convening of public

debates on Federalism and other important issues around the peace process (Engage project); regular advice to the Economics Technical Committee (Interdependence project); and, initiatives to bring together peace-makers from Northern Ireland, South Africa and the Balkans to share experiences and models (Participatory Peace-making Initiative). These initiatives have had some traction in influencing first track negotiators about the value of a more inclusive process, but

much more needs to be done to move this agenda forward. Despite some inroads, the elite nature of the negotiation process currently remains intact with the process firmly in the hands of the two leaders, their representatives and the OSASG. While UNDP-ACT continues to push for a more inclusive process, there remain challenges in bridging the efforts, and the political and developmental work of the UN more widely.

## TEXT BOX ELEVEN - CHAD: “PEACE CARAVANS” FOR MEDIATION SUPPORT

Faced with multiple political, security and economic challenges,<sup>23</sup> the PDA in Chad has supported UN efforts to create an environment conducive to political dialogue at national and local levels. As a starting point, an EC/UNDP project has sought to build the conflict management and mediation skills and capacities of religious, political and civil society leaders at both levels. “Peace Caravans” of mediators were created, supported by UNDP and the Swiss Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which travelled across the country

to disseminate messages of peaceful conflict resolution and to engage with local communities to resolve conflicts. This project was developed in partnership with the national NGO Peace and Reconciliation Committee and the Media House N’Djamena who are familiar with Chadian cultural and political dynamics. It is envisaged that mediation capacities for various types of local conflicts will spread throughout the country. The RC’s office has also launched a PBF project this year, in collaboration with IOM and supported by the

PBF, to strengthen the Chadian Government’s commitment to mediation, by: 1) developing the capacities of the Office of the Mediator to implement its mandate through dedicated technical expertise, 2) developing a policy framework and action plan, and, 3) establishing and strengthening Local Peace Committees in regions affected by local conflicts.

<sup>22</sup> There is no UNDP country office in Cyprus. It closed in 1998. There are two programmes in Cyprus. One is ACT that is funded by USAID and works on civil society issues, and the other is PFF (partnership for the future) that is funded by the EU and focuses on the Turkish Cypriot Community.

<sup>23</sup> These include demobilisation of the national armed forces and rebel groups, mass repatriation of Chadian populations from Libya and their community reintegration, a number of refugees from neighbouring countries, recurring food crisis across the Sahel as well as social tensions between the Government and labour unions.

While results and impacts of dialogue and mediation efforts are diverse and difficult to measure, there are clear examples where they have led to positive change that can, in turn, be sustained by national actors. In Nigeria, for example, the work of a PDA in targeted confidence-building measures in the context of a joint platform established between civic, religious, and political leaders helped to defuse inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions in a highly conflict-affected Plateau state. Following election-related violence in the neighbouring states of Kaduna and Bauchi in April 2011, Plateau state remained relatively peaceful, which the state governor attributed to local level violence prevention mechanisms, and to the work of the political dialogue platform supported by the PDA.<sup>24</sup>

Emerging lessons from PDA experiences in dialogue and mediation support start with the recognition that effective work in this area is tied to the ability of the UN to act promptly and creatively at critical moments. The context and specific dynamics of crises in a particular setting determine the types of roles the UN can play, although a strong and well-skilled PDA can greatly influence both the context and nature of UN engagement, and therefore provide effective support to the RC to create space for the UN's involvement. Lesotho is a noteworthy testament in this regard.

The UN can offer valuable organizational and technical support, including helping to clarify roles, responsibilities, and duties of different actors. The UN can play a strong leadership role in bringing parties to the table and in creating a conducive environment for dialogue – ensuring a safe space for stakeholder participation. Strong partnerships within and across the UN – notably amongst the PDA, the RC, UNDP and DPA – are a key ingredient for ensuring the UN acts as one, which increase the chances of succeeding.

Positive results ultimately rest on national ownership, where the broadest possible set of stakeholders share ownership of the dialogue space and mechanisms. Ensuring national actors have the capacities, resources and political will to sustain dialogue and mediation

processes and results is not a short-term endeavour. While this may not be a particularly attractive aspect of a PDA's function, it is critical if a PDA (and the UN more broadly) is to have an impact beyond a PDA's relatively limited tenure. As many cases illustrate, investments by various UN agencies and others, over years, is often only the first step in terms of fostering openness towards engagement in dialogue. Bringing in other societal stakeholders to develop inclusive processes and societally-owned agendas for peacebuilding, statebuilding and managing and preventing conflict can take much longer.

### 3.3.2 RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

PDAs engage in a range of reconciliation and social cohesion initiatives, which lie at the core of building resilient and peaceful societies. Reconciliation focuses on the (re)building of relationships among people and groups in society, and between the state and its citizens. It is a highly context-sensitive process that must be tailored by societies to meet their own needs, the nature of the conflict and the character of their transition.<sup>25</sup> Social cohesion, a related and supportive concept, is the glue that brings society together, and it can be developed in numerous, often intertwined, ways: economically (i.e. through equal opportunities and reduced disparities); socially (i.e. through strengthened social relations, interactions and ties); and politically (i.e. through transparent and inclusive institutions).<sup>26</sup>

The cases in this section illustrate how PDAs are catalysing and facilitating initiatives that bring divided communities and societies together at different levels, building social cohesion through political, economic and social processes as they work to re-construct relationships and support communities in mapping more peaceful, co-existent futures.

24 Joint programme, Report, 2013.

25 PBSO, 'Building Just Societies: Reconciliation in Transitional Settings', Workshop Report, 5-6 June 2012.

26 Peace Dividends.

## TEXT BOX TWELVE - GUYANA: BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL

In Guyana, a targeted conflict analysis<sup>27</sup> undertaken against the backdrop of ethno-political tensions and violence that followed the November 2011 elections<sup>28</sup> pointed towards the need to support social cohesion, in particular at the political level. Consequently, the PDA facilitated the development of a social cohesion strategy designed to help build and promote inter-communal trust and cross-cultural understanding across the national political elite. An equally important (and more immediate) goal was equipping Guyanese lawmakers with the requisite analytic and negotiation tools for effective law-making through consensus-building and collaborative leadership.

With sensitivities on the part of the Government to acknowledge the country's simmering conflict dynamics, and to accept internationally-led peace initiatives, orientation programmes for new MPs were designed with embedded social cohesion goals and activities. Training programmes addressing needs expressed by existing MPs were also implemented in 2012, focused on building legislation-writing capacity. The training programmes were designed to build collaborative leadership and consensus across party lines. Trainers – some of them MPs from the UK and Canada – reflected the ethnic and racial diversity of Guyanese society.<sup>29</sup>

To provide a model for collaborative leadership within a divided Government context, the PDA invited several former MPs from New Zealand (which has a minority Government) to interact with the Guyanese MPs. These efforts at building social cohesion at the level of the political elite complemented wider UNCT social cohesion programming that sought to help Guyana develop its conflict prevention and management capacity (the case study in the Annex goes into further detail).

## TEXT BOX THIRTEEN - SRI LANKA: RECONCILIATION THROUGH HOUSING PROJECTS

In Sri Lanka the PDA undertook a field mission to assess UNDP's Transition Recovery Programme (TRP) with a view to identifying entry-points for cross-ethnic reconciliation. A project was then developed to provide intensive applied training for all TRP field staff engaged in a community reintegration housing project in the conflict-affected, multi-ethnic districts of Sri Lanka. The trainings focused on methods for context analysis, community-based reconciliation, fostering social agency, and providing skills

for staff to embed inter-ethnic reconciliation goals and strategies into their work. While many of the staff were initially sceptical about the approach in a highly divided country, where ethnic groups did not share a language, they were able to bring communities together in new ways that yielded results i.e. in joint planning and housing construction across ethnic lines. Staff reported that communities moved from an initial fear of working alongside each other, to demonstrating a sense of overarching community and

participatory decision-making. There were also signs of increased tolerance within and across communities. Staff recognised that more time was needed to solidify gains, and that skills in dialogue and process management for communities would further enhance their ability to foster reconciliation. As one participant in the process highlighted: "Once I only built foundations for houses, now I see I am also building foundations for social cohesion, tolerance and reconciliation."

<sup>27</sup> The PDA consulted key stakeholders in Guyanese society, including politicians, religious leaders, civil society and the private sector – on the causes, dynamics, and possible remedies to the crisis.

<sup>28</sup> The elections pitted the People's Progressive Party (PPP), dominated by Indo-Guyanese, against the Afro-Guyanese People's National Congress (PNC). Despite the PNC and its allies in A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) winning a majority of Parliamentary seats, the elections produced a minority Government led by the PPP, which also retained the presidency.

<sup>29</sup> The UK MP was a Guyanese émigré while the MP from Canada was of Indian descent.

Key lessons to have emerged from the work of PDAs to date are grounded in an understanding of the need for greater sensitivity to conflict dynamics, and in particular the perspectives and preferences of national actors for design, and ownership of the process i.e. how particular processes are articulated, who is invited, and the setting within which the process takes place. Often sensitivities revolve around: a desire for an “even playing field”; the need to avoid being put in a compromising position; and, the imperative for national ownership in the design and implementation, and in outcomes of the process. Often it can be quite challenging to balance different interests and to ensure that certain parties are not overly dominating and marginalising others (inadvertently or advertently), and that all parties are sufficiently comfortable. PDAs often play an important role in encouraging national facilitators to create and sustain space where divisive issues can be addressed, and where mutual respect is observed. These “uncomfortable safe spaces”<sup>30</sup> can facilitate movement out of polarisation and towards a shared commitment to create a better future.

In most contexts, building social cohesion and fostering reconciliation will ultimately require multi-pronged strategies that address the structural conflict dynamics at various levels of society. In FYR Macedonia for example, the PDA has helped to guide the UN’s support to the Government in strengthening social cohesion and inter-ethnic relations through: a) long-term structural prevention in areas such as governance, education, media and society, b) strengthening political dialogue; and, c) advancing conflict resolution initiatives at both national and local levels. In Cyprus, building the capacity and cohesion of civil society to engage in Track II efforts has been an important priority to ensure their sustained and meaningful engagement with national counterparts.

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<sup>30</sup> This idea has emerged through PDA discussions and is popular amongst PDAs.

Social cohesion work can be fostered at different levels and through varied entry-points, often requiring innovation, adaptability and persistence on the part of the PDA given the intractable nature of many conflicts that characterise the contexts where the UN operates. Long-term efforts requiring dedicated attention and technical and financial support to build local capacities and incentives are often required. Which leads us to the next discussion: infrastructures for peace.

### 3.3.3 INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

Increasingly, where recurrent conflicts are common, PDAs work in support of national stakeholders to put infrastructures for peace (I4P) in place, to reinvigorate or to strengthen existing infrastructures in order to develop and nurture standing arrangements to address and prevent conflict. I4P’s can be defined as a “dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a society.”<sup>31</sup> Central to this concept is linking infrastructures at national and sub-national levels, in the interests of building more societally-owned processes for peace.

