



United Nations
Department of Political Affairs

Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on
Building National Capacities for
Conflict Prevention



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Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention

Programme Document for Reformulation and Re-establishment of the Programme, 2012-2014

I. Executive Summary

1. UNDP and DPA have collaborated on the development and implementation of conflict prevention initiatives in the field through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (Joint Programme), first launched in 2004, and then extended in 2006 and 2008 thru 2011. The programme is executed by UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) on behalf of UNDP and DPA

2. Over the past eight years, support from the Joint Programme has made a contribution to violence-free elections or referenda in countries as diverse as Guyana, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Benin, Togo, Lesotho, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, and the Solomon Islands; resolution of specific conflicts or deadlocks in Nigeria, Lesotho, Bolivia, Ghana, and Kenya; sustaining viable platforms for dialogue or conflict resolution in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Fiji, Georgia, Ukraine, and Malawi; and initiatives to reduce insecurity in Ecuador, Mauritania, and Bangladesh (see appendix for more details).

3. Drawing on best practices from these initiatives, UNDP and DPA are reformulating the programme for a two year period, from March 2012 to March 2014. During this period the programme will:

a. Develop strategic conflict prevention initiatives at the country level, including through the deployment of "peace and development advisors;"

b. Provide targeted assistance for specific facilitation activities jointly undertaken in non-mission settings (examples: the Malawi Facilitation; the facilitation by the National Elders' Forum in Uganda, etc.);

c. Support joint assessment, analysis, and "knowledge development" by DPA and UNDP, in the context of support for country-level initiatives;

d. Provide short-term support for conflict and/ or political analysis through deployment of advisors in priority/crisis countries.

4. The Joint Programme will be overseen and guided by a Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by DPA and BCPR at the ASG-level. The Steering Committee is supported in its deliberations by a Technical Committee comprised of working level representatives of DPA, UNDP, and the Secretariat to the Interagency Framework Team for Coordination on Preventive Action. Day-to-day management of the Joint Programme will be assured by a dedicated programme manager housed in UNDP/BCPR. The programme will continue to be administered by BCPR.

5. Country support from the Joint Programme is initiated on the basis of a request from a UN Resident Coordinator to the Steering Committee, or on approaches to Resident Coordinators from UN Headquarters based on specific analysis or early warning received. Prioritization of requests is based on the following:

- i. Analysis as to the potential for increasing societal tension or violent conflict;
- ii. Analysis of the comparative advantage and added value of Joint Programme conflict prevention initiatives, as well as the availability of entry points, or the potential for developing them;
- iii. Ability of the RC to innovate and undertake strategic initiatives for prevention

6. Determination of whether to provide country support involves regional desks and country focal points from both UNDP and DPA. This determination, as well as of the substantive content of the support, is made by the Technical Committee working closely with the RC on the ground. As appropriate and necessary, an informal working group comprised of relevant colleagues from DPA, UNDP, and other agencies provides ongoing support to the RC, and to the PDA or other staff deployed to support the RC. In the cases when an Inter-Agency Task Force is in place for the country in question, this support is provided through the Task Force.

II. Key Lessons Learned from the Current Implementation of the Joint Programme

7. Since 2004, UNDP and DPA have jointly implemented the “Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (Joint Programme).” The Programme was formally inaugurated by the Under-Secretaries-General of UNDP and DPA in January 2004. The Joint Programme brings together desk officers and conflict prevention experts from DPA, UNDP, and the concerned UNDP Country Offices, and on occasion from other UN partners such as UNICEF, DESA, and OHCHR, to provide joint analysis, technical support, assistance for initial programme design and implementation, and “seed funding,” for strategic conflict prevention initiatives at the country level. Support for the

Joint Programme has been provided by Finland, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, the Hewlett Foundation, Switzerland, DPA, and BCPR.

8. Successful UN support for conflict prevention often requires critical initial, catalytic work that opens entry points, obtains buy-in from key national counterparts, and ensures that effective response is grounded in sound analysis and strategy. This initial support, which is provided through PDAs primarily deployed through the Joint Programme, includes:

- a. Conducting indicative or preparatory activities that illustrate to national actors the value of non-violent approaches to conflict management and resolution;
- b. Developing “entry points” for conflict prevention through ongoing development programmes, including by assisting national actors for developing their own capacities to address emerging conflicts (this is particularly difficult in situations in which the UN does not have a political presence in-country);
- c. Ensuring the availability of the right analyses to all concerned actors;
- d. Ensuring adequate political and technical assistance, including the management of political risk, for UN Country Teams for the development of conflict-sensitive strategies and initiatives.