The concept of I4P is built upon the premise that conflict prevention efforts require sustained collaboration across a broad spectrum of stakeholders. As such, the role of the state is central to peace infrastructures, but so too is the role of civil society, in particular key stakeholders such as chieftaincies, women and youth groups

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<sup>31</sup> In a meeting in Naivasha, Kenya in February 2010, representatives of governments, political parties, civil society, and UNCTs from 14 African countries agreed on a definition of infrastructures for peace. See: Kumar, C., 2011, ‘Building National ‘Infrastructures for Peace’: UN Assistance for Internally Negotiated Solutions to Violent Conflict’, in: Allen Nan, Susan, Mampilly, Zachariah Cherian and Bartoli, Andrea (eds.), *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory, Volume 1*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 384-399.

and religious and civil leaders.

Some elements of I4P may involve some physical institutional structures, which generally focus on processes of dialogue consultation, coordination and collaboration. I4P structures often evolve to focus around the following areas:

- Early warning, particularly around election-related violence prevention;
- Conflict management, social cohesion and reconciliation; and,

- Targeting specific conflict drivers and/or key stakeholder groups, to encourage or support their peace efforts.

PDA's have supported the development of I4P in many countries, but notably: Ecuador, Ghana, Georgia, Guyana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Malawi, Togo, Sierra Leone and Kyrgyzstan. UNDP, more broadly, has supported the development of I4P in Costa Rica, Philippines, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Uganda, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Timor-Leste, and the Solomon Islands. Several examples are highlighted below:

#### TEXT BOX FOURTEEN - GHANA: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE TO SUPPORT PEACEFUL ELECTIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

Over the last decade, the PDA (and the UNCT as a whole) has supported Ghana to strengthen its conflict management and peace infrastructure, thereby reducing the ability of threats to destabilise the country. Between the 2004 and 2008 elections (when political tensions ran high) the PDA championed the strengthening of peace infrastructure at both national and local levels. At the national level, the Electoral Commission was focus of such efforts; this included a review of how it managed the 2004 elections and a conflict management training programme for staff. The capacity of affiliated institutions (i.e. political parties, the media and the judiciary) were also enhanced to support means for strengthening

socio-political cohesion. Technical and financial assistance was also provided to key human rights and justice organizations.<sup>32</sup> The PDA also supported many critical activities to strengthen the National Peace Council, a central forum dedicated to the promotion of peace through collaborative problem-solving tools and timely action, and the related regional and district peace councils that make up the National Peace Architecture. The PDA's support not only helped improve the performance of these institutions in times of crisis, but also provided a common forum for open dialogue and cooperation on Ghana's peace and security challenges (see Annex for more details of the Ghana case).

<sup>32</sup> These included the Ghana Association of Chattered Mediators, the Ghana Judicial Service, the Legal Aid Council, and the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice.

## KENYA INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE: EARLY WARNING AND ELECTION-RELATED CONFLICT PREVENTION

Kenya's I4P has evolved over the last decade but was enhanced in the wake of Kenya's 2008 post-election violence that left 1,500 dead and 500,000 displaced. There are four main components:

1. the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC), located in the office of the President, which houses a national early-warning system and supports the ability of peace actors in the country to receive, analyse and share information about potential conflicts and to facilitate coordinated responses. The NSC also supports the Government's district peace committees, recognised as an effective local conflict mitigation mechanism, and which were expanded across the country, particularly in "hot spot" areas in the wake of the post-election violence.
2. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), established following the mediation process surrounding post-election violence in 2008;

3. The National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), created to respond to the prevalence of small arms and light weapons in the country, their pervasive use, and for the prevention of armed violence.

4. The Partnership for Peace and Security, spearheaded by the PDA.

The PDA played an instrumental role in facilitating the enhancement of these structures in the post-election violence, notably by supporting needs assessments and strategy development, attracting and coordinating financial and technical support by international partners, and convening meetings to facilitate coordination, coherence and development of the infrastructure at all levels.

Both 2010 and 2013 brought opportunities to test the strength of the I4P. In 2010 society was polarised around a referendum on a new constitution, and violence was predicted. Recognising the potential for violence that could result, the PDA facilitated the

collaboration of the NSC, NCIC and civil society in forming the 'Uwiano Platform for Peace', supported by UNDP. Violence was averted through a variety of strategies, including: media campaigns and broadcasts, peace campaigns, rallies and public meetings across the country; the establishment of a free cellular phone text messaging service using crowd-sourcing and other tools; and, coordination amongst district peace committees, civil society and security agencies across the country in early-warning and response. In the 2013 general election the Uwiano Platform for Peace was mobilised again involving more partners, including the Independent Elections and Boundary Committee. The new PDA supported this process with Headquarter support, notably from the original PDA for Kenya. The Uwiano platform constituted a group of respected and influential nationals to engage Kenya's political leadership at political and district levels, and facilitated a series of meetings with stakeholders that developed a strategic framework to support what turned out to be largely peaceful elections.

PDA, with the support of the RC, UNDP, DPA and at times the wider UNCTs, work to identify entry-points to support existing structures in conflict-sensitive ways, i.e. that target actual or potential drivers of conflict, or develop and nurture capacities of stakeholder groups. In Guyana, for example, the PDA is working to expand the purview of a disaster early-warning system managed by the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) to include conflict (see Part II, 2.0), while in Kyrgyzstan, the UN with strong PDA facilitation, supports institutions and policies that aid resilience and social cohesion - supported with PBF funding. The I4P includes a new agency for Local Self Government and Inter-ethnic Relations, State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development, and local level-Peace Advisory Committees support reconciliation, now coordinated and enhanced by a National Peace Advisory Committee. At provincial and district levels youth centres have been created in multicultural communities, and water-user associations were provided with support in order to manage tensions over distribution. Women's peace committees were supported to enhance local efforts to establish peace networks. Similarly in Kenya, I4P-related initiatives often had a youth focus. In one such instance, a photographic exhibition of the post-election violence followed by dialogues in the six towns worst affected by the violence, 30,000 young people signed peace pledges stating their willingness to engage in peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities within their communities. These young people were then linked up with on-going local level peace structures and activities.

Initiatives focused on dialogue and mediation and reconciliation and social cohesion are deeply intertwined, and feed into and support the development of I4P. While they are inherently process-oriented, I4P are fundamentally focused on ensuring that the standing capacities, structures and mechanisms for transformative processes managed by national actors are effectively in place. Building upon the lessons in the above two sections and given the integrated nature of this work, other notable lessons emerge. The first key lesson is the importance of supporting national actors in establishing clear roles and relationships

between institutions and actors at all levels. National actors face the same challenges of coordination and coherence as international actors in supporting strategic conflict prevention and peace efforts. The UN can play a useful role in creating participatory, transparent space for national actors to work through, clarify and where possible codify roles, mandates and areas of comparative advantage of relevant institutions and organizations. Second, a key challenge lies in ensuring that I4P are situated where they will have legitimacy amongst a wide range of actors. There are likely benefits and drawbacks to any choice: situating them in departments responsible for security can facilitate a quick security response, but will have more difficulties in building trust-based partnerships with civil society institutions. A third challenge lies in fostering national incentives and ownership in I4P, with requisite funding streams to support them, along with sustained stakeholder participation.

With clear consensus that early-warning capacities are needed in many complex political settings, as well as post-conflict peacebuilding settings and even development contexts affected by fragility, the known challenges lie in effective response. I4P attempt to create standing capacities, with coordinated and integrated efforts of different actors to respond effectively. For these efforts to be transformative and not merely temporary, or only able to work at the surface level to address triggers and proximate causes of conflict, they need to be driven by a consensus-based analysis of the root causes and drivers of conflict, and focused on identifying and activating coordinated responses to address issues at this level. It is thus crucial that PDAs realise their comparative advantage of bringing the more operational and structural, and political and developmental elements of the UN system together to support these essential links across I4P.



## 4.0 FACTORS DRIVING PROMISING PRACTICE

There is no blueprint for what makes a successful PDA. Every context is unique and the factors that influence change in any given setting are not predictable. Nonetheless, growing evidence across cases where PDAs operate points to a number of issues and strategies driving promising practice. This section offers an overview of the strategic and operational factors that appear to be facilitating this. It starts however, by identifying key challenges that PDAs tend to confront in their work.

These include:

- Political instability and/or an unstable security context, which can limit the PDA's ability to move beyond the capital city or into certain areas of the country, leading to a limited understanding of the broader conflict/political dynamics, and can therefore lead to a partial understanding of possible programmatic options to address these.
- Insufficient political will, openness or support of national actors. It is important to note that the level of support may vary at different levels of society. In instances where national actors are open to support, a PDA can have a particularly valuable impact in terms of advancing conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding efforts.
- Deteriorating or challenging relationships and openness to engagement, particularly in the context of supporting change that some national actors may not want.
- Limited entry-points within the UN system for the PDA to engage in the development of programming, strategy and other types of support. PDAs can face challenges in influencing programming where programming is overly "project-oriented" or where the PDA is "isolation"

from the UNDP Country Office and UNCT. However, in some cases this can also provide an opportunity for PDAs to lead on the design and implementation of innovative, inter-agency projects, with a view to serving as a catalyst for larger, more sustained programming efforts. In such cases, if the PDA is not empowered by the RC to "reach out" and participate in programming design, a PDA can become a *de facto* political analyst housed in the Office of the RC.

- Managing expectations and the difficulties of showing results in short time frames, and balancing these demands with the need to embed certain capacities within the UNCT and amongst national stakeholders to ensure a degree of sustainability. With the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme intended to provide catalytic support to the PDA deployment, many UNCTs face challenges in mobilizing sufficient resources to sustain capacities and programming efforts.
- Attracting PDAs and developing UN staff both in country and at Headquarters who have the appropriate mix of substantive and process skills required.

Many of these challenges are persistent and lie beyond the scope of PDAs to individually address. However, as illustrated in the following discussions on strategic and operational factors these challenges are, to varying degrees, being tackled by innovative and courageous PDA efforts that cut across and drive promising practice.

## 4.1 STRATEGIC FACTORS

As highlighted in a recent report from the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme, successful UN support for conflict prevention often critically requires initial, catalytic work by PDAs that opens entry-points, obtains buy-in from key national counterparts, and ensures that effective response is grounded in sound analysis and strategy.<sup>33</sup> This necessarily involves the consideration of a number of factors, including:

### **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUST, AND IDENTIFYING ENTRY-POINTS**

Building working relationships and partnerships, and ultimately trust, is a necessary foundation for any PDA work. It is the first and, arguably, the most valuable on-going strategy that a PDA can employ to identify entry-points and build the momentum to carry strategies and programmes forward. In Ghana, for example, the PDA's early cultivation of a network of political, media, and civic contacts greatly facilitated his analysis of conflict drivers and, therefore, his assessment of potential entry-points for UNDP's work in support of national peace actors. The network became a source of valuable information about the root causes of political and ethnic conflict in the country, and also gave him unusual access to influential stakeholders such as Government ministers, leaders of political parties, leaders of civic organizations, and prominent journalists (see Annex).

To be effective, PDAs must attach equal premium to building relationships, partnerships and trust internally with UN colleagues and partners (discussed below, under "operating environment factors"), and, equally, with national, and even other international partners.

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33 Joint Programme, "UNDP-DPA Collaboration with Regard to Complex Political Situations", 2010 and UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (2012), Programme Document 2012 to 2014.