9. A number of key lessons and pointers have emerged from the implementation of this support in 25 countries since 2004:

- i. Many country situations require sustained engagement beyond the normal 1-2 year “programming cycle” in order for lasting national resources and capacities for conflict management to be built. It is critical, therefore, for UN assistance in this regard to be sustained; a break in assistance can reverse initial and fragile gains.
- ii. Related to the above, UN engagement with conflict prevention in specific country situations should be conceptualized in terms of a “sustainability” strategy, rather than an “exit strategy,” i.e. with the establishment of viable internal mechanisms for sustaining internal dialogue and conflict management a clear programmatic priority.
- iii. In many country situations, “entry points” for conflict prevention can be more rapidly developed for work at the local level, and on the back of a development portfolio. Useful and successful as these efforts are in resolving conflicts at the local level and in reducing the overall level of violent tension in a society, they might prove ineffective if they do not lead to similar processes at the national level. However, political sensitivities tend to be much higher at the national level, and interventions at this level require sustained political and strategic engagement between staff at UN headquarters and the field.

- iv. The viability and sustainability of conflict prevention initiatives at the country level is partly linked to the competencies of existing staff, as well as staff turnover and security of tenure of these staff in UN field presences, especially UNDP Country Offices. Key initiatives have undergone long periods of interregnum, or extended gestation periods, due to staff turnover or insufficient skills to conduct analysis, facilitate dialogue or imbue conflict sensitivity into all aspects of the UN Country Team’s work. Sustained engagement between UN headquarters and the field beyond the initial development of interventions, and the consistent disbursement of programmatic resources, is necessary to avoid these lacunae in the future. The further development of a new cadre of Peace and Development Advisers as a career path would help to ensure a sufficient supply of specialists to fill this increasingly needed role.
- v. Peace and Development Advisers (PDAs) and other conflict prevention specialists deployed under the Joint Programme to support country-specific initiatives need to receive much more systematic support from UNHQ and engage fully with the UN Country Team, especially resident agencies with a development presence. As this system-wide support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding are key interests of Joint Programme donors, PDAs need to be fully prepared and supported to help UNCTs conduct conflict analysis, formulate UNDAFs, as well as contribute to PCNAs and PBF Priority Plans, where necessary. This may require the mobilization and deployment of targeted additional resources.

10. A number of lessons have also emerged with regard to the internal management of the programme, especially through the deliberations of three global retreats of PDAs, organized with the support of the Framework Team secretariat, held in 2007, 2008, and 2010 respectively:

- i. While UN Resident Coordinators and agency heads are broadly supportive of conflict prevention efforts, they are often more reluctant to engage national counterparts on sensitive internal matters, partly due to a lack of prior experience in developing “entry points” for this purpose, and partly due to the undue political risks involved.
- ii. While PDAs and other conflict prevention specialists are able to assist Resident Coordinators and agency heads on the ground with developing programming frameworks for conflict prevention, and with the relevant strategic analysis, they often needed additional support in areas requiring specialized technical expertise. These areas include natural resource conflicts (especially land conflicts); political transitions, especially via elections, in divided societies; and the intersection between human rights and conflict prevention. The Framework Team secretariat, which implements a joint EC-UN initiative on land and natural resource conflicts; maintains the UN “conflict prevention community of practice”; and supports PDAs with orientation, retreats and training should continue with these much needed types of support.