In many contexts where PDAs work there is a severe absence of trust between societal parties and groups, and also amongst international actors. As noted by the PDA in the Maldives, "UN responses and engagement with local partners must therefore start from the basic requirement of confidence-building and communication" (*PDA, Maldives*). An emerging promising practice of PDAs involves building networks to support collaborative action, and specifically identifying "champions" to work with i.e. National counterparts that will support, and optimally, drive efforts. "Establishing a regular platform for conversations with a small group of well-placed locals has been extremely important to my work. I refer here to the Heads of Churches with whom I meet monthly. I felt lost until this structure emerged as a basis for the most important work that I do" (*PDA, Lesotho*).

The risks in becoming too close to particular stakeholders are clear, and awareness that "spoilers," too, need to be engaged. PDAs have to avoid the dangers of their work becoming overly politicised: "one of the biggest risks associated with the PDA's work" (*PDA, FYRO Macedonia*). "Polarization and politicisation define virtually all spheres of life in the country, and sensitivities around the UN position in this environment are high. The key risks for PDA work (and that of all UN actors here) relate to perceptions of impartiality" (*PDA, Maldives*).

To overcome these challenges PDAs advise maintaining professional contacts and balancing easy access to decision-makers while "remaining at arm's length from various dynamics and processes" (*PDA, Maldives*), and identifying impartial partners to work with, while also trying to "constantly ensure political buy-in from all sides" (*PDA, FYR Macedonia*). The PDA, and the UN more generally, often have a major comparative advantage in being perceived as impartial. Many PDAs report being able to leverage the perception of impartiality to build catalytic entry-points for strategy and programming.

More generally, building relationships with actors across divides is vital for producing strong analysis to guide strategy and programming of the UN. “Networking provides information and the means of triangulating information as well as the views of knowledgeable contacts” (PDA, Niger).

### **GATHERING ROBUST INFORMATION AND UNDERTAKING/FACILITATING CONFLICT ANALYSIS INVOLVING AS WIDE AN ARRAY OF STAKEHOLDERS AS POSSIBLE**

As discussed at length above, conflict analysis is now considered a foundation and cornerstone of robust programming and strategy. The challenges lie in fostering joint, consensus-based analyses. “Regular communication with the UNCT, and, more importantly, national colleagues, is also a crucial starting point for developing local knowledge, gathering information and preparing good analysis” (PDA, Maldives).

A key challenge, as highlighted by the PDA in Niger, is “identifying and weighing factors and actors’ views in a conflict analysis in a complex setting”. Managing this challenge requires good research practice, and building strong relationships and networks: “As your credibility increases and your range of knowledgeable and influential contacts expand, our ability to sift through and triangulate all the factors and data available increases, and consequently your analysis becomes more prescient. However, information will need to be grounded in conflict prevention and mitigation theory and practice (what has worked and why and what has not worked and why) to be best used” (PDA, Niger).

### **DRAWING ON THAT ANALYSIS TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORKS FOR COORDINATED, COHERENT ACTION**

PDA’s are bridging the political and developmental sides of the UN system, and in doing so addressing a core problem for peacebuilding in the international

system: the need for strategy development that cuts across silos. Many PDA’s report the development of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy as a core factor in driving beneficial results of their work. As highlighted by the PDA in Kyrgyzstan, “developing this strategy first and clearly outlining the way forward helped to get on board with where we wanted to go with the overall programme.”

Strategies and frameworks often respond to complex and unpredictable contexts, requiring multi-pronged and multi-levelled approaches to catalyse transformative efforts.<sup>34</sup> They hold particular promise when they build upon joint analysis and often work at policy and programme level, within and through both UN and national planning processes. They often include both short-term and long-term efforts to address both immediate threats to peace and development, and longer-term structural efforts to ensure sustained results.

There are, of course, challenges in building consensus and facilitating joint ownership of programmes both within the UN and in light of geopolitical considerations that often manifest locally in the contexts in which PDA’s work. “Flow of information and resource mobilisation in the UN System in Guinea is quite fragmented and programmatic responses do not always support a real common and synergetic approach. The international community is more the expression of bilateral agreements than one shared vision” (PDA, Guinea Conakry). PDA’s can play an important role in supporting the efforts of RCs to bring the international community together to share analysis and define common priorities.

### **PRIORITISING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CAPACITIES ACROSS ALL AREAS**

While developing national capacities in development related work is a cornerstone of UN

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<sup>34</sup> This is consistent with conflict transformation theory, i.e. that of John Paul Lederach.

agency efforts, the methods for fostering capacity development in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding are less well understood, though gaining increased traction and attention. This is largely due to the evolving understanding about what constitutes success in these areas, and what the specific comparative advantages of different actors are in such contexts.

In many settings the UN lacks certain capacities – a recognised reality that it is working to address. This presents challenges in terms of the organization’s attempts to develop the capacities of other entities or individuals. In many cases, the reality is that the international and national systems are learning together, in an iterative way. This may well have benefits, ensuring the context-sensitivity of international approaches, as well as their “tailored” nature.

A key promising practice is the employment of national officers to work with PDA counterparts. In addition to holding promise for sustaining efforts beyond the UN’s departure, a national PDA can bring the added-value of local knowledge and experience, thereby enhancement of context-sensitive strategies. Obvious challenges are resource constraints for these positions, and how to develop institutional memory and sustainability of efforts, once PDAs leave.

*“In Kyrgyzstan, the main challenges concerned capacity issues both in the office (and with the project staff) and with the Government and civil society partners. I developed the PDA process and the new strategy around building this local capacity and creating mechanisms to identify and address the underlying causes of conflict on the ground. Unfortunately, capacity was still low and mechanisms were still too fresh to effectively deal with what happened after I left”. (PDA, Kyrgyzstan)*

## ENSURING THE UN’S ENGAGEMENT IS INFORMED BY A RICH UNDERSTANDING OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

As many of the above cases illustrate, designing appropriate and effective programmes and strategies requires strong attention to the context – notably the national and local contextual factors shaping the environment, but also, the nature and parameters of international engagements in the country.

Key aspects of national context that fundamentally shape promising practice of programme and strategy design include:<sup>35</sup>

- **Type of conflict setting and the degree of stability:** Whether a country is fragile, in transition, is in the immediate aftermath of conflict and/or has deep structural, historical divides that present risks to peace, all dynamics are relevant for the design of effective conflict prevention strategies and programming.
- **Level of development:** PDAs operate in countries that represent varying levels of development. While the majority are low-income countries, especially in Africa and Asia, many are also in middle-income countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and Caribbean regions. National actors tend to have different interests and expectations in the types of support desired; in middle income countries, for example, the desire is typically more for knowledge and expertise rather than financial resources. Levels of poverty play a critical role: e.g. “in Niger, there are high levels of extreme poverty (according to the World Bank), the country ranks last on the Human Development Index (186/186), leading to a lack of resilience, vulnerabilities and dissatisfaction and frustration amongst the people – particularly amongst the youth (64% of the youth are below the age of 24 and the fertility rate is at 7.6%)” (PDA, Niger).

<sup>35</sup> These draws from and builds upon Ohiorhenuan, John and McCandless, Erin “Sustaining Development Gains: Towards a UNDP Strategy for Preventing Violent Conflict,” 2013.

- **Vulnerability to disaster:** A country's degree of vulnerability to disaster is a key contextual factor affecting conflict and conflict prevention strategies and programming, which PDAs must account for and have the skills to respond to.
- **International actors and operating environment:** The openness and orientation of both national and international (UN) actors on peacebuilding and conflict prevention work determine whether the operating environment will support or inhibit the work of PDAs, and impact the nature of process and results. As the PDA in Kosovo explains:

*“Most of the international community in Kosovo<sup>36</sup> has a security and/or political mandate. The development agenda is consistently subordinated to the political agenda. In the case of UNKT, status-neutrality can be an impediment to resource mobilisation, particularly in the context of Northern Kosovo. The European Union and the United States jointly dominate the donor environment in Kosovo, and exert considerable influence in determining Governmental priorities”.*

The type of UN engagement, notably whether there is a UN mission of any type, and/or DPA engagement on the ground, and generally the history of UN and wider member state involvement in the country undoubtedly shapes important aspects of the political landscape. These factors can greatly impact upon the nature and types of PDA engagement, and the forms of conflict prevention strategy and programming that will be feasible, and which will garner appropriate and effective UN support.

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36 As referred to in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). The United Nations, through its Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and its Agencies and Programmes, including UNDP, is present in Kosovo on the basis of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) which provides the mandate for its operation.

## 4.2 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

### OPENNESS AND SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT TO CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING-RELATED WORK

The capacity and openness of the host government to work in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding is an undeniable factor in the success of a PDA's efforts.

*"At the time I worked there, Kyrgyzstan was coming out of its first 'revolution'. The new Government was willing to engage on issues of conflict because they were not worried about being "caught out" like the previous Government had been. This gave us a lot of room to manoeuvre and to try new things—as long as it was clear we were supporting the Government in its efforts to understand the situation on the ground."  
(PDA, Kyrgyzstan)*

The Guyana case on the other hand (see Annex), where perceptions of the UN or the nature of its involvement may not be favourable, demonstrates that programming and strategy can be affected. This lies beyond the PDA's control, and inevitably needs to be handled at a more political level, and over time.

Most, if not all, contexts that PDAs work in are politically complex and operationally challenging, and entry-points must be built and nurtured over time. "It takes some time to establish one's credibility with (national) counterparts," and it often comes through sharing insights and resources (or at least facilitating and obtaining resources for valuable conflict mitigation/prevention programmes) (PDA, Niger).

### OPENNESS AND SUPPORT OF A PDA ROLE WITHIN THE UN (BOTH AT UNCT LEVEL AND AT HQ)

PDAs emphasise the importance of support from colleagues and UN entities – at both field and HQ level - as well as the infrastructures and resources to back up action. The support of senior management is particularly important, including the RC and heads of agencies at the country-level, and representatives of the Secretary General and/or DPA, as and where appropriate. As stated by the PDA in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "Vision and leadership by the RC is critical for incorporating the PDA effectively into the work of the RC and the UNCT. I have been able to make a valuable contribution because the RC knew in advance what he wanted the PDA to achieve. The RC has included the PDA fully in all RC Office activities, including political, liaison and diplomatic work, UNCT programming, meetings, visits etc." The RC's role is pivotal in ensuring transparency and communication with UNCT colleagues, assisted by a sound relationship between the RC and the PDA, with clarity around roles and expectations.

PDAs recognise that they are not lone actors: their efforts require institutional support to drive the often risky and innovative strategies needed to catalyse transformative change. At the same time, many recognise the continued challenges associated with realising the "One UN" vision. These challenges include gaining trust and access with RCs and agencies, wide gaps between the political and development sides of the UN – that can often be difficult to bridge - and operational coordination amongst agencies: "UNCT dynamics and the challenges associated with coordinating diverse UN agencies that have different mandates, incentive structures and funding requirements remain a significant challenge. These have to be carefully managed through effective communication,

negotiation and liaison, as well as finding practical solutions that all UNCT members can reach agreement on" (*PDA, Bosnia-Herzegovina*).