- iii. While PDAs and other conflict prevention specialists receive considerable backstopping from their counterparts at UN headquarters, this assistance—on personnel and administrative issues as well as substantive and policy guidance—needs to be more systematic and better coordinated.
- iv. PDAs and UN staff working with them also need to be able to call more systematically on DPA’s political assistance, through regular consultation with DPA Regional Divisions, with a view to elevate prevention issues to a higher political level in a country, if necessary. DPA and UNDP therefore need to cooperate more closely to provide support and guidance to PDAs and the prevention programmes under their purview. The working groups that work with RCs in countries receive support should function more systematically, meet more regularly, and take concrete follow-up actions. Support from other relevant agencies as well as the Framework Team should be sought for these groups where DPA and UNDP are stretched.
- v. While conflict prevention efforts have obtained important results on the ground in several situations, they have not led to significant impact at the national level in others, especially in complex environments in larger countries. One step towards addressing this would be to have a wider group of specialists with the relevant technical, programmatic, political, and analytical skills, rather than a lone PDA, deployed on the ground, especially in larger countries and in more complex situations. Another step would be to ensure that PDAs are able to work systematically towards mainstreaming conflict prevention into UNDAFs and other country programming documents. Critically, all these efforts should be closely linked to any high-level UN preventive diplomacy or mediation engagement in that particular country, in order to ensure that both tracks are mutually reinforcing. New, creative ways of supplementing PDAs might include the provision of UNVs or national officers as conflict prevention specialists or new collaboration with PBF on complementary deployments when needs are overwhelming.
- vi. PDAs and other conflict prevention specialists need to be continued to be organized into a community of learning and practice, with the concrete objective of refreshing their skills and repertoire on an ongoing basis, and also allowing them to generate new ideas and initiatives for their specific country situations. This community of practice is currently managed by the Framework Team, and needs to be continued to be strengthened.
- vii. The Joint Programme’s greatest strength lies in that it enables timely and joint analyses and action in sensitive, and often rapidly evolving situations, especially by allowing resources and personnel to be flexibly deployed to develop entry points for broader support by UNDP and DPA, whose more conventional processes for providing such assistance take longer to come “online.” This strength should be sustained.

III. The Programme's key outputs

11. The programme will have four key outputs for the period 2012-2014:

(i) Develop strategic conflict prevention initiatives at the country level, including through the deployment of "peace and development advisors;"

Support from UNDP and DPA for country-level initiatives from the Joint Programme will include technical assistance for programme development and implementation, including monitoring and evaluation; political and strategic support for the Resident Coordinator; political advice to the RC and CT, including from the DPA Stand-by Team of Mediation Experts as necessary; generating "entry points" for conflict prevention; assistance with resource mobilization; and the building of on-ground capacity of the UNDP Country Office and/or the UN Country Team, as appropriate, to implement these initiatives, including through the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors and other conflict prevention specialists.

Between 2012 and 2014, this support will be provided in up to 25 countries.

(ii) Provide targeted assistance for local facilitation activities undertaken in non-mission settings (examples: the Malawi Facilitation in 2011; the facilitation by the National Elders' Forum in Uganda in 2011; Assistance for the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in Thailand in 2011);

Not all countries supported through the Joint Programme will request or receive the full extent of support that can be provided through this partnership. In several instances, this support will be discrete and involve the short-term deployment of technical expertise; political assistance for opening "entry points." This is especially the case where rapid action may be needed to de-escalate rapidly rising tensions.

(iii) Support joint assessment, analysis, and "knowledge development" by DPA and UNDP, in the context of support for country-level initiatives;

At least one "best practices" note will be developed by UNDP and DPA, in partnership with the Framework Team, on support to RCs in complex political settings. Between 2012 and 2014, joint assessment missions will be undertaken by DPA and UNDP to evaluate results from current initiatives, and to establish the parameters for new ones. Joint analysis will feed both into concrete on-ground action as well as the development of UNHQ response (including policy and advocacy).

(iv) Provide short-term support for conflict and/ or political analyses through deployment of advisors in countries designated by the SG as Special Circumstances, or where otherwise warranted.

Support is likely to be requested from the Joint Programme to ensure that RCs in situations declared by the S-G as “special circumstances” have the capacity for undertaking analyses, and also wider political support from UNHQ, that could then guide strategic initiatives as well as the wider UNCT response. Support is also likely to be continued to be requested for the development of UNCT strategies through joint conflict analysis, especially non-mission settings where the PBSO/ PBF has been tasked with developing integrated plans (PDAs have provided this assistance in Guinea-Bissau and Kyrgyzstan for example.

IV. Management Arrangements for the Reformulated Programme

12. With regard to internal management and administrative arrangements, the following has been agreed between UNDP and DPA:

(a) General management arrangements

13. The Joint Programme will be overseen jointly by UNDP and DPA. It will have two full time staff: a programme manager and a programme assistant, both housed in BCPR.