## **PDAS POSSESSING THE APPROPRIATE SKILLS-SET AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO LEARN NEW SKILLS**

Effective PDAs possess a range of analytical, strategic and programming skills that are difficult to find, and to expect, one person to hold. The PDA skill-set marks a departure from the traditional programme management skills required by development practitioners; it requires the ability to: understand complex contexts; frame possible entry-points for the UN to make a positive contribution in that context; and, facilitate any difficult conversations between national stakeholders or other partners that may arise along the way. To that end, and in addition to the theoretical/ conceptual and practice knowledge of the field, PDAs require practical skills that include the ability to:

- Conduct robust analysis;
- Design and evaluate programmes and facilitate processes to develop joint strategy and programming;
- Harness and manage resources;
- Advise and help position senior leadership;
- Conduct dialogues, mediate and facilitate; and,
- Train and build capacity.

PDAs also need strong interpersonal skills, and above all, the ability to take the initiative. "Initiative and interpersonal skills, together with relevant insights and an ability to elaborate concrete suggestions, will likely determine how well the PDA can develop the trust and confidence of local and international interlocutors, and how useful s/he will ultimately be. In turn, these skills can contribute greatly to PDA analysis, and programming and strategy recommendations" (*PDA, Maldives*).

Importantly, "a degree of humility, recognition that there is always room for improvement and adjustment, good listening skills, and clear and practically useful ideas" are crucial in a PDA's ability to overcome the many challenges they face (*PDA, Cyprus*).

The balancing act required by PDAs in providing support to the UN as well as national stakeholders to advance a nation's peace and development goals clearly require a mixture of aptitudes and attitudes that are difficult to quantify. The characteristics described above are not meant to serve as a required list of "ingredients", but rather, a testament to the range of talents and skills possessed by the growing cadre of PDAs. They point to a range of skills required to support the UN in playing an effective role in a variety of different settings, and overall, the ability to navigate rapidly changing development landscapes to support national stakeholders to build resilient and peaceful societies. PDA retreats and regional workshops provide PDAs with valuable opportunities to share experiences with each other and refine and develop skills and learn about new approaches.

## **SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO SUSTAIN PDA POSTS**

Funding challenges can pertain to both broader conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming in a particular country context, as well as at the global level in relation to the capacity to deploy and sustain PDA positions. Bosnia-Herzegovina illustrates the first, where, 17 years after the conflict and in a challenging political and security situation, international donor and diplomatic fatigue has created significant challenges for both the PDA, and the UN as a whole. Many PDAs lament insufficient resources to implement initiatives; as highlighted by one: "without resources, very little can be done and PDAs run the risk of becoming the Personal Assistants of Resident Coordinators".

At the most fundamental level, PDAs suffer from poor job security. They are usually offered one-year contracts with the possibility of renewal, which

is increasingly tied to the ability of the UNDP Country Office or UNCT to contribute a portion of funding from the second year on. In addition to clear challenges related to identifying PDAs willing to leave their homes and families to undertake work under these conditions of uncertainty, “such short-term contracts often increase the challenges associated with designing long-term strategies for conflict transformation” (PDA, Ecuador), including building trust with national actors and gaining a deep understanding of the context – success factors across all conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

Funding for PDA positions through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme is intended to be catalytic; UNCTs (or UNDP Country Offices) are encouraged to absorb the costs associated with the position from the second or third year. Increasingly this is becoming a common practice, although there are cases where it is challenged by limited resources, i.e. due to donor fatigue or the country in which a PDA is deployed being marginalised as a “donor orphan”. This presents challenges for the Joint Programme’s SOPs, and requires closer consideration if PDAs are to continue to have an impact in the contexts that demand their deployment.

PDAs can also play an important role in mobilising resources in-country. In 2012/2013, it is estimated that PDAs contributed to resource mobilisation efforts that raised more than \$20 million for conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

This included funding from donors, national governments, and other sources of funding in-country. Such funding has at times been used to cover a PDA position beyond a second and third year. While PDAs are not expected to dedicate a significant portion of their time to this role, at times such opportunities flow from a PDA’s engagement with and support to the UNCT strategy and programming development.

### **ABILITY TO ENGAGE WITH A BROAD RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS – ACROSS GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC SPHERES**

Ensuring PDAs move beyond the “cocktail circuit” of international partners, established political leaders, and national elites in the capital cities is critical if a PDA is to be able to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the country context and conflict dynamics. Broad engagement will also ensure that entry-points for UN engagement not “in view”, or perhaps not preferred, by certain stakeholders are recognised and, where appropriate, pursued. Beyond engaging with opposition political parties, a PDA plays an important role in leading the UN’s efforts to be consultative and participatory. There are often very practical (and political) challenges associated with these efforts, including limited budget support for PDAs to undertake travel in-country. This challenge is exacerbated in larger countries, although it can also be an obstacle even in smaller geographic areas.



## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

As the analysis and illustrations above suggest, PDAs add value and have generated promising practices in a variety of roles that aim to respond to the myriad challenges confronting States and societies as they endeavour to prevent violent conflict, and transition from conflict and fragility towards peace and resilience. PDA efforts tend to cluster around three primary areas in their support to the UN and national partners: analysis, strategy and programming, and catalysing and/or facilitating strategic responses. The bulk of PDAs engage in a combination of these, and there is increasing awareness of the value of ensuring the inter-linkages between these areas, ideally in support of and *with* national partners to maximize results.

First and foremost, PDAs play a central analytical role. Efforts by the PDAs to undertake political and conflict analysis to inform the UN's positioning in-country and at Headquarters are increasingly complemented by process-oriented conflict analyses with UNCTs and national actors. This is consistent with the UN's commitment to ensure that conflict prevention and peacebuilding (alongside other policy agendas including development, statebuilding and resilience) are country-owned and country-led. While a central, on-going challenge lies in the fact that greater participation and transparency around analysis can antagonise political sensitivities, the benefit is that shared analysis provides a foundation for shared, coherent responses. There has been a great level of innovation in terms of conflict analysis, tool and products in recent years; these developments need to be assessed for their utility and adaptability, and ultimately promoted where they offer promise.

Secondly, PDAs play a critical role in linking political and conflict analysis with conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies and programming. In this context, PDAs serve the UN via the RCs office to bring the UN system together in support of national partners - in line with global best practice - to ensure that awareness of the drivers of conflict and fragility inform development programming and wider strategy

development. Towards this end, PDAs work with and through existing UNCT planning frameworks, such as UNDAFs, but with national partners and their respective national development strategies and frameworks. PDAs also strategically support the development of specific conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes, at times facilitating multi-stakeholder processes so that the conceptualisation, design and implementation of programmes is owned jointly.

Third and last, PDAs play a key role in catalysing and facilitating strategic conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. These often fall into three key areas: dialogue and mediation support; reconciliation and social cohesion; and infrastructures for peace. These highly sensitive and politically strategic initiatives manifest in context-specific ways. As the illustrative examples offered in section 3.3 suggest, the ways in which national actors come together at policy, regional and local levels is changing in innovative ways, enabling actors to address historical divides and generate practical, strategic and operational results. These processes also serve to bring the political, humanitarian and development sides of peace efforts into conversation with one another so that the actors that drive these processes - be they national or international - can work together. It is vital to underscore the fact that patience, accompanied by sustained support is imperative; results usually come very slowly, and are difficult to measure.

Examining promising practices and the factors driving such practices constitutes a core piece of the overall effort underway in the context of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme to address the challenges that PDAs face and to improve engagements on the ground. This Practice Note contributes to on-going efforts to deepen and clarify the growing consensus around roles and the comparative advantages of PDAs, towards the ultimate aim of supporting national partners in preventing conflict and building resilient and peaceful societies.

# 6.0 ANNEXES

## Case Studies: Ghana, Guyana, and Kyrgyzstan

The section that follows reviews PDA contributions in Ghana, Guyana, and Kyrgyzstan. It highlights key activities undertaken by PDAs and discusses the outcomes of those activities against the backdrop of the opportunities and challenges that impact their work.

## 1.0 GHANA

### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Ghana is often described as a model of stability in West Africa. This description belies the fact that the country faces major security challenges including chieftaincy and land rights disputes, a youth bulge, persistent poverty, and deepening conflict between the two main political parties: the New Patriotic Party (NPP), and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Political tensions tend to escalate during elections, and on several occasions (particularly 2000 and 2008) posed a serious threat to Ghana's stability. Tensions arose once again after the NPP rejected the results of the 2012 elections. Violence was, however, avoided when the NPP accepted a Supreme Court verdict affirming the victory of the NDC's John Mahama.

Partisan politics has also affected the management of a recurrent chieftaincy conflict in the Dagbon traditional area of northern Ghana. The conflict,<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The conflict pits two factions of the royal family—the Andani house (or gate), and the Abudu house (or gate) —against each other. The families descend from the two sons of Ya Na Yakubu II who ruled Dagbon in the 19th century. Each gate (and their supporters) disputes the others right to the throne and periodically employs violence in pursuit of their goals. The conflict escalated on March 27, 2002, when the Andani incumbent, Ya Na Andani Yakubu II was beheaded, and 28 of his followers were killed. This resulted in widespread violence and the destruction of property in Yendi (the district capital) and in Tamale, the northern regional capital.

which is part of a long-running dispute over succession to the Dagomba throne, is a dominant feature of the security profile of northern Ghana and constitutes a serious challenge to the country's stability. These challenges notwithstanding, Ghana has managed to avoid full-scale conflict, thanks - in part - to the efforts of national actors with support from UNDP. A growing economy (fuelled by a recent oil discovery), the development of peace infrastructure, and enhanced participation of civil society, the media, and other stakeholders in governance, should help Ghana consolidate peace and security in the coming years.

A PDA was assigned to Ghana in 2004 in response to the recommendation of a UNDP/ Regional Bureau for Africa assessment mission to the country in 2002. He brought conflict-sensitivity awareness to the work of the UNCT, helped the RC weigh avenues for UNDP actions in support of national peace efforts, and led cross-team consultation within the UNCT and collaborations with national and international partners to support peacebuilding in the country.

### 1.2 STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

#### 1.2.1 CONFLICT ANALYSIS BY THE PDA

The 2002 assessment highlighted chieftaincy, land-ownership and tenure disputes, competition over natural resources, religion, and tensions between (NPP) and (NDC) as the main sources of conflict,<sup>38</sup> and the findings were reinforced by a second report commissioned by UNDP in November 2002.<sup>39</sup> Building upon these findings,

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<sup>38</sup> UNDP-Regional Bureau for Africa, 'Report of Conflict Assessment Mission to Ghana, 26 August – 4 October 2002', 2002.

<sup>39</sup> Aning, K. et al, 'Ghana Conflict Vulnerability Assessment', *African Security Dialogue and Research*, November, 2002.

the PDA's analysis probed how conflicts identified in the reports might impact the 2004 election. Consultation with key national stakeholders revealed the high potential for conflict as a result of chieftaincy disputes (particularly in Dagbon), deepening political tensions, and weak conflict management institutions. Specific findings on the Dagbon conflict pointed to its politicisation with the NPP and NDC supporting the Abudus and the Andanis respectively.<sup>40</sup> The analysis also highlighted ethnicisation of political campaigns, media partisanship, and the weak conflict management capacity of key political parties and the Electoral Commission, as major areas of concern. Sustaining peace would require dedicated effort from national and foreign partners (including the PDA and the UNCT) to address these and other concerns.