(b) Joint Programme Steering Committee

14. The Steering Committee of the Joint Programme will be comprised of: the relevant “assistant secretaries’-general” from UNDP and DPA (co-chair)s; and one senior level alternate each from UNDP and DPA. Other staff from the regional bureaux and divisions of UNDP and DPA will participate in the meetings of the Steering Committee as appropriate. Meeting on a quarterly basis, the Steering Committee will carry out the following tasks:

- i. Provide oversight and ensure the effective management and implementation of the UNDP-DPA Joint Programme;
- ii. Agree on countries that will receive assistance from the Joint Programme (new or extended), including the selection of PDAs by UNDP and DPA;
- iii. Provide guidance on budget revisions, review and approve progress and annual reports;
- iv. Review bilateral collaboration in areas of mutual interest and overlap, including the strategic direction of the Joint Programme;
- v. Consider points of contention or dispute that might have arisen in areas of mutual interest or overlap, and to provide appropriate guidance;
- vi. To propose new strategic areas of collaboration or joint initiatives, as appropriate;

vii. Keep the senior UNDP and DPA leadership regularly informed about the deliberations and decisions of the Steering Committee.

15. The Programme Manager and the Assistant will provide secretariat support to the Steering Committee

(c) Joint Programme Technical Committee

16. The Steering Committee is supported in the fulfillment of its responsibilities by a joint UNDP-DPA Management that will be comprised of: 2+2 senior staff from UNDP and DPA each and the head of the Framework Team Secretariat. Other staff from the regional bureaux and divisions of UNDP and DPA will participate in the meetings of the Management Committee as appropriate. Meeting on a monthly basis, the Technical Committee will review and agree all documentation to be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval and guidance.

(d) Day-to-day management arrangements

17. The programme manager, with the support of the assistant:

- i. Will be responsible for the day to day financial and programmatic management of the Joint Programme: will share all information relevant to effective decision making , including all relevant budgetary information, with the Technical Committee members;
- ii. Will report quarterly (and with monthly financial reports) through the Technical Committee to the Steering Committee on the status of expenditures from the programme, the overall availability of funds, the state of resource mobilization, and the implementation of the agreed-on activities of the programme;
- iii. Will be responsible for the drafting of the annual progress report to be submitted, through the Technical Committee, to the Steering Committee;
- iv. Will coordinate closely with the respective regional bureaux and divisions in UNDP and DPA to ensure the effective management of activities under the Joint Programme and will ensure exchange of information;
- v. Will convene regular coordination meetings with focal points and other staff in regional bureaux and divisions in UNDP and DPA as appropriate, to exchange information and discuss specific activities as necessary.

- vi. Will provide secretariat support, including the drafting of the agenda and preparation of the minutes of the meetings, to the Technical Committee and the Steering Committee.

(e) Deployment of PDAs

18. Regarding the development of strategic initiatives and deployment of peace and development advisers, each strategic conflict prevention initiative is tailored to the requirements of the particular situation, with specialists deployed to assist with, for example, building capacities for negotiation, mediation, and social cohesion, facilitating dialogue, supporting confidence-building measures, collaborative leadership and other participatory processes, and preventing election violence.

19. Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) are recruited and deployed by UNDP, DPA, and the RC/RR to anchor these strategic initiatives which assist national actors to lessen tensions, promote dialogue and build confidence in situations of increasing fragility, instability or potential violence. These initiatives may be part of an integrated inter-agency country strategy or, depending upon political and other sensitivities, stand-alone efforts. PDAs may be given different titles due to in-country sensitivities; however, they are uniformly skilled in facilitation, dialogue and inter-group dynamics. PDAs focus primarily on initiatives that involve national counterparts at both national and local levels (approx. 80%), and secondarily, to support internal UN conflict prevention awareness and skills development (20%) for UNCT and its members in areas such as conflict analysis, integration of conflict sensitivity into their programmes, and the articulation of programming to help implement the wider joint conflict prevention strategy.

20. While recruitment of PDAs is conducted through regular UNDP Country Office channels (i.e. post advertised and long-listed by the UNDP Country Office), both BCPR and DPA must be part of the selection process in terms of agreeing on short-listed candidates, evaluating written tests and participating in interviews. Funding of PDA salaries and some of their activities is necessarily provided by the Joint Programme at its inception and for a modest period of 1-2 years. However, it is anticipated that these resources will eventually be mobilized by the UNDP CO or the UNCT either from international partners in situ or through other UN entities and funds.