### 1.2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF "OPENINGS" FOR UN SUPPORT

Through extensive consultations, the PDA determined that local stakeholders trusted the UN and would welcome UNDP-supported peace efforts. The PDA was also able to conclude that such support could be channelled through both national and local actors. On the basis of these deductions, he proposed strategies for UNDP intervention in several areas: support for Government intervention in Dagbon, support for political conflict management, and support for the development of a "National Peace Architecture".

### 1.2.3 SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS FOR PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE DAGBON CONFLICT

The PDA led UNDP's efforts to support the Government's search for peace in Dagbon. He

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40 Key NPP officials were known Abudu sympathizers. So were the Tamale Municipal Chief Executive and the District Chief Executive of Yendi. The NDC on its part picked Muhammad Mumuni, an Andani, as its vice presidential candidate. Mistrust of the government led some Andani youth to allege that the police did not protect the Yaa Naa when Gbewaa Palace was attacked.

consulted with Government officials<sup>41</sup> and the Otumfuo mediation team on avenues for UNDP to support their peace efforts. He also arranged funding and technical support for trust-building activities, such as a 2-day conference organized in Cape Coast for Northern Regional MPs, and a Dagbon reconciliation meeting organized by the Government and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, Nigeria, with UNDP support.

UNDP also supported capacity-building projects for stakeholders in the conflict region. Examples of capacity-building projects include: conflict reporting training for local journalists; and, conflict management training for butchers at the Tamale Abattoir who were often mobilised as foot soldiers for violence.<sup>42</sup> Another group that received special attention at the local level was the youth. Like the butchers, youth groups were often mobilised by the disputants to attack rivals. To help prepare the youth for a more positive role, the PDA supported several projects designed to build trust between Andani and Abudu youth. Examples included a Peace March to create awareness about the impact of conflict (December 2004), and a novelty football match (also in December 2004) to promote "peace through contact". Consistent with assumptions underpinning the "contact hypothesis" in co-existence research,<sup>43</sup> the match featured Andani and Abudu youth playing on one team against a team of Ghanaian ex-international players led by Abedi Pele.

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41 Including 3 Interior Ministers: Albert Kan Dapaa, Papa Owusu Ankomah, and Kwamina Battels. SAME

42 Butchers played a crucial role as "partisans" for the factions in the Dagbon conflict. The conflict framed tensions at the Tamale Abattoir where Andani and Abudu butchers kept separate organisations. Andani butchers accused the municipal government of denying them access to municipal council credit. Clashes between the two factions resulted in the burning down of the Abattoir and the Tamale market. To help diffuse the tension, the PDA arranged a conflict management training session for the butchers and set up a \$5000 credit fund to support joint partnerships. To be eligible for the credit, butchers had to propose a joint partnership with someone from the other community.

43 The general assumption underlying the contact hypothesis is that exposure to (or contact with) persons of dissimilar interests or cultural backgrounds can positively influence our perceptions and our actions towards them. The catalyst for "change" is usually a realization that "out group" members share some of our interests and hence may not be as threatening or unreasonable as we initially thought.

### **1.2.4 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACE MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT**

The peaceful management of political conflict requires both a tolerant political culture and institutions capable of managing conflict without stifling civic liberties. Several of Ghana's political institutions fell short of that standard in 2004. Among these were the Electoral Commission, political parties, the media, and the judiciary. The PDA led UNDP's efforts to support projects designed to help these and other relevant institutions to improve their conflict management practices. The Electoral Commission received targeted capacity-building assistance because of its central role in managing political affairs and elections. The PDA supported a review of the Electoral Commission's management of the 2004 elections in order to help establish a baseline for assessing performance and needs. One clear finding was that the Electoral Commission had inadequate capacity for managing election-related conflict and violence, a problem that was addressed in a conflict management capacity enhancement programme supported by UNDP in partnership with the African Association of Election Administrators. The programme trained staff from the Electoral Commission in election administration, results certification, and conflict management. Political parties also received training because most political parties in Ghana lack strong internal democracy procedures and appeared unable to detect and prevent internal conflict. To help address this weakness, the PDA led UNDP to partner with the West African Network for Peacebuilding to provide conflict management training to leaders of the three main political parties, the NPP, NDC and the CPP.

### **1.2.5 ENHANCING CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY IN THE MEDIA**

Informal consultations within media and civil society circles revealed that the media was partisan in their political analysis and news coverage. Sensationalism, inaccuracies, and political insults characterised much of election-year political reporting. Such practices

created political tensions, fuelled their escalation into conflict, and reduced incentives for cooperation among elites at both the local and national levels. In northern Ghana, for example, media partisanship fanned the flames of the chieftaincy conflict. To help address this problem, the PDA supported the Rural Media Network, a network of local journalists, to do conflict-sensitivity training for journalists in the Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions. At the national level, partisanship was so ingrained that editors of the major news outlets in the country had not met in seven years to discuss industry-wide problems. To help advance responsible journalism, the PDA joined with local partners to organise a meeting of Ghanaian news editors to review the quality of journalism and to stress the need for accountability. He also supported the preparations for a conference on the role of the media in national development (2006), assisted the National Media Commission to develop guidelines on political journalism (including guidelines for local language broadcasting), and also to launch a media-monitoring programme.

### **1.2.6 SUPPORT FOR THE JUDICIAL SECTOR**

To help strengthen the rule of law in Ghana, UNDP supported mediation training projects as well as efforts to mainstream Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes. The PDA led UNDP efforts to provide mediation training for both the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAG) and members of the Ghana Association of Chattered Mediators (GACM). Through UNDP's help, GACM teamed up with the Legal Aid Council to set up ten 10 Community Mediation Councils across the country, which mediated more than 10,000 cases in just one year. Support for ADR services included provision of technical advice and funding support to help institutions such as the Ghana Judicial Service, the Legal Aid Council, CHRAG, and GACM develop new ADR programmes or improve existing ones. The PDA supported training programmes (such as a one-week workshop organized for members of Ghana bar Association, the Legal Aid Council, and the Ghana

Law School to develop rules of procedure for ADR services), and a novel idea to use national service personnel to provide ADR legal services through the use of chiefs' court premises.

### 1.2.7 SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL PEACE ARCHITECTURE (2005-2008)

UNDP also provided significant support to build the national peace architecture.<sup>44</sup> Working closely with the Ministry of the Interior, the PDA helped establish the first regional peace council: the Northern Regional Peace Advisory Council (NORPAC) in May 2004. NORPAC successfully tackled conflicts in the north through peace education, sensitisation, mediation, and peace rallies. UNDP assisted by providing funds and logistical supplies for some programmes, including conflict management training for NORPAC members. Based on NORPAC's success, a National Peace Council (NPC) was established in 2006 to coordinate the activities of the national peace architecture. Beyond the peace architecture, UNDP has also supported the enhanced participation of marginalised groups, particularly the youth and women, in local and national peacemaking efforts. The PDA arranged funding and technical support for several youth and women's groups, including the Women in Peace Building Movement, an organization dedicated to mobilising women for peace in the north of the country. The support enabled the organization to train members in conflict analysis and peacemaking.

## 1.3 OUTCOMES

The outcomes of these activities were predominantly positive and may have helped

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<sup>44</sup> The National Peace Architecture was set up to promote non-violent resolution of conflicts across the country. It comprises a National Peace Council charged with promoting peace at all levels of government; Regional Peace Advisory Councils responsible for the peaceful resolution of inter-district conflict or conflicts among groups that inhabit more than one district; and District Peace Advisory Councils in charge of promoting peace at the district level. A peacebuilding support unit (based at the Ministry of Interior in Accra) performs coordination and liaison functions.

prevent a major conflict in Ghana during the 2008 and 2012 elections. Concerning the Dagbon conflict, the PDA's decision to support conflict management training for butchers in Tamale, for example, proved to be very successful. The PDA's engagement with the butchers led to the dissolution of factional associations and the formation of a single butchers association, helping to diffuse some of the tensions underlying the conflict. Similarly, the strategy of engaging youth in the conflict area proved to be constructive. Besides the positive impact of peace and conflict training, the novelty football match, for example, created opportunities strengthened relationships and trust. The camaraderie and collaboration occasioned by "teamwork" became an important driver of peace between youth groups associated with the factions. Support for the formal conflict management process (both the Otumfuo process and the government's process) also yielded positive outcomes. Financial and technical support from UNDP and other actors, was particularly helpful, and contributed to a preliminary agreement to allow the Ya Na's burial on April 10 2006. On April 21, his eldest son, Abdulai Andani, was installed as Regent, bringing an element of closure to the citizens of Dagbon.

Programmes launched at the national level were also largely successful even if they faced certain implementation challenges. A 2009 evaluation of the impact of these programmes on conflict prevention in Ghana concluded that, in general terms, the programmes contributed to the prevention of violence in the country.<sup>45</sup> The report documents the positive impact of conflict-sensitivity training for the media, the National Peace Council, Youth groups, and support for women's peacemaking roles. However some initiatives proved to be unsustainable. UNDP's support for the Legal Aid Council's expansion of ADR services, for example, led to positive outcomes in justice delivery at the rural level, but was unsustainable because the

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<sup>45</sup> Draman, R. et al, 'The Conflict Prevention and Resolution Portfolio of UNDP Ghana: Evaluation Report', Cambridge MA: Collaborative Learning Projects, November 2009, page 35

programme relied upon national service personnel who typically emigrated to urban areas upon completing their mandatory year of national service.

## 1.4 CHALLENGES

The PDA in Ghana faced several challenges including inadequate funding and logistical support. While the array of UN agencies and the wider international community on the ground presents vast opportunity for collaboration and maximising impact, it also posed a coordination challenge to the PDA. Working through non-UN organizations, such as local NGOs, means that outcomes are often driven by these organizations, at times with limited influence or control by the PDA or UNDP. The 2009 Evaluation Report identified this as one of the potential bottlenecks for UNDP's ability to positively implement its peace agenda. Evidence suggests that the UNCT was not always certain how to use the PDA. Many of the directions regarding the PDA's role came from the RC, but that dynamic was not consistent or predictable, creating implementation challenges and delays. The 2009 Evaluation report noted another problem pertaining to the lack of clear direction and guidelines provided by UNCT leadership regarding the UN's role and engagement on conflict prevention.<sup>46</sup>

Another major obstacle in this example was Ghana's 1992 constitutional provisions regarding chieftaincy disputes.<sup>47</sup> Under article 272 of the constitution, chieftaincy disputes fall under the jurisdiction of Regional Houses of Chiefs and the National House of Chiefs (appellate).<sup>48</sup> This leaves very little room for other actors (domestic or foreign) to intervene systematically to help address chieftaincy disputes - a known driver of conflict in the country. UNDP's work in support of the Otumfuo mediation in Dagbon appears to be an outlier, which belies the fact that the UNCT has been unable to develop a

broader strategy for engaging systemic problems emanating from the chieftaincy institution. Without directly referencing the limitations imposed by the constitutional provisions on chieftaincy affairs, the 2009 evaluation report highlights the lack of such a broader strategy for addressing chieftaincy disputes as a "serious gap in programming."<sup>49</sup>

## 1.5 PROMISING PRACTICES AND FACTORS THAT DETERMINED OUTCOMES

Several factors account for the positive outcomes of UNDP's peace support activities in Ghana. The PDA's ability to develop a network of influential contacts and local advisors (including senior politicians, influential journalists, prominent lawyers, and civic leaders) was a key factor. The network enabled him to collect and vet information on the causes of conflict in the country, as well as solicit ideas about possible avenues for UNDP assistance. Access (through the network) to influential stakeholders, also facilitated cooperation with national and local Government departments whose leadership and support is essential to the success of UNDP's work. The PDA's own personal qualities as an outgoing, and affable person also contributed to the positive outcome. His knowledge of Ghanaian cultural practices (and his ability to draw links to his own cultural background) also played a major role. These qualities enabled him to mobilise the resources needed to make a positive impact on the ground.