V. Monitoring and Evaluation

21. The planning, review and reporting for the Joint Programme will enable joint, coordinated and coherent monitoring of progress towards outputs and outcomes, according to results based management principles. It will be centred upon pre-defined indicators and annual targets and provide flexibility for revision to reflect progress in implementation.

22. A Joint Programme Annual Report will be produced (in addition to quarterly updates), encompassing the entire range of Joint Programme activities. Findings from the Annual Report will enable appropriate strategic, programmatic and operational adjustments, as required. Programme adjustments should demonstrate that lessons of the previous year have been learnt, strategy and/or actions have been amended. This should also include the identification of additional support needs or revision of assumptions made. Thus, the Joint Programme will undergo a systematic process of review and (where necessary) renewal to ensure that it is updated and remains relevant as a critical tool for conflict prevention.

VI. Risk Management for the Joint Programme

23. The key risks for the Joint Programme are incurred in its first, and most critical, output, i.e. the implementation of conflict prevention initiatives at the country level. Two sets of risks could pose obstacles to achieving this objective:

- i. UN Resident Coordinators and relevant staff may be averse to the political risks involved, or may lack relevant past experience or skills necessary to developing “entry points” in sensitive political contexts.
- ii. Key national counterparts, especially governments, may not engage with the relevant issues, or if they do so, only in a context where their particular concerns or approaches are prioritized.

24. Two approaches will be used to mitigate and address these risks where feasible, taking into account the contingent nature of political situations and interventions on the ground:

a. Through both the Framework Team mechanism as well as the Joint Programme, RC/RRs have been assisted in the recent past in developing strategies for engaging with national counterparts on sensitive issues, and to minimize political risk, or to take acceptable or judicious risks with the support of UNHQ. Strategies include: (a) engaging on the basis of minimally accepted “discourses,” and then widening the parameters for engagement once a certain level of confidence has been built with, and among, the relevant counterparts; and (b) using ongoing programmes to provide technical support for dealing with more complex, potentially violent, issues (for example, an environmental management programme could provide the basis for mediation on a new national land policy, or on specific land-related conflicts).

b. In sensitive situations, national and local counterparts have been successfully engaged on issues of conflict prevention not necessarily through a focus on conflict per se (counterparts may be divided on the very potential for violent tension, let alone its causes and manifestations), but rather on the basis of acquiring new skills and capacities, or generating joint analysis, on issues of immediate mutual interest. This

process of gradual engagement has subsequently paved the way for more sensitive issues to be discussed. In Mauritania, for example, a civic dialogue around the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals paved the way for a more stable and consensual process of democratic consolidation after years of authoritarian rule. In Guyana, the first-ever violence free national elections in 2006 were achieved with UN assistance not through a public focus on conflict prevention per se, but by assisting all relevant counterparts in identifying and implementing common priorities with regard to “social cohesion.” Such approaches will continue to be utilized with regard to other countries being assisted through the Joint Programme.

VII. Gender Strategy for the Joint Programme

25. Concerns relating to women and gender have hitherto featured prominently in several of the countries assisted through the Joint Programme. Women played a prominent role, with UN support, in conserving peace during national elections in Ghana in 2004 and 2008, Guyana in 2006, and in the constitutional referendum in Kenya in 2010. Conversely, women were the victims of sexual-and-gender-based-violence in the aftermath of Kenya’s national elections in 2007, and have been victims of violence during past elections in Guyana. Women have played extremely prominent roles in conflict management and resolution, especially at the local level, in countries as diverse as Nigeria, Kenya, and Fiji.

26. In light of this, and as mentioned in paragraph 20, the Joint Programme, in partnership with the Framework Team, DPA’s gender and mediation unit, UN Women, and other partners, will support the development of specific guidance on assisting women in playing more visible and sustained roles in processes of dialogue and conflict management. This guidance will be directed to “peace and development advisors” and other conflict prevention specialists deployed in the field. In the context of specific initiatives at the country level, particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that at least a third of the participants in all skills and capacity-building activities supported by the Joint Programme are women. Similarly, women’s networks and associations will be prioritized in terms of partnerships around the development and facilitation of dialogue and conflict resolution processes.