## 1.6 LESSONS

Several lessons can be drawn from the Ghana case. First, the value of consulting stakeholders in the conflict zone (rather than relying solely on the opinions of national actors who may be somewhat detached) was extremely important. Second, cultural competency plays an important role in terms of

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<sup>46</sup> Draman, R. et al. (2009), page 40.

<sup>47</sup> The two PDAs interviewed for this case did not, however, frame the constitutional provisions as a limitation.

<sup>48</sup> See Article 272 (1), Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992.

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<sup>49</sup> Draman, R. et al (2009), page 38.

effective analysis of conflict dynamics and the identification of entry-points. The PDA's familiarity with the cultural norms of Northern Ghana, for example, helped him to identify influential local stakeholders. It also allowed him to take risks and "experiment" in ways that another PDA might not have been able to do. The case also points to the need to think about long-term sustainability when designing projects. The use of national service personnel in the Legal Aid programme, for example, shows how a promising project can falter if long-term staffing concerns are left unaddressed. The overall lesson from the Ghana case is that achieving desired outcomes requires a PDA to possess the right technical skills needed to identify entry-points, craft meaningful intervention strategies, and mobilise the requisite resources for implementation.

## 2.0 GUYANA

### 2.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Since it gained independence from Britain in 1966, Guyana has been plagued by ethno-political conflicts involving the country's two dominant ethnic groups, the Indo-Guyanese (who make up 43.5% of the population) and the Afro-Guyanese (who comprise 30.2% of the population). The country's two biggest political parties are ethnically-based and tend to encourage ethnic voting. The Indo-Guyanese support the People's Progressive Party (PPP), which has dominated Guyanese politics since the country's first "free and fair" elections in 1992. Similarly, the Afro-Guyanese support the People's National Congress (PNC), which dominated the political landscape in the 1970s and 1980s and is now part of a broader coalition called A Partnership for National Unity (APNU).<sup>50</sup> APNU was formed during the 2011 elections and currently controls the National Assembly.

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<sup>50</sup> Other members of APNU the Guyana Action party (GAP), the National Front Alliance (NFA), People's National Congress Reform (PNCR), and the working people's Alliance (WPA).

Friction between the two groups is largely the result of competition over the allocation of socio-economic resources and political power. Declining economic growth and the pressures of a youth bulge are also contributory factors. The resulting tensions feed into a narrative of relative deprivation and distrust peddled on both sides by elites and, occasionally, leads to violence especially during elections. The March 2001 elections, which were particularly contentious, led to significant levels of violence and deaths. Subsequent elections (in 2006 and 2011) have been less prone to violence largely as a result of local and national efforts (supported by UNPD and other development partners) designed to build trust and social cohesion in the country. Guyana continues to face challenges, and UNDP has remained a partner for Guyanese efforts to build capacity for managing present and future problems.

A PDA was appointed to Guyana in 2003 after an inter-agency mission recommended a UN conflict prevention presence to help the country manage its conflicts.<sup>51</sup> With elections on the horizon (in August 2006), the PDA led UNDP's efforts to develop (in partnership with other donors) several strategies to support local actors to promote peace as part of a Social Cohesion Programme (SCP). Critical elements of the SCP included providing capacity-building, training, and strategic support to national partners with a view to changing the tone of political discourse in Guyana under difficult ethno-political circumstances. Through cooperation with governmental and non-governmental partners, UNDP, led by the PDA, made a modest but long-lasting contribution towards peace in Guyana.

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<sup>51</sup> The mission, which visited Guyana in 2002, comprised representatives from the DPA, UNDP (RBLAC and BCPR), DESA, OCHA, and OHCHR. The PDA was appointed in 2003 as a Peace and Development Expert.

## 2.2 STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

### 2.2.1 BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

A major goal of the SCP was to help develop the conflict management capacity of local governance institutions. To that effect, UNDP signed a MoU with the Ministry of Local Government to provide assistance to several Regions<sup>52</sup> and supported several projects designed to help officers of the Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs) and the Police force to improve their conflict management capacity. UNDP's support included financial and technical assistance to organisers of workshops and training programmes for RDCs. In July 2005, for example, UNDP supported a weekend conflict transformation workshop for the chairpersons and councillors of Region 3. It also sponsored the Chairpersons of Regions 3 and 4 (and coordinator of the Spirit of Guyana – a civic group) to attend a peacebuilding workshop in Turkey in March 2006.<sup>53</sup> UNDP's support for the Police included technical and funding support for the organization of three conflict mediation workshops for police officers between December 2005 and June 2006.

### 2.2.2 BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

Another major strategy of the SCP involved supporting the development of Guyana's national infrastructures for peace. This involved engagement with the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC), which became a major partner for the SCP. A needs assessment of the ERC (conducted in July 2004) resulted in UNDP providing strategic planning

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52 Guyana is divided into 10 regions each of which is administered by a Regional Democratic Council (RDC) headed by a Chairman. Under the MoU, direct beneficiaries of the SCP included Regions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

53 Building National Capacity for Conflict Prevention and Transformation workshop, 6-8 March YEAR, Istanbul, Turkey.

and conflict management training support for the Commission.<sup>54</sup> The PDA facilitated UNDP's support for a two-day workshop in February 2004 to train ERC commissioners in ethnic conflict management as well as to assist the Commission in its efforts to promote conflict awareness and skills training for key segments of the Guyanese public.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps the most visible aspect of UNDP's partnership with the ERC was support for the Commission's facilitation of Multi-Stakeholder Forums (MSFs) organized to promote community-level dialogue on conflict and peace challenges throughout the country.

The MSFs provided safe spaces for ordinary Guyanese to take ownership of peacebuilding in their country through dialogue and collaborative problem-solving initiatives in their communities. In a strategic move to focus on the needs of specific groups, MSFs were organized for women (8 August 2006), religious leaders (9 August), and youth (10 August). Each of these MSFs provided an opportunity for cross-community networking and collaboration among stakeholders dedicated to finding comprehensive solutions to challenges to peace in their community.

The PDA also facilitated UNDP's support for projects designed to help Guyanese institutions improve their early-warning capacities. Examples include training in early-warning mechanisms for groups such as political parties,<sup>56</sup> and their affiliated youth groups, whose conduct was deemed crucial to peace in the country.

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54 Myers, Jason and Calder, Jason "Toward Ethnic Conflict Transformation: A Case Study Of Citizen Peacebuilding Initiatives On The 2006 Guyana Elections" Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 4., Franklin, West Virginia, Future Generations Graduate School, November 2011, page 42.

55 In August 2004, UNDP supported a film festival organized by the ERC to create awareness on diversity and tolerance among school children (August 2004); a conflict transformation workshop organized for leaders of political parties and civil society organizations. It also supported a one-day consultative meeting (held in September 2005) organized to help civic leaders consider strategies to promote conversation at local, regional and national levels.

56 In July 2003, for example, UNDP supported the participation of the Secretaries-General of the PPP and PNC in a UN Early-Warning Mechanisms workshop held on the Dutch-Caribbean Island of Curacao.



### 2.2.3 BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

UNDP also helped Guyana build social cohesion by supporting projects that provide conflict management training for key stakeholders including the youth, media, trade unions, and civil society actors.

#### SUPPORT FOR YOUTH GROUPS

The PDA facilitated UNDP's support for conflict management training programmes that benefit youth. Two youth groups in particular received targeted support: the Guyana Youth and Student Movement (GYSM, the youth wing of the PNC) and the Progressive Youth Organization (PYO), which is affiliated with the PPP. UNDP helped organize several meetings that addressed some of the training needs of leaders of the two groups<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, UNDP's support enabled leaders of GYSM and PYO to participate in a Summer Peacebuilding Institute held at Eastern Mennonite University in the United States (June 2005). The programme provided much-needed international exposure and training in international peacebuilding and conflict transformation skills for the leaders.

#### SUPPORT FOR UNIONS

UNDP also supported conflict management training programmes for Unions, which had become politicized and threatened to fuel escalation of political tensions in the country. To help turn Unions into agents of peace, UNDP provided support for several conflict training programmes, including a peace education workshop (June 2004), and a weekend strategic planning workshop (in December 2004) organized for members of the Guyana Congress of Trades Unions.

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<sup>57</sup> Examples include a Party Youth Leadership Planning Session (October 2003), and a Party Youth Arms training workshop (April 2005).

#### SUPPORT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

UNDP has dedicated significant resources and attention to help build the conflict management capacity of civil society actors in Guyana. Beneficiaries include the Spirit of Guyana (SOG), and the Guyanese Peacebuilding Network (GPBN). The SOG emerged out of facilitation training organized by the ERC with UNDP support in late 2005. With UNDP's help, SOG developed into a major partner for the ERC, particularly in the area of training facilitators for MSFs. UNDP also helped to convene the GPBN, a collection of peace activists who had previously participated in SCP programmes.<sup>58</sup> UNDP's support helped the GPBN to organize a forum (in August 2006) that brought leaders of five political parties to the National Library in Georgetown to discuss their strategies for promoting peace after the elections<sup>59</sup>. UNDP also supported the GPBN's efforts to research factors that contributed to the relatively peaceful elections in August 2006. At the time, the PDA served as the focal point for UNDP in all these efforts.

#### SUPPORT FOR THE MEDIA

The PDA also dedicated significant resources and attention to the Guyanese media, which plays an important role in framing political discourse in the country. UNDP support facilitated consultations among journalists and other media stakeholders. Between February and May 2004, for example, four such consultation sessions were held to bring owners of media houses, editors, and prominent journalists together to consider the drafting of a broadcasting bill and to deliberate on steps towards self-regulation. UNDP also supported a June 2004 strategic planning session that brought in the Centre for Communication and Studies at the University of Guyana to design courses on journalism for journalists.

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<sup>58</sup> Myers and Calder (2011), page 43.

<sup>59</sup> Guyana Development Gateway, 'Peace and Politics: Uniting Guyana during and after elections', DATE (see <http://www.guyanagateway.org.gy/node/248>).

## SUPPORT FOR THE PEACE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

UNDP's support for peace promotion activities in Guyana also included a significant focus on peace research and education. In February 2004, for example, UNDP assisted the University of Guyana to organize a conference on Conflict Analysis, Conflict Resolution and Governance. The conference, which drew the participation of national and international peace scholars, prominent politicians, and civil society leaders, helped create awareness of the value of conflict resolution training and became an important marker in efforts to promote peace research and education in the country.

## 2.3 OUTCOMES

UNDP's support for peacebuilding programmes in Guyana has been largely successful. An evaluation of the SCP conducted by Lund and Myers in 2007, for example, concluded that the programme achieved its broad objective of promoting social cohesion and peace at national, regional and local levels.<sup>60</sup> Another study (conducted by Simmons and Myers in 2006) also credits the SCP with having provided a "single formalised mechanism for some communities to convey their sentiments to political leaders."<sup>61</sup> Beyond these broad characterizations of success, there are some specific examples of positive outcomes. These include evidence that suggests that civil society became empowered by the SCP: members of Spirit of Guyana, for example, undertook several peace promotion activities following their participation in UNDP-supported capacity-building projects. There is also some

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60 Lund, Michael and Myers, Roxanne 'Can Fostering a Culture of Dialogue Change the Course of a Nation? An Evaluation of the Social Cohesion Programme. Key Findings and Summary of Recommendations', UNDP UNDP-Guyana Report. August 2007, page 13.

61 Simmons, Terrence and Myers, Roxanne 'From Violent to Peaceful Elections: A Preliminary Look at Peacebuilding Initiatives in Guyana', Georgetown, 2006, December unpublished. Cited in Myers, Roxanne and Calder, Jason 'Toward Ethnic Conflict Transformation: A Case Study Of Citizen Peacebuilding Initiatives On The 2006 Guyana Elections,' Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 4 (Franklin, West Virginia, Future Generations Graduate School, November 2011, page 50

evidence to support a theory that engagement with the media appears to have had a positive impact. The PDA notes (in his final report), for example, that major news outlets, particularly Kaieteur News, appeared not only to have behaved responsibly during the elections, but also promoted peace by donating advertising space to Bikers Uniting Guyana as well as carrying peace promoting news articles submitted for publication.<sup>62</sup>

It can also be argued that UNDP's support for programmes targeting youth leaders had a positive impact. Outreach and training programmes such as the Party Youth Leadership Planning Session and the Party Youth Arms training workshop, for example, led to a commitment by the two youth groups to consider a joint calendar of activities. Similarly, UNDP's engagement with Unions contributed to their depoliticisation. These positive anecdotes suggest that the SCP may have played a crucial role in reducing violence during the 2006 elections.

## 2.4 CHALLENGES

The PDA and UNDP more broadly faced several challenges in Guyana. First, entrenched negative ethno-political attitudes (and attendant personal and group security challenges) made developing and sustaining a meaningful national dialogue on peace difficult. Other studies acknowledge this point in their work, which also found that large sections of the population were "overcome by the needs for personal safety and security" and remained unaffected by peacebuilding initiatives requiring them to "reach across villages to work towards a common future."<sup>63</sup> Another challenge was persistent tensions caused by allegations of extra-judicial killings and abuse of State resources. UNDP was unable to openly address these allegations (due to the nature of its mandate), and chose instead

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62 Spies, Chris 'End of Assignment Report' PDA Guyana Report, UNDP, 2013, page 25.

63 Myers, Chris and Calder, Jason, 2011, page 60.

to focus on its conflict transformation work.<sup>64</sup> A third challenge pertains to the broad scope of the SCP and its impact on output monitoring. Another evaluation of the programme suggests that the multi-pronged thrust of the SCP “might have led to insufficient efforts to track and measure results.”<sup>65</sup>

## 2.5 PROMISING PRACTICES AND FACTORS THAT DETERMINED OUTCOMES

Several factors appear to help explain the relative success of the SCP. They include the sheer scale of the grassroots peace promotion efforts organized through the Multi-Stakeholder Forums. Tens of thousands of Guyanese received some form of conflict and peace awareness education as a result of these (MSFs) and media campaigns led by UNDP’s national partners. One study estimates that about five per cent of the total population of Guyana was reached directly by the SCP while many more were reached through media messaging.<sup>66</sup>

An even more important factor of success was the sustainability of peace promotion efforts as local partners, such as (SOG), became trainers themselves after receiving facilitation training support from UNDP. The PDA reports, for example, that SOG members organized peace process skills training for 300 teachers in Region 3,<sup>67</sup> produced a CD of peace songs and peace messages for local TV and radio broadcast ahead of the elections, and supported Bikers Uniting Guyana to organise a motorcycle ride from Region 6 to Linden (in Region 10) via Georgetown to promote peace and harmony in April 2006.<sup>68</sup>

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64 Lund and Myers suggest that ignoring the human rights dimensions of the problem might not have been the best way to promote long-term conflict resolution given that “human rights and conflict transformation are both necessary to resolve conflicts.” Michael Lund and Roxanne Myers (2007), page 11.

65 Lund and Myers (2007), page 11.

66 Lund and Myers, (2007), page 9.

67 Spies, (2013), page 23.

68 Ibid. Page 23.

Other institutions that benefited from UNDP support also engaged in peace promotion activities on their own. The religious leaders who participated in SCP workshops, for example, became actively involved in peace promotion efforts and launched a campaign to get leaders of political parties to sign a peace pledge.<sup>69</sup> Another case in point is the GPBN, which was comprised of people who had previously benefitted from SCP programmes. Also noteworthy is a decision by the Police administration to provide mediation training for top officers and to incorporate mediation training into its curriculum for training the rank and file.<sup>70</sup> Such positive activities helped create a self-sustaining grassroots peace movement across Guyana.

## 2.6 LESSONS

Several lessons can be drawn from the Guyana experience. First, successful operation as a PDA requires a good working relationship with the RC and key members of the UNCT. In Guyana, for example, good relations with the RC enabled the PDA to have major inputs into programme design and implementation. Good relations also allowed him to pursue conflict prevention and peacebuilding leads without fear of a backlash.

Second, some prior knowledge of the country-context and familiarity with the work of the UNCT can be essential for success. The PDA’s prior experience as a facilitator of a UN workshop in Guyana provided an opportunity to meet with, and “test the chemistry” with UNCT colleagues before his deployment.<sup>71</sup> This proved important for his relationship with key members of UNCT and others stakeholders.

Third, strong local buy-in and local ownership of projects is a prerequisite for successful peace promotion programmes. Much of the success

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69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid. Page 3.

witnessed in Guyana, for example, was due to the strong ownership exhibited by local partners.

A related lesson is the need to prioritise capacity development of local actors as the mainstay of any long-term peacebuilding effort. In Guyana, such capacity-building attention from the PDA and UNDP ensured that national partners could assume control of local peace promotion efforts without too much help from donors.

## 3.0 KYRGYZSTAN

### 3.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Kyrgyzstan has struggled to find socio-political stability since its independence in 1991. Mass protests over economic and political grievances toppled its first two leaders, Askar Akaev (1991-2005) and Kurmanbek Bakiev (2005-2010). In June 2010 a simmering political conflict exploded into nationalist violence that left many dead and displaced many more. The worst affected areas were the southern cities of Osh and Jalalabad, where radical Kyrgyz nationalists targeted ethnic Uzbeks. A burgeoning narcotics trade, and ever-present threat of Islamic guerrilla activity added to the severity of the crisis. A new constitution paved the way for parliamentary elections in October 2010 and the election of President Almazbek Atambaev a year later.

The 2011 election, however, was relatively peaceful and led to a coalition government that gave rise to hopes that Kyrgyzstan's instability might be over. However many problems remain today. The country's democracy is still fragile and its economy continues to struggle amidst charges of official corruption. Rising food prices, declining foreign remittances, unreliable power supply, and growing regional disparities have added to the hardship. The coalition government collapsed in August 2012 under the weight of these and other problems and a new government (under Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiev) was appointed in September.

Kyrgyzstan remains a poor performer on key social and economic indicators. However, with UNDP's support, the country continues to confront its challenges and appears poised for a breakthrough.

#### 3.1.1 PDA ROLE AND MANDATE IN KYRGYZSTAN

The Kyrgyzstan PDA was appointed in response to the Government's request for UN assistance with reconstruction and reconciliation endeavours following the June 2010 violence. With PBF providing funding support,<sup>72</sup> the PDA led UNDP's efforts to help national partners build capacity for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Several UN agencies (including PBSO, UN Women, and DPA) helped to shape peace projects undertaken by UNDP in partnership with the government. These projects built upon previous UNDP peace support efforts, including the Democratic Governance Programme, the Preventive Development Programme, and the Peace and Development Programme. In November 2010, a UNDAF Strategic Prioritization Workshop was held in Bishkek to outline project goals and targets for Kyrgyzstan. The PDA and UNDP led the design and implementation of peace promotion projects under the UNDAF.

### 3.2 STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The PDA's strategies and activities reflect larger peacebuilding goals outlined in the UNDAF and reinforced by the PBF (under both the IRF and PRF). The Peace and Development Analysis launched under the Peace and Development Programme in 2008 by UNDP in partnership with Kyrgyzstan's Department for Economic and

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<sup>72</sup> The PBF approved \$3 million in October 2010 from its Immediate Response Facility (IRF) for Kyrgyzstan. Later, the SG approved an additional \$7 million from the PBF's Programme Recovery Facility (PRF) to fund several peacebuilding priority projects.

Social Policy, and the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI) informed analysis of triggers of Kyrgyzstan's conflict.<sup>73</sup> The PDA consulted with key stakeholders such as Government officials, political party leaders, leaders of NGOs and civic groups, professional associations, women's and youth groups. Information gathered from these consultations informed the design, planning and implementation of UNDP projects supporting peacebuilding efforts of Government and other local partners. The section that follows reviews the PDA's leadership of peace support projects in three key areas: conflict-sensitivity promotion, peace infrastructure development, and dialogue and mediation support services.

### 3.2.1 CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY PROMOTION

The PDA led UNDP's efforts to assist national actors in their efforts to mainstream conflict-sensitivity in Kyrgyzstan. Programming reflected the conflict-sensitivity needs expressed at consultative meetings organized by the UNCT and national partners.<sup>74</sup> UNDP (in collaboration with the World Bank and OSCE), for example, supported Government counterparts to promote a conflict-sensitive urban development agenda. UNDP became a co-chair of the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) assembled to pursue that agenda. The PDA led the co-chairing effort on behalf of UNDP and engaged key local stakeholders in a continuous dialogue on how

best to promote human rights as part of a broader urban development agenda in cities such as Osh.

At the national level, the PDA helped guide UNDP's support for conflict-sensitive law-making at Kyrgyzstan's parliament. He supported efforts to create a conflict-sensitive methodology for lawmakers when a review of global practices failed to find a model suitable for Kyrgyzstan's unique social cohesion challenges. He provided facilitation and technical support to enable a team of experts and stakeholders (including MPs, Government officials, legal experts, and conflict prevention experts) to develop, test, and pilot the methodology. The methodology was approved by MPs and other participants at an international conference called to consider the role of parliament in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

### 3.2.2 DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION SUPPORT

UNDP's support for dialogue and mediation programmes in Kyrgyzstan reflected priorities set by local stakeholders, including President Atambayev, who highlighted mediation-related capacity-building needs in a 2012 meeting with RC Alexander Avanesov and SRSG Miroslav Jenča. To help address such concerns, UNDP has collaborated with national partners to promote dialogue and mediation support activities. The PDA often leads these collaborative efforts on UNDP's behalf. For example, he helped coordinate a joint effort with the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) to organize a dialogue session that brought law enforcement officers and civil society actors to Bishkek to consider ways to prevent violence during the 2011 elections. The meeting's success led the President to request that a similar event be planned for Osh, the epicentre of the June 2010 violence. The PDA has supported dialogue at the national level. In November 2012, for example, he facilitated a conference organized by UNDP and the Office of the Speaker of Parliament to explore

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<sup>73</sup> The Peace and Development Analysis aimed to help improve strategies for conflict prevention in Kyrgyzstan. Its preliminary findings were presented for local stakeholder comments at various workshops organized at the regional level throughout the country.

<sup>74</sup> On October 19, 2011, for example, the Peace and Development Programme and the Democratic Governance Programme jointly organized a roundtable meeting with government partners at Osh to explore ideas for conflict-sensitive development for peace in the country. The Roundtable, which was attended by Jantoro Satybaldiev (Minister and Head of the State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development of Osh and Jalal-Abad cities), the Deputy Mayors of Osh and Jalal-Abad cities, representatives of Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces, and NGOs, considered best practices in implementing conflict-sensitive projects, mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity in project cycles, participatory approaches to conflict-sensitive programming.

avenues to improve Parliament-civil society cooperation for peace in the country. Participants from other countries were invited to share their experiences at the conference.<sup>75</sup>

UNDP has also supported mediation-related capacity-building by funding training programmes for local mediators and helping to create awareness about laws governing mediation practices in Kyrgyzstan. In September 2012, for example, UNDP joined the Organization of Islamic Conference to organize mediation training for Islamic religious leaders. The training was led by mediation experts from DPA's MSU, who also trained advanced mediators to handle complex cases in Kyrgyzstan. The PDA assisted in the development of criteria for selecting participants for the training. He also helped direct UNDP's support for the establishment of a Mediation Coordination Committee to serve as a platform for collaboration among mediators and also for deliberating on Kyrgyzstan's draft mediation law. These training programmes have helped strengthen Kyrgyzstan's conflict prevention capacity.

UNDP's support for peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan is not limited to dialogue and mediation support activities. With the help of the PDA, the UNCT seized other opportunities to support peace activities initiated by the Government. In September 2012, for example, UNDP supported the Office of the President to promote peace through a "Peace Caravan" campaign. UNDP joined with UN-Women to provide technical advice and financial support for the campaign, which involved a national "peace tour" featuring "peace role models" selected through a TV/social media competition event. The PDA helped plan aspects of the campaign and played a lead role in facilitating the partnership with the Office of the President.

### 3.2.3 INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

The PDA has led UNDP efforts to help national partners develop Kyrgyzstan's peace infrastructure. Activities include advocating for the establishment of a body to coordinate conflict prevention, supporting reform of existing institutions such as the Assembly of the People, and promoting conflict-related early-warning at the local level.

UNDP has been a strong supporter of a local advocacy campaign (mostly by NGOs) to get the Government to establish a national body to coordinate conflict prevention efforts in the country. UNDP (in collaboration with UN-Women) consulted stakeholders and supported public outreach events touting the value of a centralized approach to conflict prevention. The PDA took the lead in organizing these consultations and outreach. He also helped mobilize some 30 NGOs active in conflict prevention to draft a letter to the President requesting action on the matter. The letter enumerated the merits of institutionalizing conflict prevention through the establishment of a high Government office to coordinate prevention efforts across the country. The advocacy campaign generated little attention at the presidency until a change in Government in September 2012.

Another peace infrastructure advocacy project supported by UNDP is a campaign to reform the Assembly of People, a public platform for promoting inter-ethnic harmony in Kyrgyzstan. The campaign aims to help the Assembly to better protect the Uzbek minority. UNDP joined with several partners (including OHCHR and the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities) to provide funding and technical advice for the advocacy effort. With UNDP support, a local consultant was recruited to assess the Assembly's capacity and to suggest ways for improvement.

Cognizant of the value of early-warning, the PDA has supported crisis monitoring in Kyrgyzstan. He coordinated UNDP's partnership with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Foundation for Tolerance

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<sup>75</sup> Key foreign participants included the Kenyan National Ethnic & Race Relations Commission

International (FTI) to design and implement a simple monitoring system involving local NGOs and provincial level Advisory Councils in seven provinces. He also provided training support, including in the ICT, to local conflict monitors as part of the efforts to strengthen early-warning capacity in the country.

### 3.3 OUTCOMES

These strategies and projects have helped to strengthen Kyrgyzstan's conflict management capacity. The conflict-sensitivity law-making methodology, for example, has already been used to improve draft laws deemed conflict-insensitive. In November 2012, for example, a team of experts participating in a national conference on the peacebuilding roles of parliament tested the efficacy of the methodology by applying it to around 29 draft laws that had been presented in parliament. The experts discovered that nearly half (14 of the 29) did not meet the conflict-insensitive threshold set by the methodology and made appropriate recommendations for improving the draft laws. Similarly, outcomes of the dialogue promotion and mediation support programmes have been largely positive though challenges remain. The dialogue between parliament and civil society, for example, seems to be going well after a slow start. The mediation support programme has also yielded positive outcomes, including the establishment of a Mediation Coordination Committee to enhance collaboration among mediators; furthermore, the PDA's engagement of local institutions helped to develop the mediation training capacity of local bodies, such as the Institute of Public Policy (a Kyrgyz institute that does mediation and mediation training). There is also evidence that mediation practice is catching on in Kyrgyzstan and the country now has a new association dedicated to promoting mediation in the country.

The advocacy campaign to get Government to establish a central body to coordinate conflict prevention activities has also produced some good outcomes after a slow start. The campaign led to the inclusion of the coordination concept in Kyrgyzstan's

2012 Strategic Development Strategy, paving the way for a new body - the National Agency for Local Self Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations - to be formed. The early-warning and conflict monitoring programmes are still in their pilot phases. They should contribute significantly to Kyrgyzstan's capacity to detect conflict when fully functional.

### 3.4 CHALLENGES

Several challenges confront the work of PDAs in Kyrgyzstan. Among these are an unstable country context, funding constraints, and a lack of clarity about mandate and reporting lines. Political instability has hampered programme implementation and made it difficult for the PDA and UNDP to establish the kinds of local stakeholder networks essential to operational success. Programmes often suffer when the requesting government is removed from power and when the successor government then emphasizes other priorities, as was the case following the overthrow of Bakiev in 2010.

Finding adequate funding for projects is another major challenge. In spite of benefiting from PBF funding, there are programme needs that are not adequately covered. This has led to the PDA exploring alternative funding options for some projects. Another challenge is the lack of clarity regarding the PDA's relationship with the RC and UNCT. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the relationship structure and reporting lines are even more complicated by the PBF funding.

### 3.5 PROMISING PRACTICES AND FACTORS THAT DETERMINED OUTCOMES

Several factors account for the PDA's relative success in Kyrgyzstan. First, the PDA's ability to explore joint-funding opportunities for projects has been a major boost for the UNCT as a whole. The PDA, for example, is collaborating with the World Bank team

on a joint proposal to seek Swiss Trust Fund support for several conflict-sensitivity projects. This shows initiative and innovation on the part of the PDA.

Another factor of success is the PDA's prioritization of needs assessments in planning projects. This approach has helped establish a baseline for measuring progress as well as helped identify gaps in existing knowledge and literature on best practices that can then be filled in. This was the case in the development of the conflict-sensitive law-making methodology. A review of the practice experiences in conflict-sensitive law-making produced no adequate models for Kyrgyzstan, clearly underscoring the essential nature of the methodological aspects of the project.

Also helpful is the PDA's ability to identify opportunities for progress within unstable contexts and taking advantage of them. An example is the conflict prevention coordination advocacy campaign, which made little progress in its first few years due to an unfavourable political climate. Collapse of the coalition government in August 2012 added new complications, but the PDA managed to salvage the campaign by leveraging past good relations with members of the new Government.<sup>76</sup>

The PDA's forward-thinking abilities have also contributed to his success in Kyrgyzstan. His August/September 2012 PDA report, for example, devoted considerable space to analysing future trends in regional and inter-state conflict in the Fergana valley of Central Asia. This forward-looking report laid out various worst-case conflict scenarios that might emerge out of rising demographic pressures on land and water resources, the impact of State collapse and insecurity in Afghanistan (particularly how that might impact extremist groups like Islamist

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<sup>76</sup> Key contacts included Jantoro Satybaldiev, the new Prime Minister, who had benefited from cooperated with UNDP when he was Director of the State Directorate for the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Osh and Jalal-Abad cities (SDRD); and Mira Karybaeva, Chief of Staff of the President's Office. Mira Karybaeva was later appointed to head the Department for Ethnic Development, Religious Affairs and Interaction with Civil Society in the Office of the President. She became important asset to the PDA in that new position.

Jihad Union, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and Hizb ut-Tahir operating in the Fergana valley and organized crime in Kyrgyzstan), and the politics of border demarcation and associated disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.<sup>77</sup> Such forward-looking analysis enables the UNCT to anticipate and plan for problems before they arise.

## 3.6 LESSONS

Several lessons can be drawn from the PDA's work in Kyrgyzstan. They include the value of good networking among all stakeholder communities – civil society, government, security agencies, research community, and donors. This not only ensures local buy-in for projects, but also provides a measure of insurance for projects when requesting governments are removed from power.

Another lesson is that support for advocacy projects can yield dividends in "tough" political contexts when done well. The PDA's use of local NGOs to advocate (through letter-writing) for a central body to coordinate conflict prevention activities is a case in point. Development agencies are often reluctant to directly and publicly advocate for policies that run counter to host government agenda. Deferring the public aspects of the advocacy campaign to local NGOs (while providing strong technical support) worked in Kyrgyzstan.

Another lesson pertains to the value of prioritising local ownership in designing and implementing projects. A critical evaluation of projects funded by PBF under the IRF1, suggests that low local ownership may have undermined some of the projects implemented by the UNCT. The evaluation, which was conducted by two PBF consultants from 10 May to 30 June 2012, reports that local authorities felt left out of the decision-making process even though the UNDP project staff consulted them.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Name, 2012, page.

<sup>78</sup> Zapach, Marla and Gulnara, Ibraeva, 'Final Evaluation-Kyrgyzstan Peacebuilding Fund - Immediate Response Facility (IRF)'; 2012, page 28.



The report offers three explanations for the low levels of ownership of the IRF1 projects: the timing of the projects (immediately after the June 2010 violence);<sup>79</sup> the absence of a Joint Steering Committee;<sup>80</sup> and insufficient communication between the UNCT and the national Government.<sup>81</sup> The cumulative impact was the emergence of an “understanding divide” between the UNCT and local authorities.

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79 The evaluators note that the projects were launched at a time when the “transitional government was still trying to consolidate its authority and was unable to respond and participate fully in the development of the IRF1 programming given the rapidity of the IRF response mechanism and the humanitarian crisis that was ongoing at the time.” See Zapach and Gulnara (2012), page 28

80 The report notes that the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was never activated, and hence did not meet. Under the IRF, the JSC is mandatory and should have been composed of senior representatives of the UNCT, the Kyrgyz government, major donors, and civil society groups. It is a major coordinating body that enables local stakeholders to give inputs to project planning and implementation decision-making. The fact that the committee was not activated therefore constituted a significant loss for local ownership.

81 The report suggests that the UNCT lacked an effective peacebuilding strategy and was ineffective in its communication and engagement with national Government. This, presumably, was the principal cause of an “understanding divide” between the UNCT and the Government. However, a senior UNCT staff member is quoted in the report shifts the blame for the understanding divide to local authorities who are “not well informed and don’t understand peacebuilding...(and)... need to be convinced on the value of peacebuilding Zapach and Gulnara (2012). Ibid.

